**21st Century Idolatry**

Part 1- The god of materialism

**Luther’s 1st Commandment and explanation-**

**The First Commandment.**

You shall have no other gods.

*What does this mean*?

We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

Discussion- If we could keep the **1st Commandment** perfectly, would we need the other nine?

Luther- “For this reason He (God) wishes to turn us away from every idol that exists outside of Him, and to draw us to Himself, namely, because He is the only eternal good.”

**Luke 12:15 (Jesus said)**

**15And he said to them, “Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”**

Of the 38 parables Jesus taught, 16 focus on the subject of money.

**Psalm 24:1 (David writes)**

**The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof,
    the world and those who dwell therein.**

The key to keeping materialism in its right place is to remember that everything belongs to God. Whatever we have is on loan from our heavenly Father. We are stewards (caretakers) of all that He has given to us. Our house, our car, our bank account, our property… really everything, including our whole lives.

Discussion- How can we fight against idolatry in our lives? Can we review and evaluate idolatry on our own, or do we need an outside perspective? **God is our Provider**, and we worship Him as our living and true God above all false gods. **Our true identity is in Christ.** He saved us from our sins by dying on the cross in our place. Our true value is found in Christ, Himself. *Matthew 16*

*24Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. 26For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?*

**James Elliot- martyred Missionary to Ecuador-** “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.”

**Matthew 6- (Jesus said)**

**24“No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.**

Note: The word “money” is really “mammon,” which includes the concept of “possessions,” or what money can buy.

**Time for self-reflection**. When do things we enjoy cross the line into idolatry? Can art, or travel, or nice things, or sports, or entertainment… NOT BE IDOLATRY?

Note: Idolatry is seen in the *degree to which* you invest in these things, rather than in your life with God.

Discussion- Can a person’s **bank** **checkbook expenditures** indicate an item’s idolatry potential?

* You spend a lot of money on clothes?
* You always have the most advanced automobile?
* You’re constantly renovating/ updating your house?
* You spend money without limit on your children?
* Credit card debt is a problem because you must have the best electronic gadget? Big screen TV
* You enjoy the best restaurants?
* Travel is a priority?
* Time with friends is more important than time with God? Etc.

What about **time** commitments? Can the amount of time you spend on the golf course, or playing games on the computer, or long hours at the office indicate an idolatry problem? Can your devotion to your children indicate idolatry?

**1 Timothy 6-6But godliness with contentment is great gain, 7for we brought nothing into the world, andwe cannot take anything out of the world. 8But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. 9But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.**

Discussion- How can Christians be content in this life? Are you content? Why or why not? With a focus on money and possessions, what “masters” do you serve? Isn’t materialism/ money really “toxic” for real happiness?

**Respond to this statement**- “The wealthier people are, the less time they spend pursuing enjoyable activities.”

**The god of materialism** wants us to believe our significance and worth comes from what we have. But again, where do we discover our true identity?