

Keep Yourselves from Idols

For most of us living in the US, literal idols sitting on shelves are not our issue when it comes to idols, right? But idols of the heart? Now that is a very different thing. John Calvin said that our nature is a “perpetual factory of idols.” We so easily turn from worshipping and seeking God above all to lesser things. And so, this final admonition from John to keep ourselves from idols is one to take seriously.

Read 1 John 5:20-21

1. How might verse 20 relate to the command of verse 21?
2. Brian mentioned that John could be referring to literal or metaphorical idols. If metaphorical, John could be referring to the false teaching about Jesus from those who had left the church. In what ways might their false teaching of Jesus be an idol?
3. Brian defined an idol as anything we love, trust, serve, or pursue more than God. Do you find this definition helpful? Why or why not?
4. How can we keep ourselves from idols? What does this mean practically?
5. Most of us tend to have idols with which we struggle. What is it for you (see list of questions at the end of the study to help you assess)?
6. How might you keep yourself from that idol (or any other idol)?

7. Brian said that a core component of keeping oneself from an idol is becoming captivated by Jesus Christ and our Heavenly Father. What are some ways that we can do that?

8. What is your main application from this study?

Questions to Help Identify Idols

1. What is my hope for the future?
2. What do I worry about most?
3. What, if I failed or lost it, would cause me to feel that I did not even want to live?
4. What do I use to comfort myself when things go bad or get difficult?
5. What do I do to cope? What are my release valves? What do I do to feel better?
6. What preoccupies me? What do I daydream about?
7. What makes me feel the most self-worth? Of what am I the proudest? For what do I want to be known?
8. What prayer, unanswered, would make me seriously think about turning away from God?
9. What do I really want and expect out of life? What would really make me happy?
10. What are my strongest emotions (such as fear or anger)? We often respond with strong emotions when our idols are threatened.
11. What controls me?
12. Whose approval do I most seek?
13. What sin or sins do I constantly battle? Whatever we worship, whatever we love more than God, we will sin to obtain it.