

# Truth for Life: SIN

## DEFINITION <sup>1</sup>

### What is idolatry?

- whatever we worship instead of God
- good things as idols
- self as idol

## LOCATION <sup>2</sup>

### Where do you find idolatry?

- in the world
- in the church
  - syncretistic idolatry
  - functional idolatry
- in the heart

## SERIOUSNESS <sup>3</sup>

### Why be concerned about idolatry?

- root sin
- counterfeit gods
  - trusting a false rescuer
  - serving a false master
  - loving a false lover
- divine judgment

## RESPONSE <sup>4</sup>

### What should we do about idolatry?

- identify your idols
- turn from your idols
- turn to the Lord
- renew your heart

## QUOTATIONS:

‘A god is whatever we expect to provide all good and in which we take refuge in all distress... Whatever you set your heart on and put your trust in, that, I tell you, is your true god.’ (*Martin Luther*)

‘The language of love, trust, fear, hope, seeking, serving—terms describing a relationship to the true God—is continually utilized in the Bible to describe our false loves, false trusts, false fears, false hopes, false pursuits, false masters.’ (*David Powlinson*)

‘Our idols are those things we count on to give our lives meaning. They are the things of which we say, ‘I need this to make me happy’, or ‘If I don’t have this my life is worthless and meaningless.’ (*Tim Keller*)

What is my greatest nightmare? What do I worry about most?

What do I rely on or comfort myself with when things go badly or become difficult?

What makes me feel the most self-worth? What am I proudest of?

What do I really want and expect out of life?

What would really make me happy? (*Tim Keller*)

‘man’s nature...is a perpetual factory of idols’ (*John Calvin*)

‘all our sinful behaviour and negative emotions stem from a failure at a functional level to believe one of these truths:

God is great – so we don’t have to be in control;  
God is glorious – so we don’t have to fear others;

God is good – so we don’t have to look elsewhere;

God is gracious – so we don’t have to prove ourselves’ (*Tim Chester*)

‘the only way to dispossess it [the heart] of an old affection is by the expulsive power of a new one... We know of no other way by which to keep the love of the world out of our heart than to keep in our hearts the love of God.’

(*Thomas Chalmers in ‘The Expulsive Power of a New Affection’*)

## RECOMMENDED READING:

Tim Keller: *Counterfeit Gods*

Tim Chester: *You Can Change*

<sup>1</sup> Rom.1:25,23; Ezek.28:1,13,15

<sup>2</sup> Jer.50:38; Acts 17:16; Exod.20:3-4,32; Jer.11:13; 2 Kings 17:15; 1 Jn 5:21; 1 Cor.10:7; Jer.7:9; Ezek.8-10; 2 Kgs 17:33; Ezek.14:1,7; Jer.13:10

<sup>3</sup> Rom.1:21-25; Jer.10:10,14; Deut.11:6; Jer.7:6; 2:13; Matt.6:24; Ezek.6:9; Rom.1:18; 2:5

<sup>4</sup> Acts 17:30; 1 Thess.1:9; Ezek.36:25