

Idols of the Heart

Learning to Long for God Alone

Lesson #1 “Rachel’s Gods and You”

□ Read Introduction and Chapter One and answer the following questions from pages 13-30.

Text: **1 John 5:21** Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

1. What does idolatry have to do with?
2. How long will our war with sin last?
3. What is involved in God’s process of sanctification?
4. What has God given to assure our growth in holiness?
5. What sins did Rachel commit in taking her father’s idols?
6. What twisted Rachel’s thinking?
7. What eroded Rachel’s joy in being blessed with a child from the Lord?

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Lesson #2: “Undivided Adoration”

- Read Chapter Two and answer the following questions from pages 31-43.

Text: **John 21:15** So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs."

1. What was the one thing needful that Mary chose?
2. What are some of the possible gods of our own making?
3. Write out the answer to the question “What are the duties required in the first commandment?”
4. Now list all the verbs from question #3.
5. How did Eli the priest not honor or please the Lord?
6. “Those who _____ God, our _____ for God’s _____ and _____ should be so _____ that the _____ love that we have for _____ should _____ like _____ in comparison.”
7. What does it mean to **honor** God?

Quote: “If you heard Christ pray for you, would it not encourage you to pray, and persuade yourself that God would not reject you?” Richard Baxter

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Lesson #3: “Of First Importance”

□ Read Chapter Three and answer the following questions from pages 44-58.

Romans 7:12 Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.

1. When does a blessing from God become an idol in our hearts?
2. How do we know that Lot’s wife loved her world?
3. Why is obeying the commandments of God good?
4. What are the two reasons for, “You shall have no other gods before Me?”
5. Why did God want to release Israel from bondage to Egypt?
6. What does God demand in the first commandment?

7. What is the sum of the first commandment?

8. Why does breaking one of God's commandments make us guilty as lawbreakers?

9. How is the law like a tutor (personal teacher)? Support with Scripture.

10. List four things the Law of God does for us?

11. "Every _____, every _____ in my _____ is _____ in lovelessness and thanklessness."

12. "Every truly _____ act, including even the inner _____ to be holy, _____ out of the _____ and _____ that He has _____ in my heart."

13. What is the one infallible sign that we belong to Christ? Support with Scripture.

14. Why is spiritual growth guaranteed to the Christian?

15. What is the cause and origin of our joy in doing the will of God?

16. How can we avoid the errors of legalism and lawlessness?

Quote: “To say that there is one God and no god but God is not simply an article in a creed. It is an overpowering, brain-hammering, heart-stopping truth that is a command to love the only one worthy of our entire and unswerving allegiance.” **Os Guinness**

Quote: “Lot’s wife was an idolater, but her idolatry didn’t begin when she turned around to look at the city she loved. Her idolatry began when she treasured Sodom more than God. Her Idolatry caused her downfall.”

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Lesson #4: “The Heart Changer”

□ Read Chapter Four and answer the following questions from pages 59-74.

Luke 7:38 and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil.

1. Why was the woman in **Luke 7** able to ignore the proud disdain and hatred of the religious leaders?
2. “...remember in your _____ strength you _____ have the _____ to make yourself a _____ God-worshipper.
3. What happens when the Holy Spirit reveals Christ to us?
4. “The _____ of unbelief lies at the _____ of _____ other _____ and particularly at the _____ of idolatry.”
5. What happens when we fail to believe the truth about who Jesus is and His work on the cross?

6. How can we effectively abandon the gods of this world?

7. What are we saying every time our hearts turn toward the worship of false gods?

8. What should we do when tempted to think the spiritual battle is lost?

9. What happens as our understanding of God grows?

10. How does the Holy Spirit work in us to desire holiness of life?

11. Why do we need the help of the Holy Spirit in our prayers?

12. How does God assure us that we will never be tempted beyond what we can bear?

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Lesson #5: “Better Than Life”

□ Read Chapter Five and answer the following questions from pages 75-89.

Psalm 63:3 Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You.

1. What was the two-fold response of the three Hebrew men before Nebuchadnezzar in **Daniel 3:16-18**?
2. Where is our ultimate joy found?
3. “Nothing is _____ than _____ God. There is no _____ greater than _____ Him. Nothing is _____ than _____ love. My _____ is found in _____ alone.”
4. Why was Jesus able to endure the cross?
5. What Did David mean by ‘*fullness of joy*’ and ‘*pleasures forever*’ in **Psalm 16:11**?
6. Sweetness in our fellowship with Christ is a fruit of what?
7. Why did Christ experience great gladness?
8. What does it mean to delight to do God’s will?

9. What must we do to turn from idols to delighting in God's Will?

10. Why did Eve choose to disobey God?

11. Why were we created?

12. According to the Puritans how was deep happiness sought and found?

13. How does our holiness and worship grow?

14. Why do we disregard the First Commandment?

15. How does a Christian grow in love for Christ and disdain for the attractions of the world?

16. How are we to define happiness?

Quote, "Although we all have the same sinful nature and bent to create false gods, we create them for very different reasons. We create images out of our thoughts of our highest good or happiness. And whether we're aware of it or not, those images are the driving force in our lives. They direct our worship, either toward or away from God. They tell us what we should cherish more than Him."

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Lesson #6: “Knowing Your Heart”

- Read Chapter Six and answer the following questions from pages 90-106.

Deuteronomy 5:29 Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!

1. “Rahab _____ of God’s conquering _____ because He had already _____ her mind, _____ her heart and _____ faith in her.”
2. According to the Bible what are the three main functions of the heart?
3. What does the Bible mean when referencing “the mind”?
4. What is the biblical understanding of “affections”?
5. What is the biblical meaning of the “will”?
6. “Your mind _____ inform your affections of the _____ of your highest _____: your affections _____ it, _____ you to _____ for it, and _____ the impetus needed to _____ your will to choose.”
7. Why can we NOT know, desire and choose God as our greatest goal for our lives?

8. What is the heart disease that we humans now have?
9. Why are we to strive against idolatry though our hearts are so deceitful?
10. “It is in this _____ that we will _____ to trust Him and to _____ ourselves, to _____ sin and _____ holiness, to _____ humility, and to _____ for heaven.”
11. How does God reveal to us the thoughts and intentions of our heart?
12. Why has God given us His Word?
13. Why do we need not worry about our ultimate safety?

Quote: “Self-knowledge is the first step toward the knowledge of God. We must see ‘our own ignorance, vanity, poverty, infirmity, and what is more depravity and corruption,’ before we can ‘recognize that the true light of wisdom, sound virtue, full abundance or every good, and purity of righteousness rest in the Lord alone. To this extent we are prompted by our own ills to contemplate the good things of God, and we can not seriously aspire to Him before we begin to become displeased with ourselves.” **John Calvin**

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Lesson #7: “Thinking About Your God”

□ Read Chapter Seven and answer the following questions from pages 107-122.

1 Chronicles 28:9 "As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever.

1. What causes the change in King Josiah?
2. What did the Holy Spirit do to King Josiah?
3. What is our mind able to help us guard against?
4. “It is your Father’s _____ pleasure to _____ you about _____ and _____ law. He _____ this primarily through _____ your _____ to Scripture.”
5. How does God enable us to war against false worship?
6. Where does idolatry originate?
7. What does **Jeremiah 51:17** teach us about idolatry?

8. Why can we not see idols as easy today?

9. How can we identify idols in our hearts?

10. Where are we to find our ultimate source of joy and happiness?

11. Where is the fountainhead that all idolatry flows?

12. What is our course of action to correct lies in our thinking?

13. How do we allow ourselves to be deceived?

14. What are we to do when we realize we are habitually sinning against God in an area?

Thought: When we have created an idol in our own image, we want the comfort of a loving god without the demands of a holy god.

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Lesson #8: “Longing for God”

- Read Chapter Eight and answer the following questions from pages 123-139.

Psalms 73:23-26 “Nevertheless I am continually with You; You hold me by my right hand. **24** You will guide me with Your counsel, And afterward receive me to glory. **25** Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You. **26** My flesh and my heart fail; But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

1. Why was Hannah’s desire for a son not an idol?
2. Why are our desires important for our study on idolatry?
3. What two questions must we ask regarding the desires of our hearts?
4. What does the New Testament say is the motivating factor in our behavior?
5. “... there are desires that are always sinful... Unlike _____ desires, the prominence of this desire doesn’t make the desire _____. This desire is _____ even if it’s only _____ of once in a while. It is _____ even if it is never acted upon. One who has this desire has _____ against God because he’s _____ what God has _____.”
6. Why are Christian’s the only ones with the capacity to have holy desires?

7. “Here lies the problem with our _____: Our hearts, the _____ from which all our sin flows, have _____ to be God-centered and have _____ self-centered. Rather than living life to _____ God for His glory, man _____ for his _____ glory...”
8. What two ways do we sinfully view our work?
9. How do we wrongfully see our rest and leisure?
10. Without Christ what happens to our desires?
11. What is our only hope to recover what we lost in the Fall?
12. How do we put to death sinful desires and create new holy desires?
13. What must we do to have our desires transformed?
14. As believers how are we to examine our desires to know if they are right?
15. How does God satisfy us?

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Lesson #9: "Willing to Obey"

□ Read Chapter Nine and answer the following questions from pages 140-154.

Psalms 40:8 "I delight to do Your will, O my God, And Your law is within my heart."

1. Why does man never chose what is right and holy?
2. Why does our will not function as God has created it?
3. "It is _____ according to our overriding _____ and _____, although, because of its _____ bent, our will is more strongly _____ to sin than to _____."
4. How do we know we are worshipping idols or completely devoted to the one true God?
5. "Don't be _____ into thinking that you _____ to develop _____ willpower. We need to develop _____ thoughts and _____."
6. How do our choices become second nature?
7. Why are we responsible for unconscious sins?

8. Are we born with a 'neutral will'?

9. Why can't unbelievers understand the truth or desire to obey it?

10. Why is a believer able to choose to sin or not to sin?

11. How do we avoid idols and please God if strengthening our willpower does not work?

12. Why can't believers not once and for all flee sins and live the way God would have us to?

13. Why do we not consistently choose God and His ways?

14. How does God work the change in our hearts and lives?

15. What is our duty in our sanctification?

Quote: “If we believe anything other than God’s sovereign rule over our hearts, then we are left without hope for change.”

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Lesson #10: “Resisting Your Idols”

□ Read Chapter Ten and answer the following questions from pages 155-171.

Ephesians 4:22-24 “that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, **23** and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, **24** and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness..”

1. What is one of the great weaknesses in modern Christianity today?
2. “God’s Spirit works _____, progressively, and _____ in us so that we gradually _____ in _____ until we are rendered perfect at death.”
3. List the three steps in the process of sanctification in **Ephesians 4:22-24**.
4. When should we begin fighting temptation?
5. Why does God test His children?
6. What are the two weapons Satan uses to attack a Christian in times of temptations?

7. Why do we yield to Satan's temptations?
8. Why were Satan's temptations against Peter successful?
9. Why did Jesus allow Peter to deny Him?
10. We... "freely _____ to sin in _____ to the thoughts, _____, and fears that were _____ me."
11. What are we asking for when we pray, 'lead us not into temptation'?
12. Why does God provide a way of escape from temptation?
13. What is the only way we can succeed against the plans of Satan?
14. "Satan will _____ at the _____ of our idolatry. He'll _____ your _____ and _____, and he'll know what you _____ for _____ than holiness. He'll _____ what you fear, And it's _____ he will attack you."

Quote: "Although God rules sovereignly in my life, I am fully responsible for my sin and can never blame Him."

Quote: “If we believe anything other than God’s sovereign rule over our hearts, then we are left without hope for change.”

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Lesson #11: “Resisting Your Idols”

□ Read Chapter Eleven and answer the following questions from pages 172-190.

Romans 8:13 “For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”

1. How was Moses able to avoid being tempted by fear and pleasure?
2. What do we need to look for that exposes sinful patterns in our lives?
3. What is meant by idolatry never stands alone for long?
4. What are we to do at the very instance of a sinful thought, word or deed?
5. How do we get rid of idols that seem such a part of who we are?
6. “Heartfelt, Spirit-led and consistent _____ and _____ is the _____ weapon that can _____ the strongholds that our _____ thoughts and _____ occupy.”
7. How do we comprehend our enemies’ strengths?

8. “True _____ doesn’t make _____ or try to _____ up guilt. We _____ our sins because _____ is a _____ to a _____ God.”
9. How should we confess our sins?
10. What is true repentance?
11. When will we truly fight against our personal sins?
12. When is our repentance sincere?
13. How can we accomplish any lasting change?
14. In the process of sanctification, what do we need to resist?
15. Jesus... “has _____ your freedom, _____ your heart and conscience, empowered you with His Spirit, _____ your soul in His hand. He can _____ you from our sin. Rest and _____ in Him.”
16. A.W. Pink, “men must have an _____ to _____ and when he _____ from the _____ God, he at once _____ a false one.”

Quote: “What are you willing to give up to be holy?”

Quote: “It is never the waiters for grace, but always the active seekers for grace and doers of His Word, whom God approves.” Augustine

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Lesson #12: “Delighting in God”

□ Read Chapter Twelve and answer the following questions from pages 191-205.

Psalms 42:1-2 “As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God. 2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?.”

1. Why did God adopt us?
2. How are we to cease worshipping other gods?
3. What must we do to no longer desire idols?
4. How do we become powerful worshippers?
5. How can we have warm godly affections for God?
6. What questions do we need to ask ourselves to verify if we have true worship?

7. What are we not free to do in our worship of the one true God?
8. Why should our worship exceed that of angels in heaven?
9. “Our emotions _____ our thoughts and intentions; they reveal the _____ we’ve made about our circumstances. Our _____, sorrows, our _____ are the ways we vividly experience the _____ of our thoughts and _____.”
10. What is the by-product of meditation on the character and attributes of God?
11. How does Matthew Henry suggest a Christian to live?
12. “As you _____ to put off idolatrous _____, replacing it with _____, you’ll need to put on a _____ that appreciates, _____, rejoices in, and celebrates the _____, kindness, _____ and majesty of your King.”
13. What do we need to do to burst forth with praises for our God?
14. Why must we have an intellectual and emotional response to God?
15. What is your favorite hymn that helps you worship God? Why?