

# Understanding Idolatry Pt 1: Definition

## *Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, Oct. 29<sup>th</sup>*

2 Cor 2:11 *“Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.”*

Satan, as “the god of this world” (2 Cor 4:4) has an evil disposition (Jn 10:10); and intentional designs/devices (Rev. 12-13) for this world and all who are in it. Ignorance of his disposition and devices, as well as our own weakness and willfulness, and ultimately defeat!

(Mt 7:13; Pr. 14:12; 16:14; Mt 16:26; Phil. 3:18,19; Rev. 9:11)

Satan (the adversary) knows and uses: Our Limited Perspective → Complaining; Our Lustful Pleasures → Compulsions; Our Propensity for Perversion to enable his Distortion → Subversion → Deception, Resulting in our Corruption! (Jer. 3:20-21)

These work together to facilitate our Corruption, leading to our Rebellion and ultimate destruction!

1 Cor 10:5-8 *“they were overthrown in the wilderness. 6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. 7 Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; As it is written The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.”* (šāḥaq’: laugh, sport)

From their perspective their idolatry was “just a little harmless fun”. God revealed in Ex. 32:7 *“Thy people... have corrupted themselves”* shāḥat’: wasted, ruined, destroyed

What exactly is Idolatry? Why are we so prone to it?

How does it affect/corrupt us? What can we do to resist it?

## What is “Idolatry”? Idolatry defined

### 1. In English:

A. Webster's defines it as:

1. The worship of idols. He defines an idol as: “any thing which usurps the place of God in the hearts of his rational creatures.” (Ro. 1:28)
2. Excessive attachment or veneration for any thing, or that which borders on adoration.

### 2. In Hebrew (OT):

A. Lev 19:4 *“Turn ye not unto idols, (elîl: good for nothing! {from ‘al: nothing}) nor make to yourselves molten gods: I am the LORD your God”*

1) That's why God calls idols “Vanities” in Dt. 32:21; 1 Kgs 16:13,26; Jer 8:19 *“Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and strange vanities?”* (heb’el: emptiness)

2) Solomon learned this the hard way. Eccl. 1:2 *“... all is vanity... ... under the sun.”*

Eccl. 2:14 *“I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity (hābêl: empty, unsatisfying; from habal: to lead astray!) and vexation (Re’ût’: feeding upon) of spirit.”*

### From raa: to shepherd!

a) Satan uses the world to try to shepherd us, (aka: follow the crowd) In order to lead us astray! (Mk 4:19; 2 Cor 11:2,3; James 4:4; 1 Jn 2:15,16)

B. Lev 26:30 *“I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcasses upon ... your idols, (48x gillûl’îm: log, from galal: to roll/wallow) and my soul shall abhor (gaal’: reject) you.”*

1) This implies that the “idols” we “lean on” will:

a) eventually turn on us! (aka: disappoint)

b) Cause God to turn away (His favor) from us. Dt. 30:19

C. 1 Sam 15:23 “*rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.*”

(terāpîm: image, idol) From rapha: to heal, repair. (from rapa: to slacken, weaken, consume)

- 1) This implies that the idol which we think will “heal or repair”, actually exposes us to witchcraft (demonic influence), which ultimately weakens and consumes us!

**3. What is Idolatry in the Greek (NT)** 1 Cor 10:7 “*Neither be ye idolaters*”

Eidōlat’rēs: from eidolon (form) and latreu’o (to serve /worship) by implication a heathen god!

Vs 19 “*What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing?*

20 ...*the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.*”

A. Anything that we serve/put above God (Ex 20:3)

- 1) Becomes a type of “idol” (Ex. 20:4)
- 2) Puts us in fellowship/Partnership with devils! (1 Cor. 10:20)

## Conclusion: What is idolatry?

### Hebrew (OT)

Lev 19:4 “*Turn ye not unto idols...*” (elîl: good for nothing)

Jer 8:19 “*provoked me to anger with their graven images, and strange vanities?*” (heb’el: emptiness)  
(from habal: to lead astray)

Lev. 26:30 “*cast ...upon your idols, (gillûl’îm: To wallow/trust) and my soul shall abhor (gaal’: reject) you.*”

1 Sam 15:23 “*stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.*” (terāpîm: From rapha: promises to heal and repair)  
(from rapa: actually weakens and consumes.)

**Greek: (N.T.) 1 Cor. 10:19,20** “*What say I then,*

*That the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? But...the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.*”

What’s really behind our sacrifice and service to people and/or things, may very well be devils!

**English: “Any thing which usurps the place of God  
in the hearts of his rational creatures.”**

**Application: Col. 3:1** “*If ye then be risen with Christ, (then) seek those things which are above...*

*2 Set your affection (phroneō: focus, regard, value) on things above, not on things on the earth. ...*

*3 for ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. 5 Mortify therefore your members ...upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, and coveteousness, which is idolatry! 6 “For which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:”*

**1 John opens with Fellowship with God. Notice how it closes.**

1 Jn 5:4 “*this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith...*

*19 And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.*

*20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true...*

*21 Little children, keep (phyllasso: guard) yourselves from idols. Amen.”*

**What will you begin to do to keep (protect) yourself  
from the evil influence of Idols?**