

Biblical Counseling Training Institute
Subject: Identifying Idols of the Heart
James 1: 13-16
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Introduction:

- A. Most people don't understand the dynamic idolatry. They focus on the idols which are the object/manifestation of idolatry.
 - 1. The essence/root of idolatry, however, has to do with the state of the HEART.
 - 2. Ezekiel 14:3-5.

I. DEFINITION OF IDOLS OF THE HEART.

- A. An idol is anything that one DESIREs so much that he/she is willing to SIN in their attitudes/actions to get it, or SIN in their attitudes/actions if they don't get it.
- B. Example: A teen girl who wants a boyfriend so badly she is willing to give in sexually to get one, or be depressed if she doesn't get one.
- C. The key issue in finding idols of the heart in your counselees:
 - 1. What is the DESIRE that is driving their ATTITUDES and ACTIONS.

II. IDENTIFYING THE IDOL.

- A. The point of conception: "your own DESIREs. (Jam. 1:14).
- B. Notice the personal ownership and responsibility for the idol. It is "your own lust."
 - 1. This identifies the problem of BLAMESHIFTING.
 - a. Some people even blame GOD. (Jam. 1:13).
- C. Key data-gathering questions:
 - 1. "What is it you really wanted when you said or did that?"

2. "What were you THINKING?"

3. "Is that desire or goal BIBLICAL or UNBIBLICAL?"

D. Idols are the reason for QUARRELING in relationships.
(Jam. 4:1-2).

E. Idols are a reason for unanswered PRAYER. (Jam. 4:2-3).

III. THE DECEPTIVENESS OF IDOLS.

A. They DRAW away and ENTICE. (Jam. 1:14).

B. Our desires are not only our personal responsibilities they are potentially our greatest WEAKNESSES.

1. We are TEMPTED at the point of our desires.

2. Sin does GRATIFY the flesh. Sin is something that the flesh ENJOYS. (Gal. 5:16).

3. Counselor must understand the "law of diminishing returns."

a. The counselor must understand that the satisfaction that idols bring is very TEMPORARY.

b. The counselor must understand the price for this brief gratification is very steep and can be difficult to overcome.

III. THE DESTRUCTIVENESS OF IDOLS.

A. An idol conceived in the heart gives birth to sinful ACTIONS.
(Jam. 1:15)

B. Sinful actions result in DESTRUCTION. (Prov. 13:15).

1. Look at this process in Psalm 78:17-32.

C. The danger of idols---the Biblical definition of an addiction:
Ephesians 4:19.

IV. HOW TO DEAL WITH IDOLS OF THE HEART?

A. Identify the sin and confess and repent of it. (2 Cor. 7:11).

B. Do radical surgery. (Matt. 5:28-30).

1. Structure for CHANGE.

C. The put-off/put-on dynamic. (Eph. 4:22-24).

1. Be principle-oriented not feeling oriented.

Conclusion:

A. A dire warning from Jesus---Luke 11:24-26.