

Worship in Our Society

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I. Introduction.

A. Text: 1 Thessalonians 1.

B. Authentic Christian conversion has a double emphasis on turning: it is turning from idols and to God.

C. Unless there is a conscious turning from idols, we are not in position to praise God.

D. The New Testament mentions idolatry thirty-four times.

E. We are to flee from idolatry. (1 Corinthians 10:14)

II. An idol is something that satisfies one's emotional need to worship while simultaneously maintaining one's own sense of control (or deity).

A. Man is a worshipper by definition.

B. There is an innate desire to lift up something.

C. There is an innate desire to be like God. (Isaiah 14)

III. There are things in the world that are offensive to God but much more subtle in appearance. (1 John 2:15-16)

A. Elitism. (Philippians 2:3-4; Matthew 28:3; Luke 9:1; 49-50)

B. Materialism. Contentment is a learned discipline. (1 Timothy 6:17, Psalm 73, Philippians 4:11)

C. Newer is truer.

D. Bigger is better. We want growth, but we want healthy growth. (John 6, Mark 13, Proverbs 4)

E. Success is knowable and measurable now. The cross comes before the kingdom. (Acts 6; Matthew 4; 28; Luke 9; John 10:10; Hebrews 11)

F. Statistical analysis. This is glorying in appearance.(Proverbs 22:1)

IV. Coping.

A. We deal with pain in various ways: ignore it, anesthesia (Genesis 3), or acknowledge it.

B. We must call an idol what it is, accept God's grace and accept that life is a process.

Application questions:

1. Why do you think many churches neglect turning from idols?

2. Which subtle idol do you find yourself struggling with the most? How can we respond?

3. Why is it important to understand that facing idols is a life long process?
