

# Smashing Our Idols

*Lisa Scheffler, author*

Having spent some time in the United States, a visitor from another country wrote the following, “In America I saw the freest and most enlightened men placed in the happiest circumstances that the world affords, yet it seemed to me as if a cloud habitually hung upon their brow, and I thought them serious and almost sad, even in their pleasures.”

America, he said, was in the grip of a “strange melancholy” which often haunts free and prosperous people, even as they live in abundance.

The writer was Alexis DeTocqueville and he made these observations about America 190 years ago, in 1831. Not much has changed, has it?

While not everyone has experienced the liberty and prosperity of America equally, and there are plenty of inequities to address, the average person in this country enjoys a higher standard of living than the vast majority of people on earth. Yet, the “strange melancholy” persists. It may have even gotten worse. Anxiety, addiction, and loneliness are all on the rise.

We could name lots of causes for this melancholy. Many factors play a part, but these maladies are symptoms of an ailment that can be traced back to the Garden of Eden, when the Creator gave humanity a choice to live in communion with him, or go their own way. A choice to love and worship God and live according to his design, or reject his love, protection, and guidance and worship something else.

Perhaps the reason so many people are not experiencing joy and peace is because we are worshipping the wrong things. We are bowing down before idols.

For the next five weeks, we are going to expose some of the hidden idols of our modern world. We will consider the allegiance we’ve given the idols of success, alcohol and drugs, materialism, sex, and entertainment. We’ll heed the call of the ancient prophets of Israel, to tear down our idols, turn back to God, and worship him fully. No one but our Creator can satisfy our needs and bring us the joy, peace, and wholeness we are trying to find.

Together as the people of Christ Fellowship, let’s smash some idols and give all the glory to God!

# Week 1 | Idolatry and Success

*Lisa Scheffler, author*

What was humanity's original sin? If you read the account of humanity's fall in Genesis, a pattern emerges that persists today. Disobedience fueled by pride leads to a rejection of God and his ways. The results are always catastrophic.

Human beings were designed to be worshippers — to commune with their Creator. We cannot move through this world without “gods” to rely on. Even people who would say they are not religious share this basic need to seek out an anchor in an unstable world. When the possibility of suffering lurks behind every corner, we will make sacrifices to that which promises safety. When our desires outgrow our circumstances, we'll bring our offerings to the altar of “more” and “better.” Scared and restless, we will find a “god.”

This week, we're going to first explore the concept of idolatry, and then consider the part our pride and desire for success play in driving us to false gods.

## Day 1

What is an idol? Let's start with a basic definition that we'll flesh out throughout this series. From pastor and author, Tim Keller, an idol is “anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give.”<sup>1</sup>

Keller is giving us a definition of “idol” that works for the modern as well as the ancient world. For people living thousands of years ago in a world they understood to be ruled by supernatural forces, an idol was a physical representation of a divine being that had power or authority in the human realm. You worshipped an idol to curry the god's favor or prevent its wrath. Ancient and modern people turn to idols to satisfy needs God designed to be met by him.

Today, we'll go to the Bible to get an overview of idolatry and what God has to say about it.

## Read

**Exodus 20:3-4**

*“You shall have no other gods before me. 4 “You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.*

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<sup>1</sup> Keller, Timothy. [\*Counterfeit Gods: The Empty Promises of Money, Sex, and Power, and the Only Hope That Matters\*](#). New York: Riverhead Books, 2011. Print.

## Leviticus 19:4

*“Do not turn to idols or make metal gods for yourselves. I am the Lord your God.*

## Deuteronomy 12:1–3

*These are the decrees and laws you must be careful to follow in the land that the Lord, the God of your ancestors, has given you to possess—as long as you live in the land. <sup>2</sup> Destroy completely all the places on the high mountains, on the hills and under every spreading tree, where the nations you are dispossessing worship their gods. <sup>3</sup> Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and burn their Asherah poles in the fire; cut down the idols of their gods and wipe out their names from those places.*

## Ask yourself

- We defined “idol” above. Based on the verses you read, how would you define “idolatry”?
- What are God’s commands regarding idols?
- We’ll explore this idea throughout the series but record your initial thoughts. Why do you think people turn to idols rather than God?

## Pray

As we start our series on idolatry, let’s begin the week with communal prayer. Let’s pray the following as a family of believers and as part of this church body.

*Almighty God, Lord and Creator of all,*

*You alone are worthy of our worship. You created us for communion with you and desire for us to flourish inside your good and perfect will. You love us and through the death and resurrection of your Son, redeemed us from destruction. We are lost without you.*

*Yet, we confess that our hearts are often divided. We worship at the feet of the false gods of power, success, materialism, and pleasure. Draw us back to you. Give us eyes to see your glory and hearts that are ready to repent. Envelope us in your love. May we worship you alone.*

*It’s in the name of our beloved Savior, Jesus Christ, that we pray. Amen.*

## Talk about it

God placed us in a community with other believers for many reasons, and one of them is to learn from one another. We benefit from discussing God’s Word with others. The “talk about it” questions are good to answer on your own, but even better to discuss with someone else.

- Look back at Keller’s definition of an idol. What, in our modern world, might become an idol? How can a good thing become an idol if it’s used in ways or to degrees that God forbids?
- We’ll explore this question as the week goes on but talk through your initial response. Why do you think God is insistent that we have “no other gods” before him?

## Day 2

*Lisa Scheffler, author*

This week, we’re diving into a new series called, “Smashing our Idols.” We’re going to take an unflinching look at modern-day idols that demand our allegiance and supplant God’s rightful place in our lives.

Yesterday we considered Tim Keller’s definition of an idol, “It is anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give.” We also looked at some verses that showed us that God strictly forbids the worship of anything or anyone other than himself.

The Old Testament is full of warnings against idolatry and painstakingly illustrates the consequences of not heeding those warnings. Israel suffered greatly for breaking the first commandment and worshipping other gods.

So, here is our guiding question for the week: why is idolatry something that God takes so seriously? Today and tomorrow, we’re going to investigate why idolatry is such a grievous sin. To do that, we’re going to go back to the very beginning and look at how and why God created humanity.

### Read

#### Genesis 1:26–28 (NIV)

*<sup>26</sup> Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”*

*<sup>27</sup> So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.*

*<sup>28</sup> God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”*

### **Genesis 2:7–9; 15–17; 20–22 (NIV)**

*<sup>7</sup> Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.*

*<sup>8</sup> Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. <sup>9</sup> The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*

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*<sup>15</sup> The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. <sup>16</sup> And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; <sup>17</sup> but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”*

...

*<sup>20</sup> So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.*

*But for Adam no suitable helper was found. <sup>21</sup> So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. <sup>22</sup> Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.*

## **Ask yourself**

- For what purpose did God create humanity? What were they told to do? According to Genesis 1:26, what was significant about the way God created humans?
- Genesis 2 gives us more detail about how God created man and then woman. What do you notice?

## **Reflect**

The account of humanity’s creation is stunning all by itself. An infinite and eternal God designs creatures in his own image and likeness. Genesis tells us that out of the clay he forms the first human and breathes his own life into *adam*, (the Hebrew word for man) and “*adam* became a living being”(Genesis 2:7). After putting *adam* in a deep sleep, he removes what many translations say is a rib, but is closer to “side” in the original language (see the NIV footnote on Genesis 2:21). God forms another living being, a complimentary ally to make

humanity's divine purpose possible. From one being comes two. Eventually Adam will name her Eve because she would become the mother of all the living (Genesis 3:20).

We can gain an even deeper perspective on this amazing account when we consider the ways in which the Genesis creation story subverts the myths told by religions of the time and makes it clear that Yahweh is the one true God. To the ancient people to whom the Genesis account was originally told, certain key elements would have had an even greater significance. The first of these are the words "image" and "likeness."

According to Old Testament scholar Richard Averbeck, archeologists discovered a statue dated to the ninth century B.C. inscribed with the same two words for "image" and "likeness" as found in Genesis 1:26–27. A statue like this would be placed outside a temple or holy place to claim it for the king and the god he worshipped. The statue itself functioned to represent the king before his god in the place where the statue was set up.

"The implications are obvious. True, we are not just an inanimate statue. The biblical text is using figurative language. Like the statue of a king, we are the 'statue' of a king too, the divine king, and we have been set up in the midst of God's creation to represent him and his interests...We stand before God to serve as his authoritative representatives on this earth 'in his image as his likeness.'"<sup>2</sup>

According to Old Testament scholar Michael Heiser, the Genesis account also subverts a common belief about the idols people created. Ancient idol worshippers believed that the objects they made were *inhabited* by their gods. They would perform ceremonies to "open the mouth" of the statue. "The mouth (and nostrils) had to be ritually opened for the spirit of the deity to move in and occupy, a notion inspired by the idea that one needs to breathe to live. The idol first had to be animated with the very real spiritual presence of the deity. Once that was done, the entity was localized for worship and bargaining."<sup>3</sup>

These ancient idol worshippers had it very wrong. Yahweh had breathed into the nostrils of humanity, sharing his life. False gods and their idols had nothing to offer. Life was a gift given directly from the one Creator to human beings. He gave them a purpose that reflected his creativity and rule. Humans had been given the honor of representing God in his creation. They had free access to him as their Provider — no bargaining was required. Bowing to idols that imaged human rulers and false gods was an insulting and degrading substitute for the worship of the one, true God.

Ultimately, idolatry is dehumanizing. Sacrificing to a created thing representing a false god is to deny the image of God in us. We are his living, breathing likeness. Worshipping at the feet of an idol to beg for its favor demeans our relationship with the Creator that was redeemed by Jesus.

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<sup>2</sup> Richard E. Averbeck, ["A Literary Day, Inter-Textual, and Contextual Reading of Genesis 1–2,"](#) in *Reading Genesis 1–2: An Evangelical Conversation*, ed. J. Daryl Charles (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2013), 25–26.

<sup>3</sup> Michael S. Heiser, ["The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible,"](#) First Edition (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015), 35–36.

In the modern world, we may not believe that a carved image contains the spirit of a deity or claims its territory. We think we are too sophisticated for that. Yet, we still seek “our best life” from the gods of success, materialism, comfort, and escape. We will debase ourselves in front of the idols of our day rather than turning to the God who loves us and sacrificed himself for us. A grievous sin, indeed.

## Pray

Spend some time in prayer worshipping your Creator. Praise him for the inherent dignity you have as his image bearer. Thank him for giving you meaning and purpose — to represent him and his goodness in this world. Commit to rooting out any and all idolatry in your life. Ask the Spirit to reveal himself to you in such a powerful way you can’t help but direct all your worship towards him.

## Talk about it

- Based on what you read today, talk about why idolatry is dehumanizing and an affront to our Creator.
- Come up with a definition of worship. How is worshipping God life-giving and affirming of our dignity as his image-bearers? How does it acknowledge our dependence on him?

# Day 3

*Lisa Scheffler, author*

Yesterday, we discussed the ancient practice of idol worshippers. In parts of the ancient world, Idols were created to stand as the image and likeness of a ruler (who was often thought of as a lesser god) and the god he served. In ceremonies performed by pagan priests, those worshippers believed that the deity would inhabit the idol. In turn, the idol claimed territory for the deity.

Yet, Genesis teaches the true relationship between humans and God. Human beings, not the idols they make, were created in God’s image and likeness, and were given the honor of representing him in his creation. For worshippers of the one, true God to turn to idols was an affront to God and his purpose. To bow before any idol denies what it means to be human at the most fundamental level and dishonors the true God who created people with such love.

Today, we’re going to continue thinking through the gravity of idol worship. To bring offerings to a false god rejects the goodness and faithfulness of the true One. We’re going back to the Old Testament to hear from the prophet Jeremiah.

## Read

**Jeremiah 2:1–2; 5–7; 10–13**

*2 The word of the Lord came to me: 2 “Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem:*

*“This is what the Lord says:*

*“ I remember the devotion of your youth,  
how as a bride you loved me  
and followed me through the wilderness,  
through a land not sown.*

*...*

*5 This is what the Lord says:*

*“What fault did your ancestors find in me,  
that they strayed so far from me?  
They followed worthless idols  
and became worthless themselves.*

*6 They did not ask, ‘Where is the Lord,  
who brought us up out of Egypt  
and led us through the barren wilderness,  
through a land of deserts and ravines,  
a land of drought and utter darkness,  
a land where no one travels and no one lives?’*

*7 I brought you into a fertile land  
to eat its fruit and rich produce.  
But you came and defiled my land  
and made my inheritance detestable.*

*...*

*10 Cross over to the coasts of Cyprus and look,  
send to Kedar and observe closely;  
see if there has ever been anything like this:*

*11 Has a nation ever changed its gods?  
(Yet they are not gods at all.)  
But my people have exchanged their glorious God  
for worthless idols.*

*12 Be appalled at this, you heavens,  
and shudder with great horror,”  
declares the Lord.*

*13 “My people have committed two sins:  
They have forsaken me,*

*the spring of living water,  
and have dug their own cisterns,  
broken cisterns that cannot hold water.*

### Jeremiah 3:8–10 (NIV)

*<sup>8</sup>I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her adulteries. Yet I saw that her unfaithful sister Judah had no fear; she also went out and committed adultery. <sup>9</sup>Because Israel's immorality mattered so little to her, she defiled the land and committed adultery with stone and wood. <sup>10</sup>In spite of all this, her unfaithful sister Judah did not return to me with all her heart, but only in pretense," declares the Lord.*

### Ask Yourself

- What acts of faithfulness to Israel did God (through Jeremiah) list?
- What point is God making in Jeremiah 2:13? Why would seeking favor from a worthless idol be insulting to God?
- What metaphor does Jeremiah 2:1 and 3:8–10 use to describe the relationship between God and Israel? How does that help you understand the sin of idolatry?

### Reflect

Jeremiah spent his forty-years of ministry preaching to stubborn, stony, idolatrous hearts. Despite all God had done to create, redeem, establish, protect, and provide for his people, and even with all the warnings he has sent through the prophets, his people had abandoned him and sought protection and prosperity from the false “gods.” Jeremiah communicated God’s anguish and anger over the people’s unfaithfulness.

Notice how Yahweh characterizes the relationship he has with his people using marriage as a metaphor. The relationship between committed spouses is one of intimate devotion. Marriage is meant to be unbreakable, life-long covenant. If you talk to a husband or wife who has been abandoned or cheated on, they will describe the devastating pain of rejection, betrayal, and broken trust.

You can sense God’s pain and anger in Jeremiah’s prophesy. How could the Israelites have forgotten the blessings of Yahweh’s steadfast and loyal love (Jeremiah 2:7)? How could they leave him for worthless idols — broken cisterns that hold no water (Jeremiah 2:13)? Even those from the surrounding nations who worship false gods stay loyal to them (Jeremiah 2:11).

Yet Israel, who experienced the power and protection of the true God turned from him. They abandoned their bridegroom, and now he would give them what they thought they wanted — a divorce. The ten northern tribes that made up the original nation of Israel had been scattered in exile. Now Judah, the remnant of nation was in danger of the same fate because of her lack of true devotion. The people’s hearts were still captive to idols.

Pagan worshippers served their gods by sacrificing to their idols in hopes of receiving his or her blessings. Yet, it was well known that the gods were fickle and there was no guarantee that they would grant a request. They were notoriously untrustworthy. Yahweh has proven himself faithful. His loyal love to humanity motivated the greatest act of love ever known — Jesus’ incarnation, death, and resurrection. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6).

In his conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well, Jesus offers her living water. He tells her, “whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (John 4:14).

Idols are broken cisterns that hold no water. They demand much, but what they offer will never satisfy our thirst. We sacrifice our time, talents, and treasure for dust. So, why do we turn to them? Why do we betray the God who gives us life and pursue worthless idols?

Over the next few weeks, let’s commit to asking ourselves the hard questions about the idols we worship. And to clean our dusty mouths and satisfy our thirst, let’s drink deeply from the living water our loving Savior offers.

## **Pray**

Worship your Savior in prayer right now. Remember how much he loves you and what he has done for you. Find a way to express your devotion to him. Write a prayer of gratitude. Turn on some praise music and sing to your God. Take a walk outside and praise God for the glory of his creation. He is worthy of all our praise and devotion.

Then ask the Spirit how you can show your devotion. Who can you tell about the amazing things God has done for you? Could you demonstrate your love for God by giving your time or money to someone in need? Pray over some ideas that come to mind.

## **Talk about it**

- Based on what we’ve studied yesterday and today, discuss our guiding question for the week, “why is idolatry such a grievous sin?”
- When you are committed to someone, you make their priorities yours. Discuss some tangible ways we can demonstrate our love for God by prioritizing what he does.

# **Day 4**

*Lisa Scheffler, author*

So far this week, we have considered the grievous sin of idolatry. We’ve discovered that idolatry dehumanizes us and dishonors God. It is a betrayal of our exclusive love relationship with Yahweh as our Creator and Lord. And to put it plainly, it’s stupid. What else would you call returning to a dry well over and over in hopes of filling our buckets with living water?

Now that we've established just how wrong idolatry is, let's focus on the idol that just might be at the root of all the others — pride. The very first sin committed in the Garden of Eden was a rejection of God's way, because our forebearers were convinced they knew better. When the serpent tempted Eve with the idea that she could be like God and define good and evil for herself, her pride got the better of her. She allowed the serpent to convince her that God was holding out on her. Her pride was fueled by fear.

The Bible shows us that humanity has tried to exalt itself over God ever since. We don't trust God to provide, so we turn to other "gods." One of the most dramatic illustrations of this dynamic is Genesis 11, the story of the Tower of Babel.

## Read

### Genesis 11:1–9 (NIV)

***11** Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. **2** As people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.*

***3** They said to each other, "Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. **4** Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth."*

***5** But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. **6** The Lord said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. **7** Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other." **8** So the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. **9** That is why it was called Babel —because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world. From there the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth.*

## Ask Yourself

- What reason did the people give for building the tower? What were they hoping to accomplish?
- How do you see people trying to "make a name" for themselves today?

## Reflect

What was the great sin committed at the plain of Shinar? Why was God so concerned about the potential success of humanity in this endeavor that he decided it would be better for them if they were scattered?

In the ancient world, gods were perceived to live on mountains. According to the ancient concept of universe, the mountain functioned as a pillar holding up the sky. “With its base planted in the earth and its peak reaching the sky, the structure was the meeting point of heaven and earth. Because of this, people viewed the mountain as the place of divine residence and activity.”<sup>4</sup>

According to Old Testament scholar Michael Heiser, “The tower of Babel is regarded by all scholars as one of Mesopotamia’s famous man-made sacred mountains—a ziggurat. Ziggurats were divine abodes, places where Mesopotamians believed heaven and earth intersected. The nature of this structure makes evident the purpose in building it—to bring the divine down to earth.”<sup>5</sup>

Scholar Jonny Cisneros notes three sins committed on the plains of Shinar:

- Disobedience. The people defied God’s command to fill the earth (Gen 1:28; 9:1, 7) by settling together in Shinar (Gen 11:2).
- Discontentment. The people—dissatisfied with their creatureliness—built a tower-temple to ascend it and become “like the gods” (Gen 11:4).
- Pride. The people decided to make much of themselves (Gen 11:4) instead of the Creator.<sup>6</sup>

The sin of the people does not lie in the desire to build a city, which is a neutral, amoral act. It is the motivation behind this undertaking that is most prominent: “Come, let us build *ourselves* a city, and a tower with *its top in the heavens*, and *let us make a name for ourselves*” (Gen. 11:4 nrsv).<sup>7</sup> This is way many of the pagan religions defined immortality.

Like Adam and Eve before them, the building of a tower shows humanity’s desire to take on the role of the divine. They did not trust God’s goodness, love, or provision, and took it upon themselves to bring heaven to earth.

It is a tragic irony that people already created in the image of God work so hard to try and be “like him,” but humans want to be the ones in control. In our pride, we think we can do a better job than God. This is the great sin of Babel — people trying to make their own way to heaven, craving immortality on their own terms, and inviting notoriety and acclaim for themselves. Human beings making an idol of themselves. We break the first commandment by making ourselves the other “god” we put before Him.

## Pray

Pray about the pride and rebellion that exists in your own heart. Deep down, are there areas of your life that you struggle to put under the Spirit’s control? Are you afraid God is holding out

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<sup>4</sup> Johnny Cisneros, “[Babel, Tower of.](#)” ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

<sup>5</sup> Heiser, 114.

<sup>6</sup> Cisneros.

<sup>7</sup> Victor P. Hamilton, [Handbook on the Pentateuch](#), 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 75.

on you? Or that you know better than God? Whose approval matters more to you — that of other people or God's? Pray over your answers. Ask the Spirit for humility and greater faith.

## Talk about it

- Discuss the idea that pride could be the idol that bears all the others. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
- Discuss our culture's "Ziggurats". How do we try to build towers that reach the heaven and make names for ourselves?
- What are some ways we can cultivate faith and humility in our own lives?

# Day 5

On Day 5 of the Engage God Daily, we spend some time digesting what we've learned and inviting the Spirit to transform us. Today we're going to look to the prophet Ezekiel for our next steps as we seek to turn from idols and worship God alone.

## Read

### Ezekiel 14:4-6

*"This is what the Sovereign Lord says: When any of the Israelites set up idols in their hearts and put a wicked stumbling block before their faces and then go to a prophet, I the Lord will answer them myself in keeping with their great idolatry. <sup>5</sup>I will do this to recapture the hearts of the people of Israel, who have all deserted me for their idols." <sup>6</sup>"Therefore say to the people of Israel, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Repent! Turn from your idols and renounce all your detestable practices!*

### Ezekiel 36:25-27

*<sup>25</sup>I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. <sup>26</sup>I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup>And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.*

## Ask Yourself

- What does the Lord tell us through Ezekiel that we must do when it comes to idols? (14:6)

- Why can't we turn from idols on our own? What is God's part in our repentance? How does God cleanse us of our idolatry?
- How does the promise in Ezekiel give us hope even as we struggle with guilt over our idolatry?
- Review this week's big question — why is idolatry a grievous sin? What part does pride play in idolatry?

## Reflect

Praise God that he has given us a new heart through Jesus Christ! We have been redeemed and set free from idolatry.

Throughout out series we are going to take three steps each week:

1. **Recognize.** Under the Spirit's guidance, we're going to identify the idols of our hearts and recognize how God meets the need we're trying to satisfy with an idol.
2. **Repent.** We're going to turn from that idol — release it and repent of it. In the words of Deuteronomy 12:3, we're going to smash our idols!
3. **Revere.** We're going to turn to God. We're going to worship God with our whole hearts and ask the Spirit to grow our faith. We're going to gratefully receive the abundance that God offers us in Christ.

How would you apply those steps to the idolatry of pride? Pray, then record your thoughts, talk them over with someone else, and then after hearing the sermon, prayerfully plan how to smash your idol.

## Pray

*Father,*

*In Christ, you have given me a new heart and put your Spirit in me. I am so grateful. Show me how I am being deceived by the idols of my generation. Reveal to me anything I am putting before you. I come to you first with all my needs and wants, asking you to shape them and then meet them according to your will. I trust you, God. Thank you for your great love for me.*

*In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.*

## Talk about it

- Discuss with a trusted friend or family member your biggest takeaway from this week. Ask for them to pray for you and help hold you accountable as you commit to smashing idols in your life.

## Coming next week

Most of us are going to need a big hammer to smash next week's idol — materialism and money. Lucky for us, the Holy Spirit is ready to knock that one down for our good and his glory!