

Opening—

Begin in your process groups with a time of prayer for one another. (15min)

Next answer the following question as a large group:

What things have you put your hopes in to make your life complete? Or, put another way, fill in the blank of this sentence: Once I have _____ (fill in the blank) then my life will be fulfilled.

This week we begin the discussion about idols and how they influence our sense of identity. This week's teaching has three segments. When prompted, pause the video and answer the question in your process groups before continuing into the next segment of video.

Video Teaching—**1. Play part 1, then respond to the first question:**

How can you see this relationship between idols and identity in the culture in which we live?

2. Play part 2, then respond to the following prompt:

What do you tend to worship instead of God? What idols are you prone to follow? Take time in your process groups to answer these questions personally and specifically.

3. Play part 3 and respond to the following exercise:

Considering the idols you are prone to worship, think of the desire or need you are trying to get filled from that idol. What are those desires and needs?

How does the Gospel correct and fulfill those needs we seek to have met by idols?

Closing Discussion—

Moving from your process groups back into your full group, answer the following questions:

1. Considering the last questions you answered in your process groups, how are the Gospel and the promises Jesus makes to us better than idols and the promises they offer us?

2. Why are we prone to seek fulfillment from idols rather than Jesus?

3. What is one way this week you can move towards Jesus to meet your needs rather than your idols? Share a specific example with your group.

Timothy Keller Quote—

What is 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. A counterfeit god is anything so central and essential to your life that, should you lose it, your life would feel hardly worth living. An idol has such a controlling position in your heart that you can spend most of your passion and energy, your emotional and financial resources, on it without a second thought. It can be family and children, career and making money, or achievement and critical acclaim, or saving “face” and social standing. It can be a romantic relationship, peer approval, competence and skill, secure and comfortable circumstances, your beauty or your brains, a great political or social cause, your morality and virtue, or even success in the Christian ministry. When your meaning in life is to fix someone else's life, we may call it “co-dependency” but it is really idolatry. An idol is whatever you look at and say, in your heart of hearts, “If I have that, then I’ll feel my life has meaning, then I’ll know I have value, then I’ll feel significant and secure.” There are many ways to describe that kind of relationship to something, but perhaps the best one is worship... If anything becomes more fundamental than God to your happiness, meaning in life, and identity, then it is an idol. — Timothy Keller

Personal Reflection Questions—

1. As you have been mindful of idols this week, what idols have you noticed our culture is especially susceptible to follow?
2. As you are becoming more aware of the idols in your own heart, what makes you choose to follow them in certain situations rather than Jesus?

Group Preparation Questions—

1. If you simply ignored the idols in your life—didn’t think about them, didn’t address them— what do you think the results would be?
2. How would your life look different tomorrow if you removed the idols you currently have in your life?