

Biblical Counseling

Identifying Personal 'Idols'

“Guard your heart with all diligence, for out of it flows the issues of life”

Prov. 4:23

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

Psa. 139:23-24

“You don’t have to go to heathen lands today to find false gods. America is full of them. Whatever you love more than God is your idol” **-D.L. Moody**

Ask yourself these questions to help identify your idols:

- What do I want, desire, seek, or wish for?

- What do I want to preserve at all costs?

- What am I willing to sin for to get?

- What am I willing to sin for in order to keep from losing?

- What were my intentions designed to accomplish?

- How am I punishing or judging others when my desires are not fulfilled?

- What do I fear or what am I worrying about?

- What desires result in frustration, anxiety, resentment, bitterness, anger or depression when they are not fulfilled

Circle which “idols” are current or potential temptations:

- A. **Performance** – especially **for significant others** – you try to please to get or to keep acceptance or approval. Example: for parents or spouse. When you please man rather than God, this is idolatry. If that is the case, then you are worshipping that person more than God. Fearful of what others think rather than obeying God – this is a problem.
- B. **Performance for Self** (Perfectionism) – trying to perform up to our own standards that we have set. Can become a Pharisee. When I meet the standard, I feel good; when I don't I feel bad. Making a personal list for myself to follow that is higher than what God says.
- C. **Performance of Others** – I make a list of what others should do. Example: For my spouse to be a good husband / wife he / she *must* do... (1,2,3, etc.). If he/she doesn't do these things, I become judgmental and unloving.
- D. **Good Health** – My goal shouldn't be this, but to glorify God. It's OK to pray for healing but don't let getting healed become an idol. God may want you to be sick in order to glorify Himself (see John 9).
- E. **Love of Money** – I take a promotion just to get more money
- F. **Success** – What's a good day to you? Answering this question helps to reveal idols of the heart. What made it a good day in your mind? Usually it's "I got a lot accomplished / done." Or "I pleased significant others." Or "I got my way... Others did for me what I want them to do." Etc.
- G. **Fairness** - Life has to be fair! (Psalm 73) "I've been trying to please God; these others aren't even trying and they prosper." This can cause you to almost forsake the faith (Ps. 73:2).
- H. **Hurt-Free / Pain-Free Life** – I don't want to deal with problems. There shouldn't be any difficulties. I shouldn't have to go through anything unsettling... because I want peace.
- I. **Christian Marriage and Home** – I'll be successful if my children turn out right. That can become an idol. Or I want people to look at our marriage and think we have the best marriage in the world. I cannot serve God and have joy until my spouse changes _____
- J. **Physical Appearance**
- K. **Being respected / Admired**
- L. **Being self-sufficient / Independent**
- M. **A Material Thing – car, house, jewelry, etc.**
- N. **Athletic Abilities / Achievements**
- O. **Hobbies ~ sports, reading, whatever**
- P. **An Ideal ("Pro-life movement, "Peace Movement," political party, etc.)**
- Q. **Being Treated Fairly**
- R. **Success / Position / Power**
- S. **Worldly Pleasures (drugs, alcohol, food, sex, etc)**
- T. **Being in Control**
- U. **Meeting Goals / Achievements**
- V. **A Child or Children**
- W. **Getting Married**
- X. **Having Your 'Needs' Met**
- Y. **Other:** _____
- Z. **Other:** _____

20 Piercing Statements to Probe my Idols

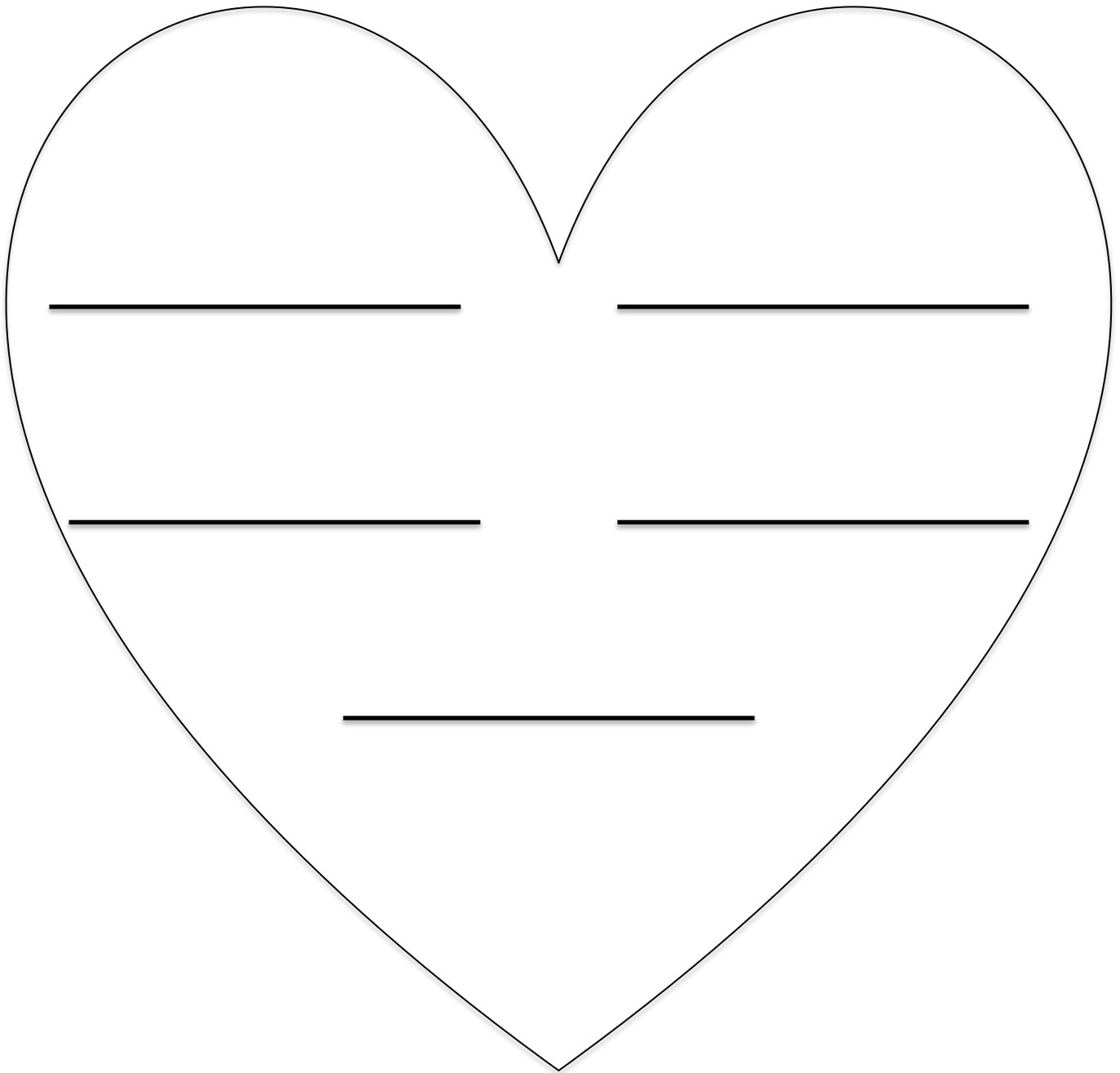
from Tim Keller

“Life only has meaning/I only have worth if...

1. I have power and influence over others.” (Power Idolatry)
2. I am loved and respected by _____.” (Approval Idolatry)
3. I have this kind of pleasure experience, a particular quality of life.” (Comfort idolatry)
4. I am able to get mastery over my life in the area of _____.” (Control idolatry)
5. people are dependent on me and need me.” (Helping Idolatry) 6. someone is there to protect me and keep me safe.” (Dependence idolatry)
7. I am completely free from obligations or responsibilities to take care of someone.” (Independence idolatry)
8. I am highly productive and getting a lot done.” (Work idolatry)
9. I am being recognized for my accomplishments, and I am excelling in my work.” (Achievement idolatry)
10. I have a certain level of wealth, financial freedom, and very nice possessions.” (Materialism idolatry)
11. I am adhering to my religion’s moral codes and accomplished in its activities.” (Religion idolatry)
12. this one person is in my life and happy to be there, and/or happy with me.” (Individual person idolatry)
13. I feel I am totally independent of organized religion and am living by a self-made morality.” (Irreligion idolatry) 14. my race and culture is ascendant and recognized as superior.” (Racial/cultural idolatry)
15. a particular social grouping or professional grouping or other group lets me in.” (Inner ring idolatry)
16. my children and/or my parents are happy and happy with me.” (Family idolatry)
17. Mr. or Ms. “Right” is in love with me.” (Relationship Idolatry)
18. I am hurting, in a problem; only then do I feel worthy of love or able to deal with guilt.” (Suffering idolatry)
19. my political or social cause is making progress and ascending in influence or power.” (Ideology idolatry)
20. I have a particular kind of look or body image.” (Image idolatry)

Common gods...	The gospel response...
<p>Practical/Functional Idols...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Power idol -Approval idol -Comfort idol -Control idol -Helping idol -Dependence idol -Independence idol -Work idol -Achievement idol -Materialism idol -Religion idol -Individual person idol -Irreligion idol -Racial / cultural idol -Inner ring idol -Family idol -Relationship idol -Suffering idol -Ideology idol -Image idol -Others... 	<p>"in Christ" I am...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Not condemned -Adopted as God's child -Justified -Received & celebrated over by God -Filled in him -A temple of the Holy Spirit -Sealed & given the Spirit as a guarantee -In God's kingdom now -Redeemed -Forgiven -Reconciled to God -A branch in the Vine -No longer a enmity with God -Dead to sin, but alive to God -Called according to his purpose -At peace with God -Assured God is for me -Chosen -Sent by Jesus as the Father sent him -A Spirit-empowered witness -A member of Christ's body with purpose -God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus -Confident of sure hope of resurrections -Others....

What are the top 5 Potential Idols to you?

A large heart shape with a thin black outline. Inside the heart, there are five horizontal lines for writing. Two lines are on the left side, two are on the right side, and one is centered at the bottom. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across most of the width of the heart.

***“Those who cling to worthless idols
forfeit the grace that could be theirs.”
Jonah 2:8***