

## Hidden Idols of the heart

There are *Source* and *Surface* idols. As you are dealing with these idols it is always important to remember to help yourself or others find truth in the promises or attributes of God. Once you have done that, then you will need to guide them to how the Gospel of Christ fulfills those promises or attributes.<sup>3</sup> Below is a list of questions that can help you understand what are some of those idols. We will encourage you to use these with each other during your time or when you thinking through your issues on your own:

- What do you worry about most?
- What, if you failed or lost it, how would that make you feel?
- What do you use to comfort myself when things go bad or get difficult?
- What do you do to feel better?
- What preoccupies you? What do you daydream about?
- What makes me feel the most self-worth? What are you the most proud of? For what do you want to be known?
- What do you lead with in conversations?
- Early on what do you want to make sure that people know about me?
- What unanswered prayer makes you really question your faith or trust in Christ?
- What do you really want out of life? What would really make you happy?
- What is your hope for the future?

### DEFINITIONS

#### **Surface Idols**

*Surface idols would be defined as those things that are easier to spot because they are closer to the surface. They are simply off shoots from less observable sins. People quickly think they are the cause of their problems with God and people. These might include:*

- *Image* – I have meaning by the way I look
- *Helping* – I have meaning by need of me
- *Dependence* – I have meaning if there is someone to keep me safe
- *Independence* – I have meaning if I am free from obligations and responsibilities
- *Work* – I have meaning by my ability to get things done
- *Materialism* – I have meaning by a certain level of wealth, financial freedom, and nice possessions
- *Religion* – I have meaning if I am keeping my religions moral codes
- *Irreligion* – I have meaning if I am free of organized religion and self-made morality
- *Inner Ring* – I have meaning if I am apart of a exclusive or particular group
- *Family* – I have meaning only if my parents and/or my children are happy with me
- *Relationship* – I have meaning a certain person is in love with me
- *Suffering* – I have meaning if when I am hurting or in a problem, and I feel noble or worthy of love
- *Ideology* – I have meaning if my views or parties views have influence or power

<sup>1</sup> All Material was originally taken from Richard Keyes.

<sup>2</sup> This concept is taken from Martin Luther.

### Source Idols

Source idols are more subversive by nature—they are MUCH HARDER to spot. Source idols will take time for you to see and learn about each other (they could potentially take years). They drive all other idols. There are four source idols: (1) Comfort, (2) Approval, (3) Control, and (4) Power.

In order to understand these concepts better we will put a same surface idol through this system and see how it can manifest in different ways. The surface idol will be materialism, particularly in a manifestation of money.

**Comfort Idolatry** – I will have meaning if I have a certain amount of money in the bank.

**Approval Idolatry** – I know others will respect and appreciate me if I have a good amount of money to spend on them or myself.

**Control Idolatry** – I won't have as many problems if I always have enough money to deal with them.

**Power Idolatry** – I know having more money will allow to have more influence.

### SOURCE IDOL CHART

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If you seek...	Price you are willing to pay...	Your greatest nightmare...	People around you often feel...	Your common problem emotion...
<b>Power (success, influence, winning)</b>	Being burdened; sole responsibility	Humiliation	Used	Anger/Frustration
<b>Approval (affirmation, love, relationships)</b>	Less independence	Rejection	Smothered	Cowardice/Fear
<b>Comfort (privacy, lack of stress, freedom)</b>	Reduced productivity	Stress, Demands	Neglected	Boredom/Laziness
<b>Control (self-discipline, certainty, standards)</b>	Loneliness, spontaneity	Uncertainty	Condemned	Worry/Anxiety

Below are some fantastic questions by Tim Keller to help us discover the what idols are leading our life.

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

I have power and influence over others.” (Power Idolatry)

I am loved and respected by \_\_\_\_.” (Approval Idolatry)

I have this kind of pleasure experience, a particular quality of life.” (Comfort idolatry)

I am able to get mastery over my life in the area of \_\_\_\_.” (Control idolatry)

people are dependent on me and need me.” (Helping Idolatry)

someone is there to protect me and keep me safe.” (Dependence idolatry)

I am completely free from obligations or responsibilities to take care of someone.” (Independence idolatry)

I am highly productive and getting a lot done.” (Work idolatry)

I am being recognized for my accomplishments, and I am excelling in my work.” (Achievement idolatry)

I have a certain level of wealth, financial freedom, and very nice possessions.” (Materialism idolatry)

I am adhering to my religion’s moral codes and accomplished in its activities.” (Religion idolatry)

This one person is in my life and happy to be there, and/or happy with me.” (Individual person idolatry)

I feel I am totally independent of organized religion and am living by a self-made morality.” (Irreligion idolatry)

My race and culture is ascendant and recognized as superior.” (Racial/cultural idolatry)

A particular social grouping or professional grouping or other group lets me in.” (Inner ring idolatry)

My children and/or my parents are happy and happy with me.” (Family idolatry)

Mr. or Ms. “Right” is in love with me.” (Relationship Idolatry)

I am hurting, in a problem; only then do I feel worthy of love or able to deal with guilt.” (Suffering idolatry)

my political or social cause is making progress and ascending in influence or power.” (Ideology idolatry)

I have a particular kind of look or body image.” (Image idolatry)