

When Do Blessings Become Idols?

(Key passage - Matthew 10:37-39)

What is a blessing?

- Merriam-Webster Dictionary says that a blessing is, “a thing conducive to happiness or welfare.”
- **The Old Testament** Hebrew word for blessing is “berakah” (pronounced “ber-aw-kaw”) which means blessing, or gift.
- **The New Testament** Greek word for blessing is “charis” (pronounced “khar’-ece”) which is translated “grace,” “favor,” or “gift of grace.”
- So, a blessing basically is a gift of favor, or grace, that is not necessarily earned or deserved.

What is an idol?

- The New Testament Greek for idol is “eidolon” (pronounced “i’-do-lon”) - ‘to worship a false god.’
- Anything that we place before God to worship, satisfy, and fill us as only He can, is an idol.

Step 1:

We all have blessings from God, most that we have not earned nor deserve. The first exercise in this lesson is to take a piece of paper and list what you think are your major blessings. You may check off some that are listed below:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> My life | <input type="checkbox"/> Money | <input type="checkbox"/> Good health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My spouse | <input type="checkbox"/> Material possessions
(home, car, clothing, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Good looks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My child / children | <input type="checkbox"/> My talents and/or abilities
(please be specific if you will) | <input type="checkbox"/> Intelligence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Close friend(s) | | <input type="checkbox"/> A good reputation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social group | | <input type="checkbox"/> Fame / popularity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My job | | <input type="checkbox"/> Power and influence |

Step 2:

Next, think of what or who satisfies the following longings in your soul that need to be filled:

- 1) **Love** (love that never fails; unconditional and eternal) - 1 John 4:7-10
- 2) **Joy** (not the same as pleasure or happiness that depends on circumstances) - James 1:2-5
- 3) **Peace** (tranquility of the soul, even in the midst of the storm) - Philippians 4:6-7
- 4) **Hope** (knowing the good that is to come) - Romans 5:1-6;
- 5) **Meaning** (a clear reason for all that exists) - Genesis 1:26-28; Romans 11:36
- 6) **Purpose** (a clear reason for each individual life) - Ephesians 2:10
- 7) **Value** (our worth that goes beyond what we own, what we do, what we know, or what others may think) - Psalm 139:13-16

Question: What or Who is the only One who can fill these seven basic needs?

Step 3:

Now, go back to **step 1** and, one at a time, strike through each blessing as if you were to lose it. Then, determine what item or items in **step 2** have been lost or compromised.

In other words, identify which of your blessings, if any, you are depending on to fill the areas of your soul that only God can fill! Idols are never lasting substitutes for God. They will **always** fail!

Step 4:

- Confess and repent of the blessings from God that have become idols. It will take the pressure off of you AND those you have placed above God to meet the need only God can meet.
- You will then be able to love others and enjoy the blessings, **without** placing the burden on them to provide that which only God can and does provide.

(John 8:36) “So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed”