

Idol Worship

✖ When we spent three weeks in India in 1980, we agreed with our pastor and his wife that we would not visit any of the Hindu temples. We did not want to expose ourselves to the spirits that dwelled in these temples. We knew that even though man had made the idols in these temples, demonic spirits were all around them.

While we were in Madras, a man came up to us and asked us if we wanted to see a museum that had bronzes that dated back to the eleventh century. We agreed to follow him, and later wished we had not. As we entered the museum we felt the heaviness of demonic spirits and soon realized that all the bronzes were idols the Hindus worshipped. Some were so grotesque in appearance we wondered how anyone could worship such an image. Our pastor quickly made a beeline for the door and said, "We've seen your gods, but personally I prefer Jehovah God."

Psalm 115 tells us all about idols. Idols have mouths, but they cannot speak; eyes, but they cannot see; ears, but they cannot hear; noses, but they cannot smell; hands, but they cannot handle; feet, but they cannot walk. This psalm goes on to say, "Those that make them are like to them; so is everyone who trusts in them" (v. 8).

I found myself thanking God that I was not an idol worshipper. Then I realized that idols are just images in people's minds. God created us with a divine imagination to worship Him and Him only. However, we often crowd Him out with the other images in our minds. A good definition of an idol is anything you think about more than you think about God. With this definition, we have to be honest with ourselves and realize we do have idols in our lives. As the psalm says, we can become just like those idols-paralyzed in our effectiveness to share the gospel with others by speaking His word. When we have

idols in our lives, we are unable to see others as God sees them; we are unable to hear others with understanding ears; we are unable to smell the sweet aroma of His presence; we are unable to touch others with His embrace; and we are unable to walk in His ways.

Whatever I put before God, no matter how good it may be, can become an idol in my life. God desires our first fruits, and He wants us to worship Him in spirit and truth. The highest form of worship is to do His will. We are hindered in doing His will if we allow other people and things to be first in our lives. Jesus said, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matt. 6:33). Just prior to this admonition Jesus tells us to take no thought about what we are going to wear or eat, or even about what tomorrow will bring. When we concern ourselves with these things and allow our minds to be absorbed in thinking about such things, we become ineffective in His kingdom.