

# CHAPTER 1

## NO OTHER GODS, PART 1



Biblical Lessons for Students, Athletes & More

Individual or Group Experience

### FOCAL VERSE

"You shall have no other gods before me." Exodus 20:3 (NIV)

### WISE WORDS

"The more time and devotion one spends in the worship of false gods, the less he is able to spend in that of the True One."

Isaac Newton

### Introduction

In session one we will discover that idols are not a thing of the past. They are alive and we live in the midst of them. Idols aren't easily detectible. That's why they're so dangerous! Author, Rory Noland, puts it this way: *"It's not always easy to spot idolatry in ourselves. Until the Holy Spirit brings it to light, we may be unaware how tight a grip something has on us. For that reason, we should pay close attention to anything we're convinced we can't live without."*

- **What is something in your life that you cannot imagine living without?**

### Page 1

- **According to Dictionary.com, what does "ball is life" refer to?** *The all-consuming passion basketball players and fans have for the game; it represents someone who loves and lives for the game, plays as much as they can, thinks about it when they can't play, and finds meaning in their lives through basketball, (or...name your passion).*

### Page 2

- **Pause at the top of page 2. What do you think John Calvin meant by, "The human heart is an idol factory"?**
- **According to John Piper, where does idolatry start?** *Idolatry starts in the heart; craving, wanting, enjoying, being satisfied by anything you treasure more than God.*
- **Given Piper's definition, is it possible to idolize "good" things such as basketball, grades, relationships, and careers? Explain.**
- **What is the difference between "conviction" and "condemnation?"** *Conviction comes from the Holy Spirit and it's a good thing. The Holy Spirit convicts us when we're headed down the wrong path, leading us to confession and repentance. Condemnation is a tool Satan uses. By definition, condemnation is an expression of disapproval. Satan wants us*

*But first...*

**Open in Prayer. If you're facilitating a group, give the group members an opportunity to introduce themselves.**

- Optional: Provide a get-to-know-you exercise of your choice.
- Group question: What do you hope to get out of this study?

**Before diving into today's session, ask group members to describe what they think an idol is.**

**Idol:** An object of extreme devotion; a representation or symbol of an object of worship; *broadly:* a false god. (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

*I don't think I have any idols. Or do I?*



to "feel" that disapproval by heaping shame and guilt on us; he wants us to play mistakes over and over again in our minds. But God's finished work on the cross has set us free from condemnation.

### Page 3

- **According to Exodus 20:3-4, what are the first two commandments given to God's people?** "You shall have no other gods before me," and "You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below."
- **Exodus 34:14 refers to God as a jealous God.** Reemphasize that He is jealous FOR you; jealous for your time and attention, above everything else.

### Page 4

Before "Chalk Talk," ask: **Is it possible that there is someone or something in your life, (like basketball or a relationship), that has inadvertently become an idol or false god? If so, would you be considering sharing? Leader, please consider sharing thoughts about potential idols in your own life.**

#### Chalk Talk

We tend to identify ourselves with what we do or what we're good at. For example: "I am a straight-A student." "I am an athlete." "I am a teacher." "I am a mom."

- **What if that identity (or passion) was taken away? Who would you say you are then?**
- **Would you be enough without it?**

### Page 6

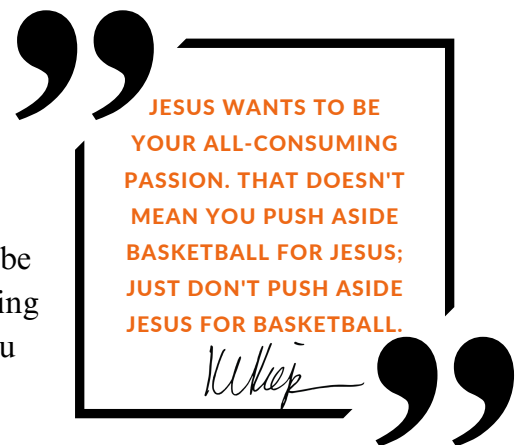
**Personal Training Session** (Leader, guide your group through the following questions).

- After reading today's lesson, do you have any reason to believe you may have constructed some idols or false gods in your life?
- Conviction can make us feel very uncomfortable, but why is it a *good* thing?
- Condemnation is a tool Satan uses to mess with our heads. It's one of his most powerful tools and can do massive damage. Be careful! We have access to that same tool. Read Romans 2:1. Why is it wrong to judge others?

#### A Look Ahead

In the days ahead, see if you can differentiate between feelings of "conviction" and "condemnation." Don't let Satan trap you in a prison of condemnation.

In chapter two, we will attempt to uncover some areas where we might be tempted to build false gods within the framework of our lives. Be thinking about areas in your own life where you may be "wasting time" when you could spend that time with the Savior.



#### Post-Game Prayer

Use the prayer on page 7 to close the class, asking God to reveal areas of idolatry in the hearts of each person and for a renewed passion to serve the One and only True God.