1Thess 9

Turn from idols and false gods.

We are back in 1Thessalonians chapter one and we will pick it back up where we left off in verse six.

We are going to take a hard look at idolatry which will probably take a few hours to cover.

This will be at least a two-part series.

1Thes 1:6 You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word during great affliction with the joy of the Holy Spirit,

[1Th 1:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1th/1/7/s_1112007) so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.

[1Th 1:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1th/1/8/s_1112008) For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place *the news of* your faith toward God has gone out, so that we have no need to say anything.

These Bels at Thessalonica had used not just words but actions…lifestyle changes and choices to witness to everyone how TLJC had changed them and saved them for all of eternity.

At some point in your Christian walk there needs to be evidence of what you claim to believe.

There is no stronger witness then your lifestyle.

/[1Th 1:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1th/1/9/s_1112009) For they themselves report about us as to the kind of reception we had with you, and **how you turned to God from idols** to serve a living and true God,\

[1Th 1:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1th/1/10/s_1112010) and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *that is,* Jesus who rescues us from the wrath to come.

The fact that the Greek population was completely enthralled by two avenues that corrupt the mind away from BD.

Yet these Bels with only 4 or 5 weeks of teaching under the Apostle Paul and some back up lessons from Timothy, had turned from those two avenues becoming an incredible witness.

/The Greek population were deeply entrenched in philosophy and the worship of false gods (fallen angels / Nephilim). This was ingrained at a very young age and developed throughout their adult life as well. The fact that these Bels publicly and privately turned from these two Greek pillars of society was incredible. It was enough to send ripples across the land!\

Go into the OT – Exodus chapter twenty RF.

The depth of idol worship in the ancient Greek culture is just as deep and powerful as it was with the Egyptian culture and the Babylonians or the Assyrians as well.

God knew from the creation of mankind that the draw for false gods and idols would be a huge stumbling block for all mankind. Therefore, He listed that high on His original commands when the nation of Israel was formed.

/Idolatry is forbidden by the Word of God, anything that is elevated within your life can become an idol. If it takes on a quality that is god-like; in that you worship it, you strongly desire it, chase after it or it keeps you occupied in thought and action is an idol. Anything that is placed above God in your life is an idol. Anything that can easily distract you on any given day can become an idol.\

Even before the Ten Commandments right from the original Garden - God showed mankind that anything placed above HIM would bring us misery.

/Gen 3:6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that **it was a delight** (*ta'ăvâ*)**to the eyes,** and that **the tree was desirable** to make *one* wise, she took some of its fruit and ate; and she also gave *some* to her husband with her, and he ate.

This means a lust or strong desire, it can also mean greed.\

TA-HA-VAH, points to a lust pattern, it can mean a strong or overwhelming desire. Covetousness, a longing for something.

You see the idol comes from a place deep within your thought process long before it is manifest in a person or an object.

The Hebrew word desirable means almost the same thing. It is - *ḥāmaḏ,* (HA-MAD) means to covet something because it is beautiful, something you acquire a lust for.

The original woman began to have a lust pattern toward the one thing GOD warned her to stay away from and then Adam fell for the same lust pattern.

/The first couple in the garden idolized the idea of becoming like God in some form or fashion. Satan had breathed life into the free will of the original man and woman, he sparked the interest of elevating self over God just as he desires. Independence from God is a form of worshipping the idea of being your own little god.\

Exodus 20:1 Then God spoke all these words, saying,

[Exo 20:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/exo/20/2/s_70002) “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

/[Exo 20:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/exo/20/3/s_70003) “**You shall have no other gods before Me** (Deu 5:7). 4 **“You shall not make for yourself an idol,** or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth.\

The commands are very clear and repetitive throughout the Bibe related to idol worship.

Idols are something we allow – something we create with our own free will.

The second commandment prohibited not only idolatry regarding false gods which is overlapping with the first commandment, it also forbids with making an image of any created thing that we might worship

This speaks to the importance of warning against idol worship.

/[Exo 20:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/exo/20/5/s_70005) “**You shall not worship them nor serve them**; for I, the LORD your God, am **a jealous God**, inflicting the punishment of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations **of those who hate Me,**

Idols can be worshipped mentally and physically and served, which speaks to time, talent and treasure.\

God does not condemn children or grandchildren for the mistakes of the fathers and mothers.

This type of scripture is referenced for those who do not break the chain of sin within a family tree.

We all have tendency for weakness and lust patterns that often run in our family tree.

The example is plain and easy for me because I have alcoholics on both sides of my family tree. Aunts and Uncles on both sides who struggled with some form of addiction like alcoholism and it became a struggle for me in my younger days.

It is very common for a family trait to be passed down from parents to children.

Or even passed through family members beyond just the parents. Trends of the OSN can run within a family tree.

God does not hold you accountable for your families’ sins and failures but He does expect us to break the hold of sins or HE will allow discipline to carry through one generation into the next.

When one generation continues in rebellion toward God there is a curse that can be brought upon that family.

REPEAT

Now the fact that GOD claims to be a jealous God needs to be understood from the proper stance of theology.

/Anthropopathism- the ascription of human feelings to God.

Anthropomorphism- the ascription of human elements or bodily functions to God.

Both are designed to show us the serious nature of a statement written in the Bible.\

The fact is idol worship has several wicked avenues that people follow and all of them lead to misery and discipline.

One of the biggest reoccurring problems the nation of Israel had, was they kept getting distracted by false idols and foreign gods.

The distractions turned into lust patterns and led them down a path of misery and discipline every time.

/Deu 4:27 “**The LORD will scatter you** among the peoples, and **you will be left few in number** among the nations where the LORD drives you. 2 “There **you will serve gods**, the work of human hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear, nor eat nor smell *anything.*

God allows or own decisions to catch up with us first – self induced misery. In hopes we turn back toward HIM.\

God never comes in, or at least I would say, very rarely comes in with discipline first.

We reap what we sow first and the refusal to turn back toward GOD is what ignites the 5 cycles of discipline from God.

/[Deu 4:29](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/deu/4/29/s_157029) “But **from there you will seek the LORD your God**, and you will find *Him* **if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul**.

From the position of pain or misery is where we begin to seek God. Notice – with all our heart and soul! \

Those who do not take their relationship with the LORD serious and when turning back to GOD do not get into a serious relationship - will suffer a negative consequence.

/Deu 6:14 “You shall not follow other gods, **any of the gods of the peoples who surround you**,

Today we have celebrities and high-profile influencers that give many people a sense of comfort in following false gods or idolatry. They give the illusion that it is normal or the *hip thing* to do as they do!\

They do it with political agendas, movies, music and social justice programs.

The attitude is always either – *everyone else is doing, it so it must be okay*.

Or- *we all need to follow the agenda for the good of the majority*.

Look at Deuteronomy chapter 8 RF.

People go along to get along – they don’t want to be the odd man out. They don’t want to be accused of hate speech or not being politically correct – which is all a big lie designed to herd us all like cattle in a certain direction.

REPEAT

God actually would tell the military of Israel to wipe out the enemies with their false gods and idols.

/Deu 7:16 “**You shall consume all the peoples** whom the LORD your God will turn over to you; **your eye shall not pity them, nor shall you serve their gods**, for that *would be* a snare to you.

God takes idolatry and false gods seriously. There is nowhere in scripture where GOD does not vehemently condemn false gods and idols.\

I challenge you to find it in scripture.

I challenge anybody to find where God gently approves of idolatry or false gods.

/Deu 8:19 “And it shall come about, if you ever forget the LORD your God and follow other gods and serve and worship them, I testify against you today that you will **certainly perish** (*'āḇaḏ 'āḇaḏ)*.

The verb is used twice – destruction, to vanish or face death.\

AH-VAH AH-VAH, a very strong verb pointing to certain destruction. It means extermination and falls under divine judgement.

A very definitive statement.

These types of scriptures can not be any more serious than how they were originally written.

[Deu 8:20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/deu/8/20/s_161020) “Like the nations that the LORD eliminates from you, so you shall perish, because you would not listen to the voice of the LORD your God.

When the LORD would wipe out an enemy army or another nation HE would do so with very swift and powerful blows that just left the whole nation or the army in ruins.

The warnings for idolatry were some of the strongest warnings we find in scripture.

/In the ten commandments the first commandment prohibits mental or soulish idolatry, the second commandment prohibits overt idolatry. God made sure the root of idolatry was addressed because it begins in thought first. Idolatry is spiritual adultery, an attack upon category #1 love — the first and most important love which is love toward God.\

Category #2 is right man, right woman and Category #3 points us to intimate friendship or close family relationships. If category one is lacking the other two categories can not grow or blossom into a healthy love relationship.

Let us close today in Jeremiah chapter 3.

God considers idolatry as adultery.

Every time a Bel worships a foreign god or lifts up an idol in their life it is a direct assault on your relationship with God.

Idol worship in any form is adultery upon your relationship with the LORD.

After the nation of Israel began to set up temples and idols of other nations and they began practicing demonic rituals here is what God would tell them;

/Jer 3:6 Then the LORD said to me in the days of King Josiah, “**Have you seen what faithless Israel did**? She went up on every high hill and under every leafy tree, and **she prostituted herself** there.

This indicates the worship of Baal and Asherah, which included sex with temple prostitutes at hilltop shrines.\

This was not an isolated incident and this happened more than once both in the Northern and Southern Tribes of Israel.

Jump down to verse 8;

Jer 3:8 “And I saw that for all the adulteries of faithless Israel, I had sent her away and given her a certificate of divorce, yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear; but she went and prostituted herself also.

The reference here means the northern tribe had already cheated on GOD.

The adultery had already caused division in the northern tribe and now in the southern tribe as well.

The division is between God and HIS people.

/[Jer 3:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/jer/3/9/s_748009) “And because of the thoughtlessness of her prostitution, she defiled the land and **committed adultery** with stones and trees.

They were having relationships outside of their marriage (spiritual analogy) with God.\

This is how GOD describes idol worship and remember GOD hates divorce and yet HE uses this analogy!

[Jer 3:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/jer/3/10/s_748010) “Yet in spite of all this her treacherous sister Judah did not return to Me with all her heart, but rather in deception,” declares the LORD.

This is the words of the LORD related to idolatry and it all is very serious with graphic description.

/Ezk 16:25 “You built yourself a high place at the beginning of every street and made your beauty abominable, and **you spread your legs to every passer-by and multiplied your obscene practice.** 26 “You also **committed prostitution with the Egyptians**, you lustful neighbors, and multiplied your obscene practice to provoke Me to anger. (Ezk 23)\

Many Bels today participate in cosmic idolatry and think it’s no big deal.

When the Bel participates in false teaching and supports churches outside of true Christianity are involved in idol worship.

/Rev 17:1 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, “Come here, I will show you the judgment of **the great prostitute who sits on many waters,** 2 with whom **the kings of the earth committed *act of* sexualimmorality**, and those who live on the earth became drunk with the wine of her sexual immorality.”\

She sits on many waters means this church or organization is wide spread across the world.

Many of you may know what large church or denomination this may be hinting too.

They had intercourse with this beast system! This evil, religious system - they supported and had fellowship with this system of evil.

/Rev 17:3 And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness; and **I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names**, having seven heads and ten horns. 4 The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold, precious stones, and pearls, holding in her hand a gold cup **full of abominations** and of the **unclean things of her sexual immorality**,\

One church fits this description pretty well, they hold the most gold and wealth in all the world, purple and scarlet are familiar in their color schemes.

They sit on the beast - they are riding along with the beast system!

/Rev 17:5 and on her forehead a name *was* written, a mystery: “BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.”

Mother over other churches, under HER authority (one world system). \