1Thess #10

Idolatry of mind precedes idolatry in practice.

We can open in Romans chapter one today, but first I need to point out some very important principles related to idolatry.

The fact is mental idolatry occurs before overt idolatry. That which you continually engage in becomes attached to your life. It brings impressions and lasting thoughts into your soul structure.

/Many forms of addiction, bad habits and obsessions develop which come from idolatry. The habitual practice, thought and pursuit of something or someone is idolatry. There is only one idol and one obsession that can lead to spiritual bliss and that is the continued pursuit and relationship with TLJC. Everything and everyone else will lead to misery, confusion and usually self- destruction.\

Self-destruction in the sense that the person God created you to be, never comes to fruition instead you become a shell of who you truly were created to be.

A broken shell, a cheap imitation of something or someone GOD created.

/Ezk 14:7 “For anyone of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who reside in Israel, who deserts Me, **sets up his idols in his heart** (*lēḇ*), puts in **front of his face** the stumbling block of his wrongdoing, and *then* comes to the prophet to request something of Me for himself, I the LORD will let Myself answer him Myself.

The heart is considered the place of norms and standards, a place of thought that can turn into wisdom.\

LAVE- speaks to the deep area of your soul where you have your conscience, where thoughts and knowledge gather and you form opinions.

It is already being processed deep within your soul structure and now you begin to bring that idol into physical presence.

/Heart - *lēḇ,* meaning the depth of your soul where you think, reason and learn. From that point you will react or respond to what you process.

Face – *pānîm,* to respect or bring something into view and become familiar with it. Present face to face.\

PA-NEEM, comes from a root word that points to respect and acknowledgement. To stand face to face with something or someone means you respect that person.

To enjoy interaction or personal space with something or someone.

Notice in Ezk 14:7 - you set up an idol, it is being constructed in your soul – within your thoughts and then it is brought out face to face in your life.

That is the process!

/[Eze 14:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/eze/14/8/s_816008) “**I will set My face against that person**and make him a sign and a proverb, and **I will eliminate him from among My people**. So you will know that I am the LORD.

The person (Bel or Unbel) who engages in idolatry pushes themselves further from God over time. The Bel can face certain discipline and possibly the sin unto death.\

God says in HIS word I make examples of these types of people. I write proverbs and warnings about these types of people.

Idolatry is caused by rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ or negative volition toward BD in the Believer.

You remove BD or in the case of the Unbel, never achieve the goal of accepting Christ into your life and there becomes a very powerful vacuum that will be filled with other things.

 REPEAT

The principle with the unbeliever is found in Romans chapter 1;

Rom 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of people who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

The ungodliness means anything opposed to the truth of TLJC, anything that pushes against BD.

Unrighteousness points us to everyone and everything that is not under the authority of Christ, HE is the only true righteous One.

Anyone who does not adjust to the justice of God brings forth strife between themselves and GOD.

/[Rom 1:19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/rom/1/19/s_1047019) because **that which is known about God is evident within them**; for **God made it evident** to them.

Written in a present tense – *which is known*, was always and will always be known. We all have a God-consciousness ingrained in our soul.\

[Rom 1:20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/rom/1/20/s_1047020) For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes, that is,* His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, being understood by what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

The way this is written has legal standards within the statement of the original context. Which really points to the fact the evidence and facts give them no excuse or legal leg to stand on in the divine justice system of God.

The facts and truth of the divine Creator are around every corner on every street, the stars, the beach and powerful ocean cry out about our Creator.

Wildlife and nature itself demand we recognize God.

The intricate science of the human body itself tell a story of GOD.

/[Rom 1:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/rom/1/21/s_1047021) For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but **they became futile in their reasonings** (*dialogismos*), and their senseless hearts were darkened.

To speculate and debate or come to conclusions from imagination or discussion.\

DEE-LOG-A-MOSS, speculations, reasoning from human viewpoint. They come to a conclusion based upon human viewpoint – that which BD points out is irrelevant in their discussions.

Their senseless heart - means foolishness and wicked or dark speculations, ungodly perceptions.

[Rom 1:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/rom/1/22/s_1047022) Claiming to be wise, they became fools,

By the cosmic system standard, they are considered wise and knowledgeable.

[Rom 1:23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/rom/1/23/s_1047023) and they exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible mankind, of birds, four-footed animals, and crawling creatures.

/[Rom 1:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/rom/1/24/s_1047024) Therefore **God gave them up to vile impurity in the lusts** of their hearts, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.

Idol worship brings forth misery, in the form of obsession, addiction and even altering our lifestyle and accepting evil in place of what was once good.\

[Rom 1:25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/rom/1/25/s_1047025) For they exchanged the truth of God for falsehood, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

As many of you know the Apostle Paul goes on in Romans one to explain how same sex attraction develops and brings forth pain and confusion and separates a person from God.

They exchange what God gave them naturally for something artificial…a counterfeit.

The simplest explanation I can give is the cigarette analogy I used in my book.

No teenager who first puffs on a cigarette enjoys that taste.

It takes several weeks or months before they begin to enjoy it and then they crave it. It becomes a little idol in their life after a period of repetition.

It is the same for many addictions and many counterfeits outside the plan of God…don’t dabble with them in the first place because you will develop a taste for them.

 REPEAT

/Many pastors and church leaders simply exclaim that once you believe upon Christ, everything in your life will change therefore you never have an issue with addiction or sin. Everything has changed in the spiritual and eternal sense! Yet our human bodies and minds have flaws that need greater attention and repetitive changes for lasting, temporal differences.\

Many Bels peel away from God because they feel guilt or shame over a sin, perhaps addiction or a form of idol worship that plagues them after salvation.

/Salvation is the beginning of your journey! There is no such thing as sinless perfection outside of our union with Christ. The goal is to accept God’s grace and mercy and learn to live and grow in that. First fully embrace eternal security and the grace plan of God which teaches us nothing can separate us from God in the eternal state. Then begin the walk with Christ, replacing the old self with the new nature habitually.\

You can replace the old idol with a new one – Jesus Christ, you can remove the old habits with new ones. But you have to take responsibility for your own walk with GOD.

What do you think spiritual warfare is really all about?

The majority of spiritual warfare happens within the Bels thoughts, decisions and personal life.

Satan loves the subtle details of life and the mundane thoughts and practices because it is easy for him to slip in those areas unnoticed.

 REPEAT

/2Cor 10:5 *We are* destroyingarguments and all arrogance raised against the knowledge of God, and *we are* **taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,**

Spiritual warfare demands that the Bel learn to think with BD. Take responsibility for what they do with their time, talent and treasure.\

Demons function through idols and the practice of idolatry —

/Zec 10:2 For **the household idols** **speak deception**, and the diviners see an illusion And **tell deceitful dreams**;
They comfort in vain. Therefore the *people* wander like sheep, They are
wretched because **there is no shepherd**.

Everything in the cosmic system is a distraction and most things are an illusion designed to draw you away from truth.\

Notice the household idols…what might that be today? The TV…the computer, the cell phone, just some food for thought!

My opinion is the biggest problem most Bels have is the fence.

They love to sit on the fence between the cosmic system and BD.

They sit and gather splinters in their backside and remain in discomfort and confusion for years.

/Jer 50:38 “A drought on her waters, and they will be dried up! For **it is a land of
idols,** And **they go insane** at frightful images.

When idolatry is present, God steps backward and what happens is we become weaker in mind and spirt.\

Turn to Galatians chapter five RF.

Since idolatry is related to the emotional revolt of the soul it often produces psychotic conditions like phobias, the fear psychoses. In fact, it spreads throughout the family or the land when idolatry is present.

The people can become very easily influenced because fear is a great tool to manipulate the masses.

A godless society will become a fearful and weak society eventually.

That weak society will become easily led. Many will fall under addictions and the weakness of lust patterns.

It is the epitome of the spoiled child who stamps their feet and cries out until they get what they want. Weak people are easily manipulated, easy to become volatile and unpredictable.

/Witchcraft, sorcery and idolatry are all under the same category. Sometimes referred to as – *pharmakeia,* involving the use of poisonous herbs and mixtures to bring about intoxication and mind- altering experiences. When the mind is weak and lacking strength from BD – fear and guilt along with a slave-mentality follow close behind.\

The Apostle Paul was teaching the Bels at Galatia principles related to our union with Christ and the filling power of God the HS.

He was using contradictions as a teaching tool. Basically, saying that many of the qualities the cosmic system promotes are part of our OSN. The New Nature is opposite of these qualities.

/Gal 5:19 Now the **deeds of the flesh** are evident, which are: sexual immorality, impurity, indecent behavior, 20 **idolatry**, **witchcraft,** hostilities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions,

Idolatry is related to each of these qualities. They rarely travel alone because one begets another.\

[Gal 5:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/gal/5/21/s_1096021) envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Practice points to a lifestyle – anyone living a lifestyle of these things can not gain any ground inside the plan of GOD. There is nothing a person can inherit from GOD if this is their lifestyle.

For the Bel it would mean divine discipline ending with the sin unto death. No blessings or rewards - a loser Bel in the temporal & in heaven.

The fact is anyone living this lifestyle has probably rejected TLJC.

Idolatry puts a person in a vulnerable position and open to demonic influence.

/2Chron 33:6 He also made **his sons pass through the fire** in the Valley of Ben-hinnom; and **he practiced witch- craft**, used divination, practiced **sorcery**, and dealt with mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him to anger.

King Manasseh fell into idol worship and served the fallen angels under BAAL.\

Idolatry is directly related to Satan and his army.

There is never a subtle form of idolatry even though it may start in a small thought or secret fashion, it will always consume and control a person over the course of time.

It is very common to find addiction and idolatry going hand in hand and demonic influence is a root behind both of those issues.

Not all idolatry becomes addiction.

But I can tell you all idolatry and addiction have elements of demonic forces within them.

/2Kin 9:22 When Joram saw Jehu, he said, “Is *your intention* peace, Jehu?” And he answered, “What ‘peace,’ **so long as your mother Jezebel’s acts of prostitution and witchcraft** are so many?”

Idolatry weakens the mind and this is either achieved through repetition, intoxication, or demonic influences. Usually, a blend of all three.\

Joram was the son of Jezebel and there is strong biblical evidence that most children and cultures raised in demonic settings will they themselves follow in the footsteps of their parents.

It is the same for a godly household – those who have a Christian foundation will have greater influence for family members to be Christians themselves.

Prov 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he grows older he will not abandon it.

Not every child will turn our perfect but many will have the seeds planted them bring them back to GOD later in life when they go astray.

The fact is idolatry is a family problem that can become a national problem.

The reason that it is a family problem is because that once one of the authority figures in the home has a problem with idolatry, it will infect others in the household.

The family unit touches out all around the community and that touches out throughout a nation eventually.

Next lesson we will close out the study on idolatry and we will look at a nation under idolatry.