



Links Players

IDOLS | RESEMBLING WHAT WE REVERENCE

Their idols are silver and gold, the work of man's hands. They have mouths, but they cannot speak; They have eyes, but they cannot see; They have ears, but they cannot hear; They have noses, but they cannot smell; They have hands, but they cannot feel; They have feet, but they cannot walk... Those who make them will become like them.... (Psalm 115:4-8, ESV)

This is what the LORD says: "What fault did your ancestors find in me, that they strayed so far from me? They followed empty idols and became empty themselves." (Jeremiah 2:5)

Most of us vividly remember our childhood and adolescence. Among the many things we remember from our formative years were the older men and women we admired; we wanted to be like them!

It takes little effort to recall the men at our golf course I wanted to emulate—some for their panache, some for their wealth, some for their looks, some for the women they clung to, and a handful for their golf swings.

Mostly unconsciously, I patterned my life after the men I revered. Because "hindsight is 20/20," many of the men I wanted to emulate, to put it mildly, were not the best role models.

Humans are imitative creatures—our Creator designed us to reflect and imitate him. If our lives do not mirror the Creator and Redeemer, they will mirror something in creation.

To piggyback on the Christian theologian G.K. Beale, "We become what we worship," or "We resemble what we revere for ruin or for restoration." Of course, he does not mean that if we revere Jesus, we become Jesus; rather, we become increasingly like Jesus.

Similarly, if we revere idols of any kind, we do not become idols; rather, as Jeremiah and the Psalmist show, we increasingly become like the idols—spiritually empty, blind, deaf, stubborn, and devoted to ruin.

To illustrate, as a kid, I looked up to a man with a personality bigger than

life, an enormously successful career, a stunningly beautiful wife, and the ability to drive a balata farther than the eye could see with a persimmon driver.

Sadly, he drank too much, lost his marriage, squandered much of his financial success, and eventually lost his swing and his love for the game. Late in life, the Great Shepherd rescued him. Though long gone now, this man still holds a huge place in my heart. And like my childhood hero, the Great Shepherd rescued me from following that hero's example.

If our heroes glamorize maverick behavior, excess, or vices, whether explicitly or implicitly, our behavior does not merely mimic theirs; we adopt their desires.

Imitating someone can go either way. If our role model is a virtuous man whose heart burns for Christ, then imitate him. As the Apostle Paul says, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). If not, don't. Going beyond the admiration and imitation of men, Scripture teaches that we all place something at the top of our hierarchy of reverence—whatever that is, it is our god.

If we choose to value anything more than Christ, we become increasingly like the idol we adore—blind to the Lord's presence, deaf to his truth, and with hearts incapable of grasping the purpose he has for your life. As Isaiah warned, "You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive."

As Yahweh instructed Israel, we are to "...tear down their altars [i.e., the surrounding cultural idols vying for our devotion], for you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God" (Ex. 34:13-14).

God's jealousy is righteous. Just as a man refuses to share his wife with another, the Lord demands exclusive loyalty and adoration. God does not offer his affections to his creatures, indifferent to our responses. He expects and deserves our passionate love in return.

God is calling us to turn from seeking our identity and security in the idols of wealth, physique, fame, status, handicap, and pleasure and to turn to him as the one we worship and reflect.

Prayer- Lord! Turn our eyes toward you, cause us to look reverently at your beauty, and cause "the things of earth to grow strangely dim."

