Gospel Treason: Week 1

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Preacher: Jeff Jackson

[0:00] Amen. Alright, thank you all for being here. How do you feel about Wednesday nights being kicked off again?! I'm going to pick on Mitch.

I'll leave Amy alone because I'm scared of Amy. But I'm not scared of Mitch. You should be kidding. Yeah. Alright. Hey, thank you guys for making this a priority as I prayed.
It's a joy for us to be together again. Look, I don't want to be melodramatic. Ever. That's not my personality most of the time.
I'm only melodramatic when I want to get something from Suzanne and I want to manipulate her, then I get real drama queen on her. Yeah, she's on to me. So I usually get this, get over it, and then we move on.
But I want to tell you that this subject, dealing with the idols of the heart, was revolutionary for my Christian growth.
[1:46] When I began to learn about this, oh gosh, in the early, early 2000s, after we had been doing this, oh gosh, in the early 2000s, we began digging into material and a pastorate that I was involved with.

Counseling was starting to really climb. And I was intrigued by this topic, so we began to dig into it. And as I did that, it changed me.
It really worked on me and catapulted our spiritual growth forward. It also revolutionized the way I thought about ministry. As Brad Bigney, if you've read the assignment for tonight, as Brad Bigney, Pastor Bigney, talks about what it did to his life, it didn't just revolutionize his marital issue.
It changed the way he thought about his ministry, his walk with God, because it takes us into the Scripture to talk about the root causes for why we do what we do, particularly when we sin.
Why we chase the things that destroy us. And why we keep doing it. How it is that we can be self-deceived. I need to talk to you.
[3:07] I don't want to forget this time. Sunday, I just got busy. Where was I? Yes. I'm glad I'm not the only one.

Self-deceived. We can be very self-deceived in this. And one of the reasons, and we'll be pointing this out throughout the study, one of the reasons is because our idols, and you've heard this from the pulpit, like to hide.
Idols do not stand forward and say, worship me instead of God, as it were. They appear as good things oftentimes, and we begin to want them too much.
And they camouflage themselves. They mask themselves. They don't want to be found out. They don't want to be rooted out. And they want you to self-justify.
They want you to defend them and feed them. And they'll do everything they can. Now, when I talk about it this way, do I make it sound like this is some kind of an active force?
[4:12] That's because it is. Because of who's behind it. Who's behind it? Yes, absolutely. This is demonic. It's very real. It's very spiritual.

It's very deep. So when you're doing the surgery of digging out hidden idols in your heart, you're going as deep as you can go. You're going into your soul. Heart, soul, mind, fairly synonymous, even though they describe different aspects of the way that we approach and interpret life.
Our mind would be that aspect of our heart where we reason. And our will, the part of our heart, is where we are choosing. That's the choosing aspect. Your will is what motivates you forward to do what you do.
Now, what I'd like to do to start off and whet our appetite for all of this is something I rarely do, if ever. I want to direct you to the introduction.

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I hope you took time to read the introduction. I think we mentioned it in the directions for being prepared tonight that we would actually do this. If you will indulge me for a number of minutes, we're not going to read all of chapter one and all that.
[5:27] We'll probably do some excerpts from it. But I would like to read the introduction as you follow along. Because it does set the stage. I got these places frozen.

I went to the dermatologist and they... They itch. My nurse is telling me, leave them alone. All right. He says in the introduction, my wife and I have been married for 25 years. All right. So we've got some people in here married about that same time. But 20 years ago, we were at war.
Now, as we read this, please don't tune out thinking, well, my marriage isn't like that. Or, you know, I'm not at war that I know of with anybody. I'm not even married, that kind of thing.
Think about the most challenging relationship that you have. Maybe right now or one that you had fairly recently that's fairly challenging to you.
[6:26] It might be your marriage. It might not. With him, it was his marriage. All right. There was no camouflage, no guns. Neither of us were crawling under barbed wire in our single wide mobile home.

But we both felt that we were constantly stepping on landmines in our relationship, putting out brush fires, running for cover, dodging bullets that our tongues fired back and forth.
And our marriage had deteriorated into a battlefield. And we were opposing forces. Man, that's pretty intense, isn't it? The casualty rate was high.
The love and laughter that initially filled our home and had characterized our courtship seemed like a distant memory. I began to wonder whether those early years had even been real. Maybe we had been fooling ourselves back then.
Maybe there was no such thing as real love. Maybe what we had was as good as it got. And yet I sensed that God wanted more for us, both for our good and for his glory.
[7:28] My wife and I seemed worlds apart. Neither of us could say what had gone wrong. What had been our first misstep? Where had we wandered off the path of marital bliss?

And how had this relationship, one that God had designed to be our greatest earthly comfort, turned into all-out war? Now, remember, we're not talking about a believer and an unbeliever here, unequally yoked people.
These are two believers, married in Jesus Christ, sharing the same Lord, and they're at war with each other. I mean, these two people can't even stand to be in the same room together.
It's amazing they didn't divorce. For countless hours we argued in circles. Think of that. Countless hours, each defending ourselves and blaming the other.
We solicited help from older couples, hoping that they could help us sort out why or where our marriage had gone wrong. In every case, they were gracious. They offered us a thread of biblical truth, such as, well, you both just need to die to self.
[8:33] Which, that's good counsel. But no one could penetrate the surface of our skirmishes, and no one could unearth our heart's foundations and expose the real problem. Idolatry.

We had abandoned the gospel as our first love and had instead begun to treasure and cling to something else as our reason for living.
We were traitors, turncoats, who had given something other than Jesus Christ and His sweet gospel first place in our hearts. And the result was havoc in our home.
The ripples of our idolatry crashed into each other as from two large rocks dropped into opposite ends of a quiet pond. But neither of us knew how to calm the waters again.
By God's mercy, we eventually found a biblical counselor and things began to change radically.
Now, if you read any of the acknowledgements at the beginning, the biblical counselor that they found at that time was Stuart Scott.
[9:42] Do you know the name? You know who we're talking about. All right. We've known Stuart for quite some time and Stuart has counseled us as well. In fact, it probably was around the same time that he might have been counseling them.

He was offering us guidance on some things going on in our life and in our marriage and family. So mightily used of the Lord. Let's see. Not that he introduced us to the gospel.
We had both been Christians from a young age. I was the pastor of a local church. Now, doesn't that make you wonder how is he getting up in the pulpit every Sunday and preaching the gospel when he and his wife can't even be in the same room?

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You realize that's a disqualification? You're disqualified at that point for gospel ministry. You either repent and have some brothers hold you accountable and get that thing right.
If he had come to Greg and I in that condition, like say outside of another church and he had come to us and said, brothers, fellow pastors, help me out. And he had told us this story just like this.
[10:49] You know what Greg and I would have said? Brother, you need to step down and work on your marriage. The attention that you would give to the congregation and shepherding, you're not in any position to do that. You need to shepherd your wife and get your relationship.

If you can't manage your own home, how can you manage the church of God? That's what the Word says. So he says that I was the pastor of a local church.
We still read our Bibles and prayed. Neither of us had knowingly abandoned the faith, but we had replaced our Savior with idols. And these became the driving force in our hearts.
Not Jesus. He wasn't in the ministry for Jesus at that point in his life. He wasn't in the marriage for Jesus. The driving force of his life were idols.
We had fallen into the trap, it's a good way to put it, that God warned His people about so many years ago when He said, for My people have committed two evils. They've forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.
[11:57] What we had done is we had spent a lot of time a lifetime digging other cisterns, wells, from which we hope to catch life-giving water to sustain us, fulfill us, bring us peace and joy.

And the digging didn't start on our wedding day because it had been going on for years. What does he mean? We simply imported the project into our marriage.
They both brought their baggage into the marriage, the idols of their hearts. The pressures of marriage and ministry, along with the close proximity of another sinner, simply pushed to the surface what had been lurking in our hearts all along.
There you go. Now that's a key concept that I want to point out to you. A key concept in understanding the issue of idols in your heart is that God will ordain trials, challenges, hardships, and circumstances to force these issues of the idols of your heart to the surface so you can see them.
Why? Because your heart is desperately sick and deceitfully wicked. So remember, these things like to hide. These two people felt very justified pointing to the other person and saying, there's the problem right there.
[13:12] Yeah, we need to go to counseling because they need to help you get right, girl. And then she would fire right back. They were deceived. Deceitfulness of sin that this material will help bring out.

So if you and your spouse or you and someone else are where we were almost 20 years ago, you might be saying, help us. What did the counselor say that made such a difference?
What did you learn from God's word that so transformed your marriage? Well, that's exactly what I want to share with you in the chapters that follow. The breakthrough for us came when the counselor helped us to identify and then repent of the ways in which we had allowed other desires, other goals, other cravings to dethrone our Savior and His gospel.
The ways in which we had allowed these idols to become entrenched and to rule in His place. Please understand, and He will say this in just a few minutes.
In just a minute. This is hard, deep, soul-searching work. And only the Word of God can pull it off. You can't navel-gaze long enough to figure this out.
[14:32] You need the power of the Holy Spirit to help you see these issues of your heart, root them out, and then give you the desire to see them killed. And they will not go quietly.

They will want to dig in like a tick and hold on. He taught us from Ezekiel 14 and James 4, 1-3. We'll look at that tonight. About the idols of our hearts.
And this was news to both of us. Now, don't let that get wasted on you. What is His vocation? And He's been in the ministry for some time.
He and His wife are mature Christians as it were. And it is news to Him to have somebody tell Him the issue is your heart, friend. And He's in ministry.
So that will tell you what He was not ministering to His flock. He wasn't ministering the issue of helping them deal with the idols of their hearts because He didn't know anything about it. That's exactly where I was.

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[15:36] We were in ministry for years before I learned this. At least, well, I'd been in seminary so if I count all of that it was probably 13 years before I knew any of this and dealt with me.

And they made me deal with me, by the way. When I started learning this, they made me deal with me. I didn't learn it for you. I had to face my own stuff. neither of us had gone to a counselor believing ourselves to be idolaters.
We just knew we had a bad marriage. And we each believed the other was the one who needed to do the changing, right? We had both grown up in church. There it is again.
They'd grown up in church. They didn't know this. But had never been taught the dangers of having something other than Jesus Christ and His gospel rule our hearts. I bet you they didn't even talk like that.
They probably didn't even talk like what's ruling my heart in this moment. I bet you most Christians you're going to talk to out there don't talk like this. They don't think this way.
[16:42] But it's biblical. And here's the interesting thing about it. People think in terms of behavior change not heart change.

That's how psychologized we are. If I can just deal with this bad behavior if I can just deal with this sin whatever it is and change this behavioral issue so instead of doing this I'll try to do that or I'll distract myself or whatever.
So they think in terms of behavior change but they don't think in terms of where that behavior is coming from. The root that is producing the fruit.
My aha moment came when the truth came crashing down on me that what I was chasing after in my heart I must be well thought of by everyone at church.
That's an idol. He's identifying that. He said I didn't realize this. I didn't realize that what I was chasing after in my heart and what it rooted itself so deeply in my conscious awareness and in ways that I didn't even think about was he told himself this I must be well thought of by everyone at church.
[18:01] Everybody at church me as the pastor needs to see me and think I've got it all together. I've got the answers I've got the family I've got the material blessings whatever pastors think communicates to their people that they've got it together.

I want them to think well of me. Another way to say that is this I must I must I must have your respect. I'll do anything to get it even lie to you to get it manipulate you.
Was he living a lie? That's how insidious this is. I wanted to read this because I wanted to embellish it and set out to you how serious this is.
Oh God in heaven I wish I wish more and more of churches would whether they use this or not just open the Bible and teach people how insidious this is.
Anything that supplants the lordship of Jesus in your life as the one who gave himself for you. My goodness nobody deserves your worship more than he does. But we marginalize him so often and we justify it with work I'm too busy to be about the priorities of heaven.
[19:24] We all do this. All of us do this. We're all prone to this. It could be anything. It could be something as insidious as I have to have everybody's respect.

Well, do Greg and I want you to respect us? Sure. But are we willing to sin to get that from you? That's an idol.
Or to sin if we don't get it. That's an idol in our heart. All right, let me jump back in. All of this, I must be well thought of by everyone at church, had a direct impact on not only the way I treated my wife, but also my daily moment-by-moment decisions.
That is a good, good observation. And exposing the idols of my heart helped me to take giant steps toward resolving the ongoing conflicts in my marriage.
It shifted the target of my attack away from my wife and onto my heart so that I could begin to work on more than just trying to be nice or to be polite or to have a date night.
[20:36] All right, there's your behavioral change right there. You see that? What you guys need to do is be nicer to each other and you need to have a date night once a week. Yeah, okay, those are fine, but are those dealing with the issues of your heart and why you sin in the first place?

No. Brought face to face with the ugly monster that was my own idolatrous heart, I found freedom in seeing the real enemy for the first time.
And it humbled me and it should have. It heightened my love and appreciation for the gospel and my Savior. This was so liberating. I love reading this. It's so liberating for this man.

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I identify. I get it. It has deepened my awareness of my dependence on Christ to rule my life moment by moment. Oh, God in heaven, if we could live there.
And it's been hard. And in my book, I wrote very hard. That's what I would have said. It's been the hardest work I've ever done in my life. Hands down is dealing with Jeffrey Lee.
[21:44] Hardest work. And it's ongoing. I haven't arrived any more than you have. The valley indeed was dark, but God. There you go, Michael.

That's your but God, brother. My brother loves but God. Right? The valley indeed was dark, but God has done an incredible work. Not only in our marriage, we are now the best of friends.
And I love this, as well as lovers. Yes! That tells me they're drinking in life together. You know, they're not allowing the idols, the busyness, the everyday to get in the way of them enjoying each other.
Sometimes in counseling, I'll take people back and say, why'd you get married? When you saw her for the first time, what happened? When you saw him for the first time, what happened?
When you guys finally realized that you were for each other, what was that moment like? Trying to help him remember. Why did you get together in the first place?
[22:48] What did it for you? They're lovers. But also in the way I preach and teach, it's made this difference. And how I relate to other people, both inside and outside our church family.

I'm reminded of Ephesians 3.20, seeing that God really is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think. My wife and I desperately wanted deliverance from a marriage that we felt trapped in.
A marriage, by the way, of their own making. They made it not fit to live in and they didn't want to live in it. But God did more. He revolutionized our ministry and our passion for the gospel, for our Savior and for the church.
I pray that God will use this book to help get the life changing message of exposing and repenting of idols of the heart into the hands of as many people as possible. So in the chapters ahead, I will lay out a plan to help you identify and destroy the idols that keep you enslaved to certain sins in your life.
Sins that keep you from experiencing gospel joy and freedom. Now, stop right there for a sec before I finish this. So, I don't know that you identify with that terminology because you may be thinking, I don't feel enslaved to anything.
[24:09] Be careful. That would be my first red flag to say to you, hmm, let's spend about an hour together and let's start digging out what you're enslaved to because it's there.

It's there. Let's read a verse real quick. Let's turn to 2 Peter. Peter. Peter. Peter. Peter. Peter. 2 Peter. Chapter 2. And chapter 2, I'll give you the verse in just a second.
Chapter 2 is dealing with the terrible, terrible issue of people who despise authority, people who despise God's authority, false teachers who he says are like unreasoning animals, and the followers behind these false teachers who promise all of these worldly things and get a following, but they're empty.
Clouds without rain. And then he comes to verse 18. For speaking out arrogant words of vanity, these people entice by fleshly desires, do you see that?
[25:29] By sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error. So these are probably talking about immature Christians as well. Promising them freedom.

That's what idols promise. Freedom. While they themselves are slaves of corruption. Now notice, for by what a man is overcome, by this he is what? Enslaved.
By what you are overcome, that is what enslaves you. That's another way of saying this. Whatever it is that I give my heart to in that moment, that's what captures me.
And I'll worship it. It's that straightforward. And it happens moment by moment. So while we're talking about a lifestyle issue here, we have to realize that that lifestyle is comprised of moment by moment by moment.
And it's those moments that we target. If your target is too big, you're sure to hit something, but not what necessarily, you need to shrink your target.
[26:36] And so we're shrinking our target like this. And we're bringing it right in to where it needs to be. And that's what we're aiming at. When Greg and I preach and teach, we have a target in mind every single time we do it, and it's your heart.

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We are trying to craft our sermons that are textually driven in a way that drives right at your heart and challenges your heart. It informs your mind, but it challenges your heart to think biblically about whatever it is that's being presented to you in the way of repent and replace.
All right? Let me finish this out. Enslaved to certain sins, sins that keep you from experiencing gospel joy and freedom. I will show you how to keep the main thing the main thing.
But I warn you, it's not fun. So, you know, Wednesday night not necessarily going to be very fun. It will hurt, but you need to keep coming. And it will get ugly, but you need to keep coming when you start to see what is going on in your heart.
Look to Christ. Don't let this study turn you into a navel gazer who's more caught up in examining your own heart than in delighting in your Savior. When you fix your eyes on Christ and on the wonders that He secured for you, you step into the dark labyrinth of your own heart.
[28:04] If you don't fix your eyes on the Lord, if you don't look to the Lord, if all you do is stay problem focused, I've got to fix the problem, fix the problem, fix the problem, I'm not happy, I'm not happy, I'm not happy, those kinds of things, well, you're not fixing your eyes on the Lord, and that's saying a lot about where your heart's focused.

So before we begin, stop and pray that God will show you more of the beauty of your Savior, even as He reveals more of the ugliness and deception of your idolatrous heart. This is interesting, if you have any questions or comments regarding the book, I'd love to hear from you, and you can do this, and he mentions the free study guide.
Alright, Alonza, will you show them what you have there? Alonza got the gold star tonight. See that? That's the study guide. So you can print it out, it has a way you can print it, alright, so when Josiah and I went through this together a couple years ago, he and I sat down as brothers in the Lord and went through this together, it was a wonderful time, and I think he made this for me, did you make it?
Marivi made this for me. This is the gold standard, right? There you go. Ask Marivi, she'll tell you how to get all this. But this, it's not much, but it's worth it.
It's free. All you got to do is print it out, and it has some extra stuff to help you work through the chapter material. Alright, it's not a lot, but it's helpful, and I'll be referring to it this evening if I have time.
[29:45] Okay, introduction, thoughts, comments, how'd that strike you? Where are you in your thinking about this? Give us some feedback that helps us understand where some of us are in all of this.

Are you worried about it? Are you anxious about it? Are you excited? Are you encouraged? All of the above.
So, Dora was the first to admit the truth. I'm scared to death, but. Yeah, what's God going to show me, right? Yeah. Alright, someone else. What are you thinking?
You're too scared to say. So, buckle up, baby.
Is that what you're telling her? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I think so, Travis.
[30:57] I think it's going to be a good thing. It's a process. You'll finish this book and you won't be done battling idols. You won't be finished identifying issues of your heart.

You're just getting started. But boy, what a lifetime. If God grants you old age, whatever you have left, living, understanding these issues of the idols of your heart, it changes the way you pray.
It changes the way you think about being changed into the image of Jesus as you walk with him. It changes the way you think about your marriage and the problems in your marriage because what the Bible is going to do is refuse to allow you to point the finger.
You know, when Suzanne and I have had difficulties in our marriage, particularly in the past, it was too easy to do that. But as we began to dig into this kind of material and become more biblically devoted, more biblically central in the way that we thought, the Bible wouldn't let us point fingers.
It's not that I didn't have my sin, you know, as she pointed fingers. Yeah, I had them. It's not that she didn't have sin, but I'm not the Holy Spirit.
[32:16] I'm a sinner. married to a sinner. So we needed the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, to help each one of us identify the issues of our own heart.

It's that way in all marital issues, in all relational issues. You can spend as much time as you want looking across the way at your spouse or your friend or your co-worker or whatever, or you can deal with the issues in your own heart, even if they don't change.

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Even if nothing changes on the other end. Can you live with joy and forgiveness in your heart toward that person? Absolutely. Even though that person is still mean to me and isn't nice to me and hasn't forgiven me, yeah, you can be forgiving in your heart, can't you?
And that can change the way you live in relation to the Lord and those people. Now you're not as ensnared, as entrapped, as enslaved as they are. Living in that meanness and unforgiveness, which makes them miserable.
People are always looking for a way out of stuff like this. And God keeps creating the circumstances for Christians to be in the hardship and in the challenges so that they see the issue of their own heart.
[33:33] And when we ignore that, when we find something to distract us from it, when we put it off, guess what happens? God circles you right back around and keeps you there.

And you wonder, why am I in this cycle? You don't have to wonder anymore. Because God loves you. And He wants to show you the issues of your heart so that you can then deal with them.
That's the way it works. And I'm looking into your eyes and thinking, you're so young to learn this right now. I was double your age. No, no. Triple your age before I learned this.
What a blessing, right? To have these young folks in here learning this. To have you guys fairly still young in your marriage learning this. And there's still hope for us with the gray hair.
There's still hope. Right? Yes. Any other thoughts, questions, observations before we begin to dig into some more of this? I don't want to overlook the fact that you might want to ask something or comment about something that we've read.
[34:39] Okay. What is your definition of an idol? Ah. Change. Let's try it again. What would have been your definition of an idol prior to reading this material or prior to coming to this church?

Because some of you have been here long enough to hear us teach on this already in other venues, other times we've met. What's typically the definition of an idol that people would give?
Even believers. An object of some kind. A statue. They are thinking in antiquity, something someone built and bowed down to.
Right? Okay. Any other ideas? Money. Okay. It could be money. People worship money. Not that they would necessarily say that that was an idol. But yeah.
I mean, there could be their life shows it. The way they live. What they're loyal to. All right. So, most of us probably before we were, this was pointed out to us in scripture, wouldn't have thought of idols living inside of us and us being idol worshipers.
[35:46] It's kind of offensive to tell believers that. Are you seeing now though, how this is absolutely true about us?

Okay. So, idols of the heart. And this is from the study guide, Alonzo. That was the first question. He says before reading the chapter, would you consider yourself an idolater?
Why or why not? I mean, before I started learning this, I'd have said, what? No way. We don't have any of those icons in my house that I know of.
And we don't bow down to stuff like that. We don't have altars built out in the yard like Catholics do. No, we don't do that. Okay. List the things or persons that you think truly holds your trust and loyalty.
So, you can make a mental list before we dig into some more of this. Of the things or persons that hold your loyalty. That you give your loyalty to.
[36:55] think about people or things that you feel like you can't live without. I don't know how I would live without this. I can't imagine my life without this.

It might be a person. It might be a thing. It might be a particular lifestyle you're used to. It might be a spouse, a child. Let that sink in.
Let that. A biblical understanding of idolatry dramatically changed my own life and exposed how far I drifted from the gospel.
It radically changed my understanding of everything. My marriage, parenting, pastoring, counseling. Idolatry is perhaps the Bible's most pervasive theme. What do you think about that?
Were you surprised to hear him say that? Suzanne, you say yes. I was, but I thought about it. Yeah. But you know, like in the Old Testament, that people are constantly being told to them that they're people.
[38:05] And they're because of idolatry that they then brought into the worship. Yeah. Yes.

Right. Anybody else? Yes.

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That's a great segue for us to do this next, Mitch. Let's go to Proverbs 4.23. Proverbs 4.23. So, Mitch was talking about how precious focus is in your life.
What you focus on. We could use another word. We could say fixated. That has more of a negative connotation perhaps. Focus doesn't have to be negative.
We could say what you love. Substitute it for focus. Proverbs 4.23. What does that verse say, someone?
[39:18] Keep your heart with all vigilance for from it flows the springs of life. Okay. Keep your heart with all vigilance, her translation says.

Mine says, watch over your heart with all diligence for from your heart springs the issues or the matters or the concerns of life.
You live out of your heart. You live out of your heart comprised of mind, will, emotions, desires. That's what you live out of.
Every moment of every single day with all diligence means this is first in line for what you're focused on.
For what you're focused on. With all diligence, the phrase, with all diligence, that is actually first in the Hebrew sentence. That's what this verse would actually begin with written in the Hebrew.
[40:27] So it's emphasized. With all diligence, watch over your heart, for from it flow the springs, matters, issues, concerns of life. Alright, now let's go a little bit further into this and see what he says.

Put away from you a deceitful mouth. Could a deceitful mouth represent some kind of idol in your life? If you're speaking deceit, you're speaking it out of your heart.
And put devious speech far from you. Notice how he's walking through this with you. Speech, now he's going to, that's your mouth, now look at your eyes in 25.
Let your eyes look directly ahead. See, this is Mitch's focus idea. Let your eyes look directly ahead, let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you.
He's right. Focus is precious. We're told to guard this. Watch the path of your feet. So we've got mouth, we've got your eyes, these are the gates of your life that stuff comes in and comes out of your heart.
[41:35] Watch the path of your feet and all your ways will be established. So do not turn to the right nor to the left. Turn your foot from evil. people. This is dealing with the issues of your heart.

How about 1 Corinthians? Just give you a couple verses here. 1 Corinthians chapter 10.
So Paul is comparing the believers walk or contrasting it with that of Israel and saying don't make the same mistakes Israel made in her pride.
Turning away from the Lord in her pride. Craving evil things. And trying to convince themselves that they were doing right. And so in verse 12 of chapter 10, therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.
See once again folks your idols will hide from you. You will stand on these things. Believe in these things. Give your life, resources, and loyalty to these things.
[42:54] And he says take heed. You think you stand. You might fall. No temptation in verse 13 has overtaken you but such as is common to man.

And God is faithful who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also so that you will be able to endure.
Now you've heard us teach on this before some of you and I'll just remind you. What we're talking about here in the way of this temptation is God working in your life the circumstances the trials the situations or whatever that will force you to move through the very thing that is threatening to overwhelm you.
The very thing you're struggling with. He will create circumstances and put you in that struggle and he will bring you through that struggle using the very thing that has threatened you so that you can overcome it.
Look at what the verse says. God is faithful. These temptations that threaten to overtake you are common to being a human being. God will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able but he will use the very temptation struggle challenge circumstance and he will provide the way of escape through it so that you will be able to endure it.
[44:24] You see he's not promising that he'll help you get around it or over it or under it. He's saying I'll use the very thing that you're afraid of that you're worried about that you're anxious about

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the very thing you've given loyalty to that is destroying you I'll use that to take you through it.

I am faithful. God the key! God is faithful. He wants us to face these things down but the only way we can do it is in him.
As Christians we have that power in the spirit not only to face these things but to move through these things repenting and replacing being purified seeing our faith grow growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ now very interestingly just to put this cap on it what does verse 14 say someone therefore my beloved flee from what all right what's the therefore therefore it's connecting isn't it Alonza therefore given what I just told you and instructed you in therefore my beloved isn't that beautiful the ones I am in love with the ones that I brought to myself the beloved of God therefore flee from idolatry because that's the issue the idols of our heart do not want us to move through these things with a
God is faithful heart if we lived in the God is faithful heart it would destroy idols if God is faithful in your heart you don't need idols it's another reason they sneak in you're living faithfully and they sneak in and our hearts are just breeding grounds for this so we want to let the Lord help us face it down questions comments insights about where we've been in the scripture so far Dora asked the question so we are allowing them to come in without being aware maybe that they are idols what do you think I got a head nod over here they mask they do okay does he say in the chapter somewhere that even good desires he did didn't he and he had a particular word that he used and then described that let's see if
I can find it you know I've colored in it so much that if you find it let me know ah I found it page 24 under the definition of an idol an idol is anything or anyone that captures our hearts minds and affections more than God you might say to me Jeff good grief if I think of it that way I'm idol worshiping throughout the day I don't I'm not God conscious every second of every day does that mean I don't love the Lord in those moments or right just stay with it stay with the study and these kind of questions will get answered notice what he says next so what could be an idol in your life anything it's true that's why we're in such trouble because absolutely anything can become an idol even a good thing when wanted too much becomes an idol the Puritans called such things here it is inordinate desires think of inordinate out of place too much one way or the other idolatry is who or what you worship it's what you long for it's what your heart is set on yes sir the cell phone sure yeah oh the world would stop yeah yeah brother yeah could be so this is a good so this is a good example of a good tool it's useful technology but we can use it to the point where we become enslaved it overcomes us and so every every idol moment no pun intended every idol moment where we've got our phone open and we're doing something with our phone this is a problem have you ever gone to a restaurant and watched couples sit there on their phones they're not talking they're not sharing oh she said it not me not me not me now look I have to admit the tag team on that
[51:10] I do worry about you sometimes in church on Sunday alright when you're using I do because here's and I don't think you're doing your grocery shopping or you know you're buying the next pair of shoes online I don't think that here's what I worry about that you're allowing your phone tech to take you to other places after you do what you do and you hit and it takes you and you're reading that and boy that's interesting and then you're getting into that and the next thing you know I've been talking for five minutes and you're like what I don't I hope that doesn't happen but don't let it happen so alright I'm just tagged you didn't say all that I did okay but yeah it could be an entry point yeah this is the point it could be an entry point so even a good thing the point is even a good thing can become a bad thing if we want it too much he goes on to say somewhere anything that we are willing to sin to get it or to sin if we don't get it that's the flag that it's an idol

I am willing to sin to keep this I am willing to sin to get this and I'm willing to sin if I don't get it or if I can't keep it we got a problem a big one while we're here let's go over on to page 25 and take this apart together actually it's at the bottom of 24 idolatry is a big deal because here it is if you want to know why idolatry is such a big deal and why we're doing this study it infiltrates and takes over the heart the nerve center it determines the way we sin when we sin with whom we sin you think of a bicycle wheel the hub is the heart where the idols are and each spoke is a specific sin and you can trace each sin back to the hub the center of the wheel the heart now in this war against sin you must not be satisfied to simply stop sinning that might have more to do with behavior change
I'm just not going to do that anymore okay that's a good start but don't stop there as you work with your kids with yourself with your spouse identifying your heart's idols can help you to understand

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why you become so irritable why you raise your voice see why you're so angry why you punish people who get in the way of your agenda in some way silent treatment whatever we have all kinds of ways identifying identifying the idols of the heart is when the tide starts to turn it's not enough to memorize some verses about anger and self-control no go after the heart there are heart issues behind all that anger folks this is real when someone is in a rage at home or in public you can be sure that someone else has threatened one of his or her idols and war is about to break out anger irritability verbal outbursts are indicative of heart issues gone awry so you're losing control idols give you the false security of being in control it's a lie and so when you start to feel out of control in relationship to your idol you react to that and so that reaction is what it looks like when our relationship start to break down first with the Lord and then it ripples out to other people this was the example he used do you see how all this is a spiritual issue isn't it crazy people think in our day and time they think that that behavioral change is the key man you know just whatever stop doing this start doing that start a new thing stop an old thing distract yourself they find all kinds of ways to not deal with the root and such is the heart anger irritability and verbal outbursts are indicative of heart issues gone awry when you react to someone else what is it that you are protecting what is it that you must have you see when you do this you see the other person as an obstacle that's why you're upset now look

I'm not saying people don't really sin against us but we look I can't be responsible for you doing to me what you do I can't control you I would love to think I can Mitch but I can't right but what I can control is my response I can control how I think about my brother PJ no matter what PJ might do or not do to me I'm in charge of how I respond to my brother how I think about my brother those are the attitudes of my heart not his if I hold unforgiveness in my heart toward my brother that's my issue not his no matter what he did to me I can't justify it see that's what I would do with Suzanne God help me I felt justified well she said well she did or she didn't say or she didn't do was more my issue what she didn't say what she didn't do and my responses toward her were my responsibility that was coming out of my heart and I cannot control what comes out of my wife's heart

I cannot do it I can't control what comes out of the hearts of the people I minister to and shepherd all I can do is lay out the truth and then I can deal with me and how I respond what is it that you must have if you have convinced yourself that you have to have this anybody that gets in the way of you having it is a problem an obstacle something to be dealt with punished ignored greed covetousness greed yes it is a sin among many other ways of things that I'm describing right now husbands doesn't the Bible say that our wives should respect us yes but if you go around with the old respect me chip on your shoulder constantly telling yourself see this is the self talk telling yourself my wife must respect me you will inevitably be hyper vigilant and hypersensitive you will be perpetually angry doggedly policing your wife's behavior why because for you respect is not just something that God commands your wife to do it's something that you think you must have in order to be happy in your marriage and so now

[58:26] I'm in a position where all I think about is what I don't have what I'm not getting what's not happening what other people have that I don't it could be I deserve better I deserve different I'm not asking for much I do do in me here I'm doing me it's not Lord it's not like I'm asking for the moon I mean it's in the Bible we just get so syrupy full of ourselves don't we so ugly this is what he said he said it's going to be ugly hyper vigilant hyper sensitive perpetually angry doggedly policing I would add one to this you become increasingly discouraged and despondent how can you not be how can you not be discouraged and despondent when you're living in this bubble that says

I'm not getting what I deserve I'm not getting what I need so many times the conflicts that you're having can be traced back to your own desires we see this in James 4 1 through 3 you think this I must be respected I must be blank whatever and then it causes war between you and anyone who gets in the way of that desire let's go to James chapter 4 have you gotten there yet Matt so we need to buckle up so James 4 Matt has been taking our men through the book of James and our men's breakfast what is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you now this is endemic and this is natural to human beings remember there is no temptation common to man right these are things that are common to being human what is the source of quarrels we get in quarrels what is the source of conflicts we get in conflicts among you now he's going right to the source is not the source your mine says pleasures anybody have a different word passions yes that wage war in what your members what are the members of a human being what are your members the heart the mind the soul what else are your members that wage war in your members yeah yeah look when

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you're in the when you're in the depths okay
I'm in the depths doesn't your body show it it's it's hard to hide being in the depths and in the depths and you wear it on your face and everybody knows and the chip on your shoulder is obvious you know oh Jeff's not happy it can be much worse than that Jeff thinks his whole life is over whatever we're such drama queens what is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you is it not is not the source!
your covetousness you lust that is you desire folks you desire you lust and do not have so what do you do you commit murder now he goes to the biggie right you want this so bad you're willing to take another human life that that's the nature of your heart or you you kill a person by a thousand needles the silent treatment or what 50 thousand other ways that you let the you're lust you when he when he uses the word lust in verse 2 this means an intense desire or longing for the idea here in this in the language the idea here is something that you have set your heart on it's intense it's very deep this wanting quarrels the word that my
Bible uses here quarrels literally means wars or conflicts battles contentions and then he goes on to use a different word here in the Greek conflicts it means literally fighting fighting like literally hand fighting clashes disputes pleasures or passions as Greg's translation says pleasures or passions means unfulfilled selfish desires it's a negative connotation so these are not good passions good desires healthy biblical godly these are unfulfilled!
[64:09] selfish desires that have taken root and now are beginning to define you because you desire this so much and you feel so unfulfilled in this especially toward another person that you're willing to make war and so we're back to page 25 so many times the last paragraph so many times the conflicts that you're having can be traced back to your own desires I must be respected I must be whatever loved liked and it causes war between you and anyone who gets in the way of that desire then you cry out to god in prayer and still don't receive because you ask amiss god change her god you know i need respect god you know how important that is get her god you go god but god doesn't answer a prayer like that what is he more interested in he's more likely standing there suzanne read this to me the other day laughing out loud he's standing there with a two by four wanting to smack you in the head and say shut up and love her stop worshiping yourself and thinking you're so important john piper said sin is what we do and we're not satisfied with god he says sin is what you do when you're chasing after something other than god namely one of your idols on page 23 god is not your sugar daddy in that paragraph there in the middle he is looking for ways to make us more like

Christ so he wants to show how you respond when you don't get your way there it is he is creating these circumstances in your marriage he is creating these circumstances in your life in your job whatever because god is showing you how you respond when you don't get your way when the unfulfilled selfish desires of your heart are made manifest how else are you going to see them you're not the holy spirit you're not god you need god to show!
on page 21 right in the middle of the page the middle paragraph unlike us god sees us perfectly we don't see that what we're asking god to give us is an idol but he does he sees we've shifted from the gospel and our savior is our sole source of joy and purpose now here's the kicker god won't help us chase our idols so don't ask him to yeah yep when god sees you pursuing the glory of another he's not going to help you get it and this is this is why we're miserable we would love to define the problem and the issue in terms of someone else I did he asked the question there so why don't we smell it why don't we see this for what it is god has given us his word to serve as smelling salts to rouse us from the idolatrous coma we live in so much of the time the reason that we don't see it or smell it in his example is this folks because it's deceitful it's deceitful because idols hide and we need god's word to root them out it's why we have sunday mornings!
root out the issues of your heart where you show disloyalty to Jesus and replace him with someone or something else and so much of the time we're not even aware that we're in the grip of an idol all right I'm going to stop there in just the last few minutes questions comments insights can you believe the time went that fast I hope you didn't feel bored about it okay anybody final Dora has a question okay Dora's question is are these idols akin to spiritual warfare what would you say anybody so that would be a yes perfect you said yes didn't you yep it is this is spiritual warfare because we said we established at the beginning while we're the ones doing the sin and worshiping the idols who is who is the one behind the idols who's the one feeding us the idols yeah

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Satan demonic forces you know when we say Satan sometimes I don't mean to make us sound so important that Satan himself is following me around going I'm going to get you but he has a whole army of demons that work for his pleasure and his good any other comments questions yeah yeah yeah you hear that y'all hear that great point Doug constantly chasing chasing chasing what and he's saying the point is if we could if we could garner more contentment and humility about our life before the

[70:19] Lord it could nix works yeah yeah if you're if you're using works to salve yourself or to mollify some issue of personal insecurity yeah that's manipulative but but there there are certainly it's insidious it's insidious really so Marievi's answer I'm doing this for this so Marievi's answer was it's all about motivation motives yep well this has been great great yes Marievi describe describe the relationship between being tempted okay oh yes so we're not absolved of personal responsibility because we're being attacked remember when

Greg and I are fond of saying this it's self sin and satan right it's it's it's the ugly triad the unholy triad that we're fighting so what is our default we cannot say the devil made me do it listen satan cannot make you sin that is the teaching of the charismatic movement and don't believe it the devil cannot make you sin my wife cannot make me sin no one can make me sin my sin makes me sin I choose to sin my flesh I sin because I like it and I say that God help me great so that's what the book's going to help us do all right look that's a good segue now I got to cut it off hold on I can do more questions afterward but let me respect the time here if you will look at chapter two so next week's homework is going to be chapter two and three you got to read two chapters now for next time okay it's not hard you just got to be disciplined and sit down and do it at the end of chapter two page thirty six identifying personal idols

Dora so you're right on you're tracking yeah so ask yourself am I willing to sin to! this am I! going to sin if I think I'm going to lose this do I turn to this as a refuge comfort instead of going to God more questions to ask and look at all those bullet points there okay and look look at the personal checklist you see that do do this exercise don't skip over this please do this exercise for your own good then you'll be ready to read chapter three chapter three is beginning to help you better identify what these idols are and then more importantly if you look at page 53 idolatry requires a specific plan of repentance and so he has a couple of steps here that he's going to talk to you about that builds on what chapter two ended with so do chapters two and three for homework for next time and when we come back in we'll talk about some of that list and answer

Dora's question more specifically do I begin to identify if it's an idol or not alright and repent and replace Greg okay thank you Greg let's see I do yes so here's two pages pages of all that plus some additional stuff see and then they have this really cool graphic here that's smaller in your book in the thing but it says now write the top five current or potential idols from your checklist onto this heart now the reason he's having you do this in chapters two and three and get this done is because the rest of the book is going to help you work through what these issues are so that it becomes more personal to you you don't have to share these with us all right only five only five only five yeah this isn't enough page for me all right okay we're good you guys have been great thank you for being here tonight and for helping us kind of speed through the introduction to all this material I think you're seeing that we've got some ground to cover and it's going to be a penetrating study for all of us you kind of wish that we could gather many more believers in to learn this but hey you learn it and then you take it to other people this is again no pun intended this is the heart of biblical counseling ministry and some of you have been in counseling with me and you have seen how the issues of the heart are what

I go to as quickly as I can and start helping you deal with the issues of the heart because it's life changing all right let's pray together and we'll be dismissed on a formal level for those of you who need to get home for work tomorrow and all otherwise we've got some goodies that they brought in for us and we can have some time of fellowship with our first Wednesday back in a while father God thank you for this study thank you for pastor Brad and his wife and the diligence that they have shown not only in the repentance of their own lives but in turning all of this around to stand before your people and say folks we made a mess of it and we repented and God was faithful Lord I just really appreciate that about him and his wife I really love them for that as a believer myself and I thank you for the ways that you are going to take the people in this room through this study together and begin to refresh and perhaps even revolutionize the way that they think about themselves the way that they think about their relationship to you and to their spouse to each other and perhaps

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[77:49] Lord even about the priorities of the church the family of God and how high a priority that is for you in all of these ways God and many more we pray that you would be glorified and help us to walk in faithfulness you are faithful thank you almighty God in Jesus name we pray amen amen

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