Gospel Treason: Week 2

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Preacher: Jeff Jackson

[0:00] All righty. We're going to launch right in unless there is a burning question! or issue that any of you want to bring up regarding the material.

We can start with something that maybe you didn't understand because I'm going to be reviewing through this together. So, what do you think? Are we good to just jump in or would you like to, bless you, would you like to ask something or comment on something that maybe you've been holding on to?
What do you think? Are we good? Just launch? Okay. All right. So, if I remember correctly, I asked you last time to read two chapters and at the end of chapter two, that's right, two and three, and at the end of chapter two, you were going to do this little exercise to help you process what you are identifying as idols in your life.
It doesn't do any good for us to read a book like this and not take time to ask ourselves, how is this material helping me see what I need to see in the way of change in my life, change in my heart? Now, remember, he's telling us and he will continue to say this throughout the book that idols like to hide, they camouflage themselves and masquerade as legitimate wants, needs, desires, aspirations, goals.
[1:52] They love to hide. They don't want you to know what they are. Now, when we say that, I'm not trying to animate an inanimate thing. I'm trying to tell you that there is a force, a spiritual force behind idols in your life and it's Satan.

And we're going to deal some more with that as we move through. We're also going to talk about your responsibility as you are tempted and led away into sin by your own flesh. So we can't blame it on the devil, but we want to acknowledge that the devil is a very real entity involved in our idol worship.
He is our enemy and he is the enemy of the Lord. And so he'll do anything he can to camouflage his schemes. Idols are schemes. They're frauds in your life and in my life.
So we want to root them out and you have an enemy that's going to work really hard to make sure that you don't do that or if you do, that you blow it off and not worry about it and stay where you are. So many of the issues that we face that unbelievers face in the way of symptomology, I'm going to call it. I'll explain this and go into it more as we get along tonight and in future sessions.
[3:06] So many of the things that people come to see therapists for, psychiatrists for, go on medications for, so many of those things can be rooted in idols and their symptoms of idol worship.

And so we want to constantly dig behind those symptoms to find out what it is that's fueling the symptomology. What's the root? The only way that we can diagnose that correctly as Christians is through God's Word because only God can see into your heart.
You can't even do that. You have to have the Word of God for God to use His Word to reveal to you, to open up to you what these idols are and then show you the way to deal with them.
Okay? Alright, let's jump in to chapter 2. Now, please bear with me. Hey guys, come on in. So, we don't have anywhere you can sit all together unless you join Suzanne at the back and spread around.
Can you do that? You want a table. And there's one up here. I think Suzanne's going to move. Suzanne's going to move up and let y'all do that. Thank you, hon.
[4:23] So, here's the deal. I don't intend to read each chapter to you that you've probably already read. But I want to use excerpts from it and read portions of it, get into discussion, ask questions, and then take you into the Word as well and answer some of the things that stuck out to me.

This is a teaching moment, so I'm going to teach. Alright, one of the things that helps us remember what's going on with idols in our life is how he describes perfecting and protecting idols.

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That's what this chapter is all about. It's pretty much the theme of the book. It is how we perfect and protect our desires.
Desires that have become, in some cases, good desires that have become inordinate, out of place in our life. We want something too much or even perhaps too little and it's become an idol in that way.
But we are always perfecting and protecting idols in our life. Now, this is an ongoing battle. You will not be able to overcome idol worship in your life on this planet.
[5:38] You will be able to deal with it moment by moment in your life and get better and better at recognizing them, at repenting from them, and replacing idols with...

But look, that idol is going to want to come back the next day, the next hour. So I don't mean to discourage you. I just want to set the expectation. But it's worth the fight because of what God tells us that idols do to our lives and those around us.
In a future chapter, you're going to see, it talks about how idols in your life destroy people around you. It's quite serious. All right. On page 27, as we begin, God is calling us by His Spirit and His grace to stop perfecting and protecting idols and rather to reject them.
So there you go. You have two choices. You either continue to perfect and protect or you reject. That's it. That's what we're dealing with. But man, He says it's hard.
Not only because they don't want to leave, but also, and here it is, it's because we don't really want to lose them. Was that surprising to you to read that? No. Mitch is saying, no, not really to me.
[6:51] If you've been walking with the Lord for very long and you've been introduced to this concept, it should come as no surprise that they don't want to leave and they're hard to get rid of. Maybe the issues that you're struggling with and the idol behind it have been there for a long time.

I like the way He says that. The issues that you're struggling with and the idol behind it. See? The issues manifest in the way of relational problems, all kinds of other ways, symptoms in your life. Most of them, but behind all of that are these idols. And they've been there for a long time. And you probably, I'm going to say, he didn't say that, and you probably don't recognize them as enemies. Each one has become a friend, a companion. And here's the insidious part. You're comfortable with. See? You're comfortable with.
Even a security blanket of sorts. Right? That's good language because it describes very aptly how we relate to these things.
[7:59] We get comfortable with them. They feel very warm. A security blanket. It's something that we can put over and around us and move from there. We good, gals?

I'm seeing he's got a... Hurt? Okay.
Alright, let's stop and pray, guys. Let's have a word of prayer. Thank you for telling me, gals. Yeah. His walk didn't look like a... That didn't look like a work thing. Yeah.
Alright, let's pray. Well, Father, we just want to pause for a moment and pray for our sister, Tara, and the accident that she's had now. And we pray that the doctors that she's going to will be careful and thorough and that they will be able to provide her not only with relief, but with a diagnosis that moves her toward healing, God.
We pray that it's not serious. There's no broken bones. Nevertheless, again, in these circumstances of life, I pray that you would give Doug a great patience and wisdom as they labor together, work together to make decisions about her treatment and whatever is needed.
[9:16] There's just unanswered questions for us, Father, but we know that you love Doug and Tara, and we know these things happen in our lives for reasons that you are clear about.

And so we come to you in prayer and lift her to you, lift Doug to you, lift the girls to you as they show the concern that they have for their mom. And we pray, Father, that this would result in Tara's healing even tonight.
And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Thank you. Alright, so you believe, and this is the one that I underline the most here, you believe it's who you are and how you get through life.
Your idols can become so much a security blanket for you and so comfortable to you that you begin to believe this is who I am. This is who I am.
And it's sad. And sometimes it's very, very, very hard to help people get through this. Sometimes it takes quite a bit of time and effort and energy.
[10:24] It's pretty messy. And in the meantime, people are being hurt that are close to these folks. Here's the temptation over at the top of 28.

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It's to make a slight modification. You keep the idol, but you tweak it. Do I really have to get rid of it? Do we have to really be that serious? You just put a little Christian t-shirt on it and that's the danger. You tweak it rather than performing radical amputation. And here's what I want to point out to you. Instead of you saying, I can't keep living this way.
Now folks, God has to show you that. Alright? This idol does not honor God. That's what I wanted you to see more than anything. This idol does not honor God.
When you come to that place, you have hit the issue. That's the issue. It's not, my marriage is in a shambles. That's bad. God can do something about that.
[11:25] It's not, my relationship with my kids is this. Or, my co-workers. Or, whatever. Fill in the blank about whatever your idol is creating in you and causing in your life.

It could be something as simple as your irritability and impatience, which could pass as idols, but I'm going to show you later.
Irritability and impatience, what we want to do is look behind those kinds of things to find out what's causing it. What is the idol that's going on in your life that would create in you this irritability, irritability, this impatience, this shortness with people or with someone or a certain circumstance? Behind all of that is where your idols hide. It could be something as overt as that. It could be something as covert as you've just convinced yourself that you're the kind of person that needs to keep people at arm's length for whatever reason is good to you.
Those are examples of idols that do not honor God. And that is the issue that makes idols what they are.
[12:42] They are against the Lord. Whatever else idols are doing to the people around you, the biggest problem with them is they're against the Lord. Or God wouldn't call them idols.

He wouldn't identify them for what they are. They're God substitutes. They're false gods. Gods. I forgot to cue Greg. I'm sorry. It's running.
We're all good. Okay. I need to get focused here. Alright. Thank you. So, he asked the question then on page 28, how does this happen?
How do we become idolaters? Now, let me pause. For those of you who've read this and you remember this section, how do you summarize how we become idol worshipers? What would you say?
Just take a shot at a quick summary, Mitch. Okay. That's pretty clear and simple. What do you think of that?
[13:40] Yeah. There's a substitution. And sometimes she says you don't do it consciously. Alright. What do you think of that? Is that concept?

Alright. Now, as soon as we say, I agree with you by the way. As soon as we say that though, here's what I don't want you to do. I don't want you to adopt psychology's explanation for what you might think is the antithesis to our conscious awareness.
Our subconscious. Or our unconscious. There's no such thing. The Bible does not teach that you as a human being have an unconscious. Alright.
You with me? I know. How radical. But it's true. You do not have a subconscious and you can't blame it on that. That's an out. That's psychology's out.
Who invented the subconscious? Man. Freud. A God-hater. He hated God. Alright. Now, we don't want that.
[14:46] It's been around for a while. It's a pagan concept. Freud just made a lot of money on it. the ego and the id. Right. Well, I won't go there.

I remember when I first read that and I just, even then, I was like, what? Was he on drugs with this stuff? What in the world? He was. He was. That was funny.
You see what I'm saying? You just can't get away from this. So, substitutes. It's anything in life. It can be anything.
It can be a material. It can be a car. It can be a person. It can be a concept. It can be a goal. It can be your upcoming vacation. It can be good things.
So, what does it all sum up to? A feeling. Yeah. So, what does it sum up to? Like, all these things you're not obsessed over or do more than being with God?
[15:48] Right. So, when you think of a God substitute and the way that we relate to a God substitute and idol, we're talking about things that would draw our loyalty, our allegiance, even our love.

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So, this could be very entrenched. So that, or it could be something that we're comfortable with, as he mentioned. It doesn't have to be something you're deeply in love with.
It can be something that you've just learned to trust instead of God in moments like this. A, B, or C. Suzanne? You said it last week and he says it later in this chapter that am I willing to send you this or am I willing to send you and I'm going to leave it.
And do I turn to it that the way you get to it? Yeah. Yep. It's the motivation. Yes. Yes. It's what you do with the idol.
It's the loyalty and allegiance of your heart toward the idol. It's what you're asking the idol to do for you that you should be asking and expecting God to do.
[16:58] Whether it's hope, trust, safety, a sense of well-being, identity. Yes, Cal? I'm a PTSD service.

Oh, okay, now I'm with you. I didn't understand. PTSD. PTSD. Yes. So, we take classes and we go to seminars and there's a whole group of veterans that do it and I do it online and so they give you all these pamphlets and booklets and they'll give you a bunch of videos you can look at and tell you something and you kind of yourself.
Your civility, not trusting people, keep a distance from that you see that night figure of civility and your quick response to defend yourself or to address it towards you and they always ask you in the end, okay, then we read the book and come back online and what is about it, okay, which one of these things helped you?
Okay. And then they keep it down and mine has always been to start. I've always said that and some of the veterans said, yeah, that too.
And I was glad you bought that. I wasn't aware of all these that it was in Iowa, per se. But, yeah, and in that discipline, I don't see a lot of spiritual stuff.
[18:42] Right. Doesn't surprise me. So my dad was a Vietnam vet, combat vet. He was diagnosed with PTSD. He was saved just a few years before he passed.

And trying to help my dad recognize the idols behind what was keeping him so locked up with all those symptoms you just said, was a years long process of praying for him, sharing with him when he let me, talking to him, loving him, was a process.
But when I tell you, I can't, I don't have time to explain it, Cal, but here was the kicker that finally helped my dad, I think, move past all of his excuses, many of them he wasn't even aware he was using as excuses, to get to the idol that was pretty much driving the train.
My dad was convinced that he could not forgive himself for some of the things he did in combat. And as a result, what he did when he came back to the world, he said, and he was very ashamed. And so, me trying to teach my dad that there's no biblical truth or precedent for forgiving yourself in the Bible. The Bible does never tell us to forgive ourselves. So once I was able to work with him a while on that and pray for him, he had some other people speaking into his life as well.
[20:11] When he finally dealt with that, true forgiveness, from Jesus, unconditional, past, present, and future, he became a Christian.

He trusted the Lord. And we saw the change come over his life. My mom will tell you the same thing. He was finally free, she said.
So, brother, thank you. Thank you. I'm glad. All I can do is praise God, brother, that you're here, God brought you here, and that you're learning the truth behind the roots of these things.
It's all spiritual, isn't it? Okay? So, we become idol worshipers from the womb. That's our default, that's our bent, is to be idol worshipers.
Did you have to teach your children to be selfish? Okay, yeah, I didn't either. They took after me. I brought them into the world, and so, right?
[21:11] You reproduce what you are. And I'm a sinner, and I made a bunch of little sinners. All right, here's the struggle, he says, over on 29.

Here's the struggle, Dor, maybe this will go further to help explain this. Yes, God is glorious. Yes, God is powerful, but He's not always on our timetable. Can you say amen to that?
All right, that was the problem with the Israelites. They thought Moses had been gone too long when he was up on getting the Ten Commandments and gone all that time. He's not coming back. We have to take care of ourselves.
It's the same thing we struggle with now. It's timing. God's timing is not our timing. All right, now that's a principle. God's timing is not our timing.

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So what do we do? Now how do we respond to that? This is just one way this manifests. It's not the only way. God's timing, so we turn to something we can control.
[22:10] Okay, I can't control the timing of this. Maybe it's a circumstance that you just walked into or something that just happened and it's pushing your little idle buttons. And so your idle starts to come to the fore to rescue you because it's what you've come to be comfortable with and depend on rather than to trust the Lord and live in His wisdom.

So you learn to make excuses for yourself. What you're really doing is you're trying to find something that you can control even though it serves us poorly. How do we say that?
Well, see, you get so comfortable you think it works. But then what happens next? You've got to do it again and again and again. Why? Because it doesn't work. Nothing's being cured.
You're just learning to cope. And the Bible does not teach coping mechanisms. The Bible teaches hope in Jesus Christ and in the wisdom of the Lord.
This is very different. Idols serve us so poorly they hurt us. They cost us. But all too often we're willing to pay the price. Here's again. They're deceptive.
[23:19] We're willing to make excuses to keep them. We think they're more predictable than God is and they keep us in the driver's seat. And then I wrote dot, dot, dot, dot, to idols.

Often just to remove the uneasy feeling of waiting and depending. Maybe the issue is I don't want to wait on God. Maybe the issue, the circumstance is a little different or situation is a little different for you and you just, you know, I don't want to depend on God.
This makes me, bless you, this makes me uncomfortable. This makes me feel anxious. This creates in me the temptation to worry, so I worry.
This situation, circumstance, whatever, whenever, it brings out in me the insecurities that I live with. And so what do I do? Do I depend on God? Do I trust God? Do I believe that God will help me deal with that? Or do I look to my idol?
[24:59] To help me in those situations. You see how this can start from a young age? You can start learning how to do this at a very young age. And instead of blaming our parents, what we should do is say, you know, I've learned something in my life and I've developed a particular habit in my life and now I'm a Christian and I answer to the Lord for this habit.

Regardless of what my parents did or didn't do. Or other people in my family did or didn't do. I've got to deal with this. This is my issue. And so what am I going to do?
Am I going to continue to go through hobbling through life with idols hanging off of me everywhere?
Now he makes this statement and see what you think of this.
The next statement there at the top of the paragraph break, God is good but He's not safe. Agree or disagree? Agree? Come on. Go out on a limb.
Yeah. Alright, you don't. Cal's a no. Lon's is a yes. What do you think? God is good but He's not safe.
[26:10] That sounds very profound. Is it biblical? I think it's a play on the earth. Yeah. Is it? I think that when they ask about Ashland if He's a safe one and they say He's not safe but He's good.

He's not safe but He's good. Are demons safe around God? Were demons safe around Jesus? No. Were sinners?
Yeah. Perhaps it's a both and. Alright? I want to show you something in Scripture to help you think about what He's saying and put it in its proper perspective because I believe God is safe.
Not for everyone. That's the key. Is that what you meant? He's safe for me but He might not be safe for us. If you rebel against Him and play the fool He's not going to be safe for you, brub.
Perspective. Perspective. Amy says. Good, Amy.
[27:22] PJ? You going to tag team? You're stuck in a between the same pattern and you want to adjust the answer to the music. Okay. So, let's hang on to that.

That's my segue in about five minutes. Alright? Let me take you to the Word. Great, great job. This is great. You're tracking very well. Let's go to Psalm 46. Now, I am not saying that Brad Bigney is wrong.
I am not dissing on him or jacking him up or saying he missed it. Fortunately, that statement does not stand on its own.
It's in a context. And so, we're trying to understand the context that he's saying it in. God is good but He's not safe. Psalm 46.

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God is our refuge. Do you see safety there? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. What is a refuge? It's where you go for safety. God is our refuge.
[28:26] Now, does that settle it? God is safe. For those who seek Him. For those who run to Him as a refuge. She said a tower.

A strong tower. Oh, our. Our refuge. Well, if you'd have said tower, you'd have been right too. That's right, Michelle.
God is our refuge and strength. The very present help. In what? Time of need. Trouble. Now look, we don't have to go further than verse 1.
But the whole psalm is about this. God is safe, folks. He is your refuge as a Christian, as a believer. He is safe. And He's good.
And He saved you. So He's the greatest safety that you have on the planet. There is no greater safety that you can find in this world.
[29:19] None. When you run to Jesus, you have run to the right place and person for refuge. Anything else is a lie.

If you go to John chapter 14, I'm going to give you one Old Testament and one New Testament. John 14.
I'm going to ask my brother Greg to read these two verses for me. John 14.27 will be the first one. 14.27 and 16.33 and we'll give you the context.
Alright. 14.27 Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Not as the world will do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled.
Neither let them be afraid. Okay. And then 16.33 I have said these things to you that in me you will have peace.
[30:32] In the world you will have tribulations. A big heart. I have overcome you. Now you see that? You have trouble in this world. I have trouble. You have health issues.

I have health issues. You have relationship problems. I have relationship problems. It's part of life. Where do we go to deal with this trouble? Jesus. Jesus.
Because He's our peace. He's our refuge. He brings peace. Folks, God is safe. He's the safest place for you to go.
Particularly when you are experiencing the troubles of life. The difficulties of life. The surprises of life. You just remember you serve a God that doesn't sleep or slumber and He's never surprised. He's always on the job. being God. And we're not. Alright? So I wanted to clear that up and I want to keep it in context.
[31:27] He goes on to say He'll mess with your life. Alright? I don't like that language. But Brad is like this sometimes. And I've actually talked to this guy not long after I think this.

I was still in my program of study I think. And I just called him and he made an appointment and we had a Zoom call and it was great. He's a great, great guy. Not just to be messing with your life but to conform you to the image of Jesus.
See, that's good. I'm glad he followed that up. Yet, notice, the flesh wants to remove such uneasiness from your Christian walk and idols offer a way to do it.
But it's a lie. It's a false promise. See? Idols, idols lie to you. Your flesh doesn't want to be uneasy. You don't want to be uneasy in social situations. You don't want to be uneasy with the unknown. Or what you can't control. Or the other person that's doing this to you and there's no way for you to make them stop even though you've tried.
[32:35] See, your flesh doesn't want you to be uneasy. But where did the Bible promise you that this would be an uneasy life? Or this would be a life free from being uneasy?

It doesn't. It says just the opposite. Right? You will have trouble in turmoil. This is a false promise because idols don't deliver.
They are liars. They are not safe. They are not our friends. When you go down, drop down into the next paragraph, anything that you exchange for God is a lie.
It will not deliver on its promise. Now folks, that's not safe. Yep, you want to know what's not safe, that's not safe. Idols are not our friends.
If you jump over to page 31, again, I'm tracing a theme here. Right down toward the last sentence or so in that block quote.
[33:38] Find that last sentence. Begins, rather than look to the Creator and have to deal with His Lordship, we orient ourselves towards creations where we can be more free to control and shape

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our lives in our desired directions.

Now do you see how this is all spiritual? spiritual? We're thumbing our nose at the Lordship of Jesus Christ in our life. And He is Lord whether we recognize Him as Lord or not.
We may not be bowing to Him as Lord, but He is Lord. And so what He's telling us here is our idols serve us in the way of helping us to orient ourselves toward anything but submitting to God.
this is where submission, Lordship, there can only be one Lord of the manor, not 45. And so if there's one Lord of the manor, we're all servants.
Now the question is, are we serving Him? Are we submitting? We'll look at a passage in just a moment that speaks to this. Alright? This is the lie.
[34:54] This is a note I wrote to myself. This is the lie that helps us avoid the circumstances and situations and trials which God uses to make us face and forsake our idols.

Let me read it again. This is just a note I wrote to myself in response to this idea that we do this because we want control. We want to shape our lives in our desired direction.
I want to be the master of that circumstance. I don't want to have to depend on God to use that circumstance to show me the idols of my life so I can deal with them. I've convinced myself I just don't do well with that.
So I'm not going to deal with it. The way I'm going to deal with it is not to deal with it and I'm going to make it an idol and make excuses and all that kind of thing.
Alright? This though is the lie that I can be in control. I can shape and do my own direction because it helps us avoid the circumstances, it helps us avoid the situations, and it helps us avoid the trials which God uses to make us face our idols and forsake them.
[36:05] So we're avoiding the very thing that God wants to use as a tool, hence my brother's comment. God will come in and He will create these circumstances and He will use them to, this guy said, two by four you to show you what's going on in your heart.

Now I want to show you more of that, okay? If you go to the bottom of page 58, I know I'm jumping ahead but I want to show you how He does this.
The bottom of 58 and I'm going to read over to the top of 59. Oh, how I wish I could tell you that this is not true but it is because according to Scripture God never gets a wrong address.
He always chooses the right moment to expose your heart. See, there's His timing. Not just to afflict you or whip up on you but to expose your heart so that He can realign it to His.
See, so if you're avoiding these very circumstances and situations that He's creating to reveal this to you so that you can repent and realign your heart with what is true in the Lord, if you're avoiding that then you're in a circle, aren't you?
[37:16] Because He's going to keep bringing you right back and right back and so people come in and say, I feel like I'm on a gerbil wheel or I feel like I'm on a roller coaster. I bottom out, I go up.

I bottom out, I go up. That's my life. This is why. It's all spiritual. It will continue to circle around. If you have a particular sin habit in your life, particularly as it relates to other people, right?
A relational sin issue in your life and it keeps circling back around and biting the people around you and maybe sometimes at night when you don't want to think about it but you have to because that's all you've got left and you're sitting there thinking, why do I keep doing this?
Now you're getting your explanation. What's behind it? Alright, go to the bottom of 59 with me. That last paragraph before the bold there. God's timing is perfect.
Ecclesiastes 7.14 We have to look it up because here it is. In the day of prosperity be joyful. And he says, you know, we're good at that. Right?
[38:20] We all want prosperity. But the verse goes on. But in the day of adversity consider this. Surely God has appointed the one as well as the other.

Now you've heard your pastor preach this out of Ecclesiastes. The conflict that you're facing right now with the people in your life is a divine appointment.
Now you either believe that or you don't. But it is. According to the scriptures it didn't just happen it was on God's calendar. And why is God using relational conflict in your life?
Past, present or future? Why is He ordaining and appointing that for your life? Because He wants to show you the idols of your heart. So that you can repent, forsake, face the Lord and replace it with something that honors God.
Because at the bottom line what's most wrong with idols is it's an offense to God. See, even as we fight idols it's not about us. It's about the Lord.

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[39:30] You still with me on this? If you look also go back to page 31 there where we were talking about this whole idea that we want to be free to control and shape our own desired direction when these situations come into our life.

If you look at page 33 right at the top of the page when we cease to worship God we do not worship nothing we worship anything.
That's good. You'll probably be hearing that in a sermon or seeing it on a slide here somewhere. So he asks the question how can you start to deal with idolatry in your own life and he gives a wonderful wonderful passage of scripture.
Search me oh God and know my heart try me and know my isn't this interesting anxieties and see if there is any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.
So, how do you begin to deal with idolatry in your life? Well let me give you some homework and then he outlines the homework. He says the heart is deceitful from Jeremiah 17 9 desperately wicked who can know it?
[40:46] And then he answers God. God knows it. Verse 10 of Jeremiah 17 tells you that. God knows it and he will help you know it.

Hence the circumstances and situations and trials that God ordains appoints in your life to help reveal to you and your responses your responses become the evidences of what's in your heart because your mouth speaks from the overflow of your heart.
You behave out of your heart. We're going to do more with the heart stuff. I'm going to do a whole session here pretty soon on a biblical view of the heart.
Just some of you will be reminded of that and some of you it will be fairly new. But what he's telling you here is that God will help you know it. You don't have to be a master analyst or have the keenest insights or a degree in biblical counseling.
You just need to be willing to say with Psalm 139.23 Search me O God and know my heart. Try me and know my anxieties. Now I want to let everybody off the hook with what I want to do with you next.
[41:58] I'm going to walk you into something else in scripture. Would you please indulge me and in all the honesty you can muster would you mind raising your hand if you have ever or if you are in any way going through your life having to deal with any level of anxiety at all.

Would you raise your hand and I'm raising mine first. Now I want you to look around and see there's not a person in this room that isn't raising their hand that they deal with anxiety. It's not a trick question.
Okay. I'm not setting you up for failure. I just want you to see as brothers and sisters in the Lord that that's common to being human. But here's something else I want you to know. God speaks to it in His Word.
He doesn't just leave you to face worry and anxiety. He speaks to the issue of what it is. And folks this can be crippling. Have you seen the experience of this?
Yes. It can be crippling in your life. Anxiety can. It can come in all different forms and all different kinds of reasons. Now I want to do something more with that because of the way that this has been interpreted.
[43:12] I don't know what I didn't look to see what version he's using. He's using the NIV? Alright. I'm going to read from the NAS in a moment. We're going to turn there. Search me O God and know my heart.

Try me and know my anxieties and see if there's any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting. Alright. If you go over on page 34 we're going to go to the scriptures in just a moment. I cannot believe the time. My goodness. Wow. Wow. Okay. He says part of this repentance in praying this prayer is then saying to God and he's paraphrasing here at the top of 34 God I want to know what my idols are.
I really do Lord as much as it hurts right even if it hurts I want to know see that's the prayer you're earnestly pleading with the Lord show me the idols of my heart that are dishonoring you and leading me astray because that's the issue it's okay to pray Lord this is ruining my marriage Lord this is ruining my friendships Lord this is keeping me and my spouse straying and at odds we're not as close as we need to be because I've got this in my life it's okay to pray that as long as you understand that at the bottom line you're dishonoring the Lord because it's sin idols are sin we're not to do that and remember your idol might not be some gross obvious thing leering at you from

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the throne of your heart in fact for a believer most often it's not usually it's something that we don't recognize in ourselves now if you go over to page 52 page 52 he's going to give you an example of what
I've been saying to you about God appointing these circumstances situations and trials in your life to be his tool to reveal the idols of your heart to you what other way is there as God uses his word to show you where these idols are hiding and what they are right in the middle of 52 in the middle paragraph break so often when you're in the boat he's talking about suffering trials hardships so often when you're in the boat and the storm hits and the waves are crashing you pray God help me give me peace but he's waiting for you to throw your idols overboard you want God to send you peace while you hang on to them while you row and live for something other than for him but he won't do it don't think that God doesn't answer prayer no he does don't say that he's not good he is what he's doing is the very best thing for you what is he doing here it is he's leaving you to rock in your little boat with the storm blowing so that you'll wake up and realize that the idols have to go [46:26] God doesn't give peace to people who are frantically clinging to protecting and perfecting their idols I would add making excuses for them alright now I wanted to show you that so that you see that later he's going he's dealing with the reality that God appoints these circumstances and situations he appoints people in your life if you're married that number one people that he uses to help reveal idols in your life is your spouse like it or not now this caused a lot of marital difficulty for Suzanne and I when we first got married the reason is because I didn't know any of this and so when tension started between two sinners and I began to deal with issues in her life and my life and our married life I didn't realize that in many cases what my wife was reflecting to me was my own image in my marriage

I should have been seeing myself in my marriage instead I blamed it on her you with me God will use the closest person and people in your life to reflect back to you the weaknesses of your life the idols of your life see I been at this church now most of you have been with me many of you! been with! me with Greg as pastors for 11 years believe that brother this church has been off the ground for seven years see I can't say things like this oh well that previous pastor well first of all there ain't been no previous pastor of this church right I can't blame it on my brother Greg whatever this church is strengths and weaknesses it's right here because you reflect much of what the! leadership is that's just a principle out of the Bible our fingerprints are all over this church so where there are strengths Greg and I say thank you Lord for using us using us who are we to help strengthen this group of people and lead them in Christ Jesus and if there are weaknesses we say Lord please forgive us help us strengthen us in ways we need to grow better deal with that no no that's not going to work believe me
I tried it it's not going to work if you come over on page 35 right here next to the last paragraph on 35 right underneath the indented quote there I want to end this chapter by leaving you with Christ and then if you go down to the last sentence of that paragraph glance at your heart but gaze at Christ keep the main thing the main thing you know I like that right you know I'm going to like that all right now I want to show you something I want to take you to this passage in Psalm 139 this is probably where I'm going to have to stop but let's just see where it goes let's go to Psalm 139 all right now we're at we're at the place where he's quoting verses 23 and 24 and [50:30] I'm going to read it from my translation NAS we'll see how close it is to the ESV as well search me oh God and know my heart try me and know my anxious thoughts that's where the NIV got anxieties I think and see if there be any hurtful or literally way of pain in me and lead me in the everlasting way the everlasting way would be the eternal way lead me in the way of heavenly priorities heavenly living here see we don't have to pray this in heaven this is a prayer for here so lead me in the heavenly priorities of life for here now search me could also be examine so this is a prayer for God to examine you in ways that you cannot do for yourself you and I can't go this deep in our life psychotherapy is wrong they can't get you to go so deep that you understand yourself you realize psychotherapy is all about helping you understand yourself and feel better about yourself those are the!

in secular psychotherapy those are not the goals of Christian counseling discipleship Christ likeness is the goal of Christian discipleship and you don't get there by understanding yourself better you get to know Jesus better and you deny yourself and you take up your cross and you follow him do you see how this debunks all of that nonsense that people follow and get themselves spiraled down this is why people say my therapist told me I would be better off to divorce my

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spouse I would be happier and I deserve to be happy where's that written it's not but Christians are counseled like this believe it the actress or the singer songwriter Amy Grant divorced her husband and remarried on the advice of her psychotherapist that told her she deserved to be happy fulfilled is that what it was so divorce her husband and marry the guy that's making her happy and she did this happens all the time search me examine me and now know this or see this and know who who's he asking to know his heart
God and know my heart heart is inner man so heart takes in the way you reason the way you choose the way you desire the way you feel it takes in all of that it's your inner man so search me examine me oh God and you know you know my inner man my innermost being then he says this try me that means test test me now the idea here is like using minerals and testing them out so God is going!
use certain things purity so he's going to refine it's like testing metal and refining it so you're asking God to refine you test me refine me put me in situations where I'm tested so that I can see what the result is that's why you do a test you want to know the result if I give you a test here next week if I give you a pop quiz!
I want understanding your knowledge your ability to try me and know once again and know you know my what my anxious thoughts literally in the Greek here the idea is troubled and disquieting thoughts yes it's literally rendered cares the idea is disquieting or troubling thoughts but the literal rendition is cares caring can get you in a lot of trouble and we don't teach that the wrong kind of caring can get you in a lot of trouble that's the kind of caring that he's talking about here deliver me from the kind of caring that I shouldn't be using and having in my life it's the kind of caring that wants to fill in the blanks of your life so you can try to control it it gives you some idea or semblance of being in control you run ahead and you fill in the blanks with your thoughts your forecasting your what ifs because you're insecure because you're anxious because you're afraid whatever fill in the blank and so what is he saying here he's praying a prayer that says
[55:39] Lord I realize this is real in me this goes on in me the psalmist is admitting this and David says see if there be any way of pain in me what he's asking God to show him is this I know that I do things in my life that sabotage me was that true in his life alright so he's asking God show me the way of pain in my life show me the way that I shoot myself in my own foot you know why he has to pray that because these things hide they don't want you to see them and then he ends this way lead me in the priorities of life that you have help me to live by what you say is right and true and worthy the everlasting way the way that's going to survive all this not my way obviously the ways that

I've tried to do it have! shoot thy own foot or worse but that's not all now listen the Bible speaks to anxieties we all have them okay let's look at another one 1st Peter 5 now the reason that I'm using this one is because he mentions it in the book and because I know from my life my own life and from counseling that this is at the top of the list of what people deal with the top of the list of why so many people come in for counseling or want to sit down and talk about things going on in their life because they're anxious they're worried they're fearful now look what Peter tells us and this is very interesting in verse 5 of 1st Peter 5 you younger men likewise likewise just simply is rehearsing what he's been telling them in the first four verses he said now you younger men just like I've been telling the others be subject to submissive to your pastors your elders and all of you now notice clothe yourselves with what toward whom okay so we have submission and humility contextually in verse 5 for God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble that's the problem
God opposes the proud if you live in the pride of your idols God will oppose you he's not going to let you stay in the boat rowing through the storm holding on to your idols and say God save me from the storm he's going to say no we'll just keep that storm going until you're ready to let go of the idol now look I'll row with you but here you are you know you got your idols and your you know that's what we do the whole time saying help me help me God help me help me God polish up them idols now now verse 6 therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God who is really in control who has the mighty hand
God not you thank God so humble yourself under his mighty hand stop trying to wiggle out of the circumstances the trials and the situations that God is creating and appointing in your life to help reveal idols to you so that you can repent and replace forsake and be faithful in the Lord humble yourselves under his hand submit to him in this process that he may exalt you at the proper time here's the timing again we can't get away from it God has a timetable when it's time for God to stop

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the storm and be your refuge he will but not till he's done the work in you alright now look verse 7 casting all your what on him what's the word why does he have to tell us to cast our anxieties on him because we want to hold them to ourselves and because we have them this whole room is full of people who deal with anxiety you're not the only one but what we do is we allow that to become an excuse for disobeying the Lord avoiding people avoiding situations avoiding circumstances when God is saying no that is exactly what I have designed for you to walk into so that I can show you what's behind that anxiety it's an idol and when you get anxious you get anxious because your idol is threatened and I'm trying to show you that you get worried because your idol is being threatened because you don't feel the control that you thought you had that you want to have because you've made an idol out of it must be this way for me to function in this manner so when it's not this way

I function in a different manner and that different manner often looks like disobedience because you want control I want control believe it or not one of the biggest items in my life that God constantly uses to do this in my life is the pastorate I had to get to a point where I learned the pastorate is so dadgum hard I'm not whining I'm stating a fact because God uses the pastorate to keep people like he and I humble in what we do dependent in what we do because it's going to look really bad and go really bad for you if we don't do that so God constantly uses the pastorate to do that to us he is constantly putting he and I in situations that are way above our pay grade the only way for us to deal with that is either fake it or depend on the Lord that's it you're welcome thank you for praying for me now you know why

[62:29] Greg and I our first response to you as you compliment us and you're good at that as you encourage us as you talk to us about our strengths and our giftedness and all you're so good at that guys thank you it's why we respond so often with thank you please keep praying for me I believe that we are effective because of your prayers the faithfulness of God in answering the prayers of his people keep our pastors pure and keep them faithful amen so now you see this is what I wanted to show you tonight humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God it's God in control it's God creating and appointing the circumstances trials and situations so that he can get you in a place where he can show you how you respond you see and hear how you respond in a situation you're not comfortable with you would rather not be in it was a surprise to you but not to God and now God is using those responses coming out of your mouth or in your behaviors or whatever it is your goals your focus however and he's showing you what's going on in your heart that's the only way you're going to know and so you begin to evaluate what's going on behind those words for example irritability let's say you're irritable let's say that you're a person that deals with impatience and irritability so you're quick to snap or run down or blame shift or get kind of ornery and standoffish or whatever maybe you give the silent treatment you know there's all kinds of ways okay am I hitting most of them let's say you do that is there

I'm glad I'm not over there because my ribs alright so that's going on in your life and so you say well I have an irritability idol no you have a symptom of irritability where your idol is being shown irritability is revealing you have an idol problem your impatience is showing you have an idol issue because in that moment your irritability and impatience is showing you're not trusting the Lord you're not looking to the Lord in that moment you're not so you've replaced the Lord with something the irritability is a sign post it's a symptom in a sign post pointing back to something going on inside your heart you can't blame your spouse well if he wouldn't I wouldn't be you can't do that you've got to deal with your heart circumstances don't make you sin they reveal the sin going on in your heart now this is critical folks the reason

I camped out here for this one is this is critical you are going to have a hard time taking the next step for the homework that you did at the end of chapter two about identifying your idols look I will never ask you to show everybody what you wrote down in your five things or whatever no I'm not here to embarrass you I'm here to appeal to your heart your reason in the Lord your intellect in the Lord through the word of God and say folks these idols are not our friends they may feel comfortable to you now you've done it so much you've made excuses for so long all that but the reality is these are the very things that Satan is using in your life to keep you from taking the next step toward repentance and being used mightily of the Lord in context that you would rather avoid I learned a long time ago that the very things that I was the most afraid of was the things that God immediately in ministry began to move me into and make me deal with

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I remember telling her not two years into the ministry fresh out of seminary I was like I am living my worst nightmare right now what is happening to me right now in ministry this is the stuff that I have nightmares about and now it's happening what did God show me yeah the worst thing you think could happen to you now it's happened and I'm sorry you're what oh you're still alive in fact you're still in the ministry in fact I'm doing a work in you and changing you see this is the way your God works because he's big and he's safe run to him run to Jesus everybody worries everybody has anxiety everybody walks into social constructs and situations and contexts!
where they feel uncomfortable everybody including me some of them more than others but those are exactly the kinds of things that God wants to use to show you how much you're making it about you wow Lord I have really made this about me haven't I and the people closest to me have paid the price because whenever I'm not getting what I want in this I let them know it you see what I'm saying and this is the way people fall out this is the way marriages get strained so I'm not saying that people don't sin against you but it is always always wrong for you to sin in response to being sinned against it is never right for you to sin in response to being sinned against never you will never find the Lord saying oh well I get it go ahead sin punch his lights out
[68:27] I'll look the other way okay all right quick questions comments I know I didn't get to chapter three that's not a problem because everything in chapter three is going to be repeated just about everything in the subsequent chapters that are coming up all right so questions comments insights anything you want to throw out you were good to let me just keep going what do you think this all sound like a bunch of hooey yeah good good good

Kevin I agree with you I just didn't want to let it stand for some folks to say oh my gosh he's saying that God isn't God yeah he's right God isn't safe you're right contextually he's saying you can't put God in your box and make him what you want to be so now I feel safe I've got God corralled it's a good point yeah yeah yeah yeah that back to Amy's thing comment about perception perspective it's that's what it is yes I've had people tell me that God is a safety net a safety net we can do whatever we want to because God is your safety net that's why I say he's not no he's not safe I can't do what I please I'm not safe right right I'm going to suffer the consequences of my sin we're not safe in disobedience now let's add real quickly are we safe in our salvation there you go thank God
I can't send my way out of my salvation okay right and there are consequences he will allow us to live in the consequences of wrongdoing he will and sometimes the wrongdoing can follow you for the rest of your life right yeah boy that was hard yes and then he sinned later in the census and thousands and thousands of people died because he sinned I tell you I don't know how he lived with it man I couldn't imagine that being the ruler of a nation and having thousands of people that are your subjects die as a direct result of your sin I mean the Lord God knows I just mightily a man after God's own heart with all that there's hope there's hope hey thank you for being here again thank you for letting me stand up here and do what I do and I hope the scriptures encouraged you these are great passages of scripture wonderful we didn't get to one of them
I think it might have been in chapter 3 where he went to James and talked about how you are tempted and then led into sin because you give in to your own fleshly temptations and Moravia brought that point up at the end of last session so we'll get more into that as we go I don't want you to think we have an excuse to blame the devil even though he's active in all of this he doesn't make you sin he can't he's not that powerful alright ok well we can talk more I'll be around y'all will be around we have goodies next week let's go ahead and do now I'm not saying we'll get to both of them but let's go ahead and do 4 and 5 because I've got something I want to do right when we get to 6 so let's go ahead and do 4 and 5 now 4 is a little long so don't procrastinate because you'll be speed reading trying to catch up and miss some stuff read 4 and 5 and we'll see how far we can go in that
Greg and I will be tag teaming I'll be out a little bit in October Greg will be out at the end of October Matt you're gone all of October when do you come back September November ok so you'll all three of us will be gone at the same time that's wow ok that's alright we got some guys that can handle it alright let's pray together and let you go get your goodies father thank you once again for your grace and mercy as we are able to gather and talk through these things and expose Lord we're exposing in your word we're using your word to expose the lies of our enemy we're using your word to expose the lies of our own heart as our hearts lie to us and so we forevermore pray that you will help us to walk closely with Jesus to be people of prayer and depend on you especially Lord as we

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fight these different issues that are so common to being human like anxiety and worry and fear [74:08] Lord the insecurities that we carry within us for different reasons help us to bring all of that to you you are our refuge in that you are our safety in that and so God help us to trust you lean into you heavily and learn to love you God and follow you we thank you in Jesus name Amen

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