# Gospel Treason: Week 3

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Preacher: Jeff Jackson

[0:00] Dear brothers and sisters, so if you read through chapter 5, we were going to try to do two chapters tonight.

I'm going to start in chapter 5 and then quickly move us back into 4 where we'll do the lion's share of our discussion or talking tonight, teaching. So if you have your books, if you'll go to chapter 5. Chapter 4 was long, but a lot of that I think was, yeah, the story that he had.
And I just skimmed that. I had read it before, of course, because I've been dealing with this book for a while. So in chapter 5, I'm going to draw your attention, beloved, to page 82.
And I'll begin to just walk us into this as we continue to try and think through how the idols that you, hopefully by this time, the idols that you have identified in your life, maybe one, two, three, whatever, having done the exercises before, you can think more carefully and prescriptively about what these idols are and how to begin to address them in your life.
[1:29] Because they're not our friends, are they? Idols are not false gods. They're not our friends. The worst thing about idols is that they're anti-God. They're against God.

And therefore, they're against anything God is or stands for. His children. Idols are not our friends. On page 82, he says right above that dark bowl there, that dark shadow, idolatry has changed how you see yourself.
Right above that. One reason that the battle against idolatry is so fierce and that idolatry is so hard to shake is this. You're not just clinging to substitutes for God.
Now, that's true. That's a big, big deal. But he's saying you're not just standing there with a handful of counterfeits, false gods tucked under your belt or whatever, hidden in your clothing, as it were. The problem is much bigger and it's rooted far deeper. Now you're starting to get into how we understand the operations of the heart and why the Bible tells us the heart is desperately sick.
[2:34] It's wicked. It is beyond human understanding. Psychology cannot tap the depths of the human soul, the heart. Neither can any aspect of mankind's attempts to understand itself.

We have to have God reveal to us, expose to us, demonstrate to us. Now, the process that he uses to do that is what we're zeroing in on right now.
We're talking about how it is that God on the front end begins to make our idols known to us, especially since they masquerade, camouflage, hide.
They want to conceal themselves even in good things. Things that in and of themselves aren't bad. So we need God to work through our lives to reveal these to us.
And the process that he uses to do that is very interesting. And it can be very difficult. And that's what he's saying now. Idolatry changes how you see yourself. When you're snared in the trap of idolatry, you take on an entirely different identity.
[3:46] Now, that should shake you a little bit. You start to do this. You start redefining yourself in light of that particular idol.

Now, this is self-talk. A lot of this that he's saying right now is revealed in how you talk to yourself. Think about yourself. About how you relate to you.
Now, Christ is real specific about how we are to relate to ourselves. What is one of the verses we use often to talk about what we should do with self?
Deny. Deny yourself. Love yourself. That doesn't mean hate yourself. And it's not on the other end of the spectrum. Love yourself.
You know, the terrible teaching. You have to love yourself before you can love others. The only problem with that is that's man-driven, not Bible-driven. Our self-talk reveals a lot of what he's talking about now in terms of the way idols captivate us, capture us, and begin to redefine us in its image.

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[4:56] We are in the image of Christ. But idols redefine you in terms of their own image. And your self-talk will begin to reflect that.

You start redefining yourself in light of that particular idol. The I must-haves. The I should be able to.
It ought to be thus and such. As that all of that refers to me. Those are the ways that we start revealing to ourselves how our idols are beginning to define how we think about what we need, who we are, the oughts and musts of life, how needs are defined.
This is one of the reasons that there were so many books that came out about 20 years ago. I think that was kind of the apex of it that spoke of all this issue about our needs.
And even in Christian circles, he mentions one, the book, His Needs, Her Needs. Have you heard of this one? Yeah. All right. That one was huge at one point when we were 30 years ago when we were involved in trying to figure all this out.
[6:13] How does psychology and all my degree stuff. And that book came out. And boy, was it popular in Christian circles. People were doing Bible studies around that book right and left.

His Needs, Her Needs. Suzanne? Yeah. Yeah. The love languages, right? What's your love language? You still hear people say stuff like that. All right. All of that that we're referencing right now has to do with what he's talking about in this context.
Just a couple of lines down now. We're still on page 82. That's why when one of those things you live for is threatened, you react so fiercely and violently.
When one of those things, what things? Your idols. Your idols. Your idols. Your idols. Your idols. Your idols. Your idols. One of the things that you've become loyal to. One of the things that has now surfacing, that has come to define you.
That has come to own you. All right? You are struck with panic if it's taken away or if someone gets in the way of that thing. Now, hold on to that one.
[7:20] I hope you circle that one. If someone gets in the way of that thing, that idol, what you've convinced yourself of that you have to have. What you've convinced yourself of that you have to have. I must have this.

I must have it in this way. I must have it in this way from you. You must function toward me in this way. Well, who are you? Who are we?
We are servants of Christ the King. We don't have the right to dictate to other people, this is how you must function toward me. And if you don't, I'm going to punish you for it.
Right now, just think about that now. Think about that. Because it's not just a thing or a person you enjoy, it's who you are. You feel threatened because this has come to define you.
You feel like you cannot be you without it. Your idol can be masked in insecurity in some way toward people or toward situations.
[8:20] You just think in this context or around these kinds of people or whatever. And you're very insecure about that. It's come to define who you are. So anything that threatens to expose you in that insecurity, you panic.

Do you hear this? This is where your panic attack stuff comes from. When people cannot put panic attack in an organic cause, this anxiety and worry, this is you being threatened.
Your idol is being threatened. And so you panic. And people panic at different levels. It depends on how devoted you are to the idol. It depends on how much that idol helps you function in life.
That's going to determine a lot of what your reaction is. There's a last sentence on 82. There's a loss of self. A loss of self. You're afraid that you're going to lose yourself.
Now, you may not be at the front of your mind aware of this happening, but you certainly experience the feeling of the threat of it.
[9:27] You might not be able to articulate it, define it, explain it, even to yourself, much less someone else. But it's there. That's why a good counselor will ask you certain questions and take you down a road that will help draw this out into the open for you.

And it's quite an effort. Over on the top of 83, you take on false identity in light of your particular idol. So, to even think of turning away is like turning away from yourself, losing yourself, having the rug pulled out from underneath you.
We use terms like this. I feel like I'm losing my mind. It creates a sense of disorientation. I'm losing my way. I'm at the end of my rope.

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These are all ways that we express feeling like our idol is threatened to the point where, what do I do now? My idol isn't coming through for me. I'm in panic mode to rescue myself in terms of what I have been looking to, to help me cope, to prop me up in life.
He talks about the identity rock. Jesus isn't your rock of identity. It's something else. He goes on to say here in the middle of 83 as he quotes Tripp.
[10:46] Tripp writes in his book, Lost in the Middle, we take on experiences, relationships, or accomplishments as our identity. Here's the quote. Sinners tend to move away from defining themselves in relationship to the creator.

They begin to define themselves in relationship to the creation. But the creation cannot bear the weight of defining us. It will always come up short. It is bound to happen.
And when it does, a moment of disappointment can quickly turn into a fundamental loss of self.
Now, I hope this doesn't sound too terribly psychological to you, although the word psychology comes from the Greek word soukos.
Soukos. And it means soul. So the study of psychology is the study of the soul. The domain of the soul belongs to God. The church allowed psychology, humanistic psychology, to hijack the study of the soul, the cure of the soul, the ministry of the soul, years and years ago when psychological experts came to the fore.
Doesn't it make you wonder what in the world did the people in the 1600s and 1700s do before psychology arrived on the scene? How did they have mental health? They didn't have anybody around to help them with it.
[12:04] Yeah. Right over on 84. Let me just keep walking you into this. False identity takes place unconsciously. Again, I want you to be careful when this word is used in any literature you see, Christian or otherwise.

Remember, the Bible does not allow for an unconsciousness or an unconscious part of yourself. It doesn't allow for that. So what I've written out in the margin for me when he says, false identity takes place unconsciously, I don't think that he's using it necessarily in the psychological sense necessarily, but I wrote out self-deceptively.
False identity takes place self-deceptively. We're self-deceived. False identity takes place self-deceptively. So we might be rationalizing about it. We might be justifying in it.
We might be making excuses and other things that we do to cope, but we're deceived. So this false identity can take place in a way, to his point, can take place in a way where you're not on the forefront of your mind thinking about it in biblical ways, identifying in biblical ways.
You just learn to act this way. This is just part of who I, accept me like I am. Most of the time, here's the way we defend these idols that become our false identity.
[13:25] It's just my personality. And so personality bears the weight of that. It's just my personality. So we demand of our spouse, you need to just deal with me this way, this is who I am.

And it can be a cop-out. So he says this, well, let me ask you this question that I wrote in my margin here.
How much do things, stuff, goals, guilt, that's a popular one, or some person or a group of people, how much do these things influence or control you?
Just think about that. Think about why you do what you do. He's going to talk about motives in a minute. How much are you controlled by your ideas that surround things, stuff?
What about your goals? Nothing wrong with goals in and of themselves unless goals have come to define you, drive you, motivate you. Instead of, I want to bring glory to the Lord.
[14:31] I want to become more like Jesus. I want to obey Him in His commands to show I love Him. So I want to serve His people. I want to submit to His Word. These are the reasons that we're alive in the Lord.

How much are you controlled by your own goals, your own sense of guilt, your own sense of demanding that things be this way? People act toward you in this manner so that when none of that happens, you find ways to punish, to retreat, to disappear.
See, I can say these things to you guys in a room like this because this is part of being human. We all do this. We all struggle with this.
Every single one of us. You don't have to be going through some major crisis. Maybe you are. But you don't have to be going through some major crisis in your life at this moment for these things to be true of you.

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Idols hide and lurk. And our enemy is immensely patient. He doesn't mind the long game. You know, this is Israel with the pagers.
[15:44] Years before they've got all that in place and then boom, they push the button years later and boom. Our enemies. He's very patient. Right before Set Your Heart on God on page 84, he says this, The things that we set our hearts on never remain under our control.

This is the major point of this book. Instead, they capture control and enslave us. And this is the danger of earthbound treasure. Don't fool yourselves, folks.
These coping strategies that you've developed. These excuses that you make for avoiding truth, avoiding people, avoiding sin in a way that helps you confront it.
These ways that you justify wrongdoing in your life and things that you know are not right. These are all things that will try to convince you that you have to have these things to be in control.
Nothing can be further from the truth. You're not at all in control. You're being controlled. Let's look up 2 Peter 3, verse 19. I think it's verse 19.
[16:55] I'm pretty sure. 2 Peter 3. As soon as someone's there, please feel free to read it. Or excuse me, 2.

2 Peter 2, verse 19. What's it say? False teachers will try to convince us that these kinds of things are exactly the things that we need to build into our lives.
That's their false teachers. They're putting across false doctrine. They're not dealing in the truth.
And so the context there are false teachers who promise freedom. They don't even know what they're talking about.
When in reality, those are the things that overcome you. And what does it say? The thing that overcomes you does what to you? What does the verse say? Enslaves.
The thing that overcomes you enslaves you. Idols overcome you. Whether you realize it or not. That's the biblical reality. Did you just read that?
[18:11] That's the biblical truth. So we don't have to split hairs over that. Right under set your heart on God. Again, when you set your heart on other things, right in the middle of that paragraph on page 84, when you set your heart on other things, some earthbound treasure, whether it's a body, a person, a substance, it begins to enslave and control you.

And some of us are very practiced at being enslaved because we've been doing these things or this particular thing or this particular pattern for some time so that it's now, it's just really ingrained in our life.
We just think about ourselves this way. That's the problem. We think about ourselves this way. Well, this is just the way I am. Well, this is just the way it needs to be. And then we say things like this.
Am I wrong to want this? Am I wrong to expect this? You know? Do you see what that question does?
Is that question pointing this way or that way? Am I wrong to think this? Which way is that question pointing that way? What that infers is this. Somebody is messing this up.
[19:26] Am I wrong to want this? See, I did this. I did this early in my marriage. I was telling Suzanne today as we were talking through this together and I got emotional with her just thinking back on it.

You know, I got married and like he said, you know, I thought after a while when it felt like the wheels were coming off, I'm like, you know, I didn't have any of these problems before I got married to this woman.
Where do you think that problem is, Jeff? Well, I know where it is. I'm looking at it right over there. Kind of thing, you know. And I told her with tears. I said, I am so sorry, you know. I didn't know any of this then.
I didn't know that God was using you in my life to show me idols in my life that I'd had all along in my life. I had them with my mom and my dad, my brother, my sisters, you know.
But when I got married and that soul union, that's the closest thing I had, boy, it really started ramping up. And I remember even before we learned all this, coming to her at one point and saying, it's not you, it's me.
[20:35] It's not you, it's me. Now here's what I didn't mean. When I said that to my wife with many tears one day, one day I'll tell you that story if you haven't heard it. I didn't mean that she didn't have her idols or her issues.

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I just simply meant, it's not you, it's me. It's my stuff. It's my junk that I need to deal with. I need to stop blaming you and I need to deal with my stuff, didn't I?
I said that to her. I was on my knees in front of her on a couch. She was sitting on the couch. Do you remember that? And that was the beginning of the change.
Because when I stopped blaming my wife and started thinking in terms of what I needed to do to deal with it. Now it was going to be some time before we would end up out in California at Grace Church to have this stuff modeled for us.
We'd never seen it. We'd heard about it and read about it. But you're in a church where we're trying to live this. We're trying to model it. And that's gold.
[21:42] Okay, over on 85. Now he's going to talk about common identity replacements that result from idolatry. So now we've already established that idols take over your identity.

Or at least they want to. Now as a Christian, you're still in Christ. Christ is still your identity. But your functional God, that is the God that you look to in place of Jesus, that God is the one that's now coming to define you more than the Lord is in terms of how you live.
How you think and live. Your God can't get you to heaven. Jesus is still your God. But you're living as if He's not. You're functioning in ways that He's not in certain areas of your life.
So he says this is what happens. I am success. Page 85. One of the most common identity replacements is I am success. What does he mean by that?
Next sentence. You define yourself in terms of achievements. This is one of the most popular problems I see in people dealing with issues in their life as Christians.
[22:52] I am the sum total of what I can achieve. If I can achieve a happy husband, if I can achieve a happy life, if I can achieve a functioning, high functioning family, if I can achieve success in my work, if I can produce this, if I can produce that, if I can achieve...

That becomes the sum total of how I see myself as a success or a failure. A good person or a bad person. And sometimes this gets so convoluted, it's really hard to separate.
It's really hard to pick that out of who I am. It's so much a part of what I am, how I function, how I think. So if I'm not performing well in a certain aspect of my life, I don't feel successful, I don't feel good, I don't feel happy, I can't have joy.
Those are indications that you're looking to something other than Jesus. The question becomes this, can you be in circumstances that are very difficult, that are very trying, that don't have a lot of success painted all over it and still find joy and peace and calm and purpose and meaning?
If you say no, then Jesus is not the God you're looking to. It's that straightforward. Christians make excuses.
[24:18] Just like everybody else, we're just people. I am my own success. My definition of success, my definition of achievement becomes the measure of who I am.

Okay? So he goes on to say on page 86, when what you do, the shadow box there, when what you do becomes who you are, you'll feel threatened by other people.
Here's one of the most nefarious aspects of this problem with idol worship. He goes on to say, you might wonder why sometimes you've run into people where something's happened in your relationship with them and they just kind of go postal on you and you wonder, what in the world?
And he says, what's happened is you're bumping into their identity because you're a threat to them. in some way, maybe even unknown to you. Maybe this is your spouse. You have bumped into something that they're counting on to form their identity.
And now they are threatened by that. He gives examples here. A newer or younger person with greater abilities comes into your company, comes into your office, so you feel threatened or displaced.
[25:34] Your spouse struggles in some way with the opposite sex. And so that is a constant sense of threat to you. Now, you may say on that, and I understand this, you may say, well, but we're not supposed to be disloyal to each other in our marriage with that kind of thing.

And that's absolutely true, right? We would all agree with that. What you have to be careful of is that that good thing doesn't become something that now defines you so that you begin to distance yourself and distance yourself and distance yourself if that person doesn't behave within the arc of what you have defined as acceptable.
Now, are you with me? I don't know. Are you with me? No. Thank you, Jeremy. Yes, thank you.

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That's another word for it. I have formed expectations of you in such a way that if you don't perform within the sphere or arc of what I've defined as acceptable in that performance, you're going to get punished for it.
I'll give you the silent treatment. I'll do this. He mentions these in the book. Don't feel picked on. He mentions these in the book. If you feel like he's reading your mail, it's just because the truth of the Bible drives into the soul of every human being in here today.
[26:58] Over on the top of 87, he says this, this has become, if you take your identity from your job, top of 87, if you take your identity from your job, if you take it from sports or something else, it won't be long until you start seeing the ordinary demands of a spouse and a family as getting in your way.

You'll start to resent time being taken away from your business or hobby. Now, you need to put what it is that trips your trigger in here. This may not be it because that's become your identity. It's what you live for. bitterness, envy, sprout up in given context. The point is this, you start to see people, when you create this identity for yourself, the people in your life will do one of two things toward you in this false identity that you have built for yourself.
Again, it may be anxiety, it may be insecurity, it may be a sense of I must have this to feel like a successful person, a loved person, and so you kind of put that on your spouse or on the people around you.
Here's what happens. When we start forming our identity in that kind of mentality, that kind of false dichotomy or whatever, we set these people up for failure because now these people are going to be one of two things in our life.
[28:31] They're either going to be people that stroke my identity by accepting my idols and my idol worship, which they won't even know whether they're doing it or not. Sometimes they step back and go, what did I do?

What did I say this time? They don't know because you haven't told them. You probably haven't told them because you probably don't recognize that these are even idols in your life.
So they're either getting in the way of your agenda that has been set up because you've formed these idols. Look, what are the symptoms? Irribility. Irribility.
You're irritable. Sometimes you don't even know why. And certainly the people around you don't know why. They walk around and go, Dad's in a mood. You know, that's the code. Dad's in a mood. And then they disappear. Mom's in a mood. And then around the corner they go and everybody finds somewhere to hide. That's how I grew up. I've told you before, I could tell by the footfalls of my dad coming up the steps in the barracks we lived in.
[29:33] There were cement steps. Third floor all the way up. See apartments, see whatever. When he came home from work, I could tell by his footfalls what I was in for. And if those footfalls sounded a certain way, we'd all find a place to hide.

I could tell how quickly he started drinking when he got home. If he came in the door and my mom had a beer in her hand with the top popped, I was like, ooh, go get under the bed.
That's how I lived. And this is what idols do to us. People either stroke you and support you in your idol worship or people confront you.
And sometimes the confrontation sounds desperate. The people that get closest to us, they often don't understand the idol situation in your life any more than you do. But they'll say things to you that sound pleading.
And then it could morph to where now they're as disgusted as you are with the whole scenario and you're being frustrated.
[30:46] That's the word I feel I hear most often from people in this context. I'm frustrated. No, you're angry. You're bitter. You're resentful. Whatever. But you get to a point where that morphs now and that person around you that's closest to you that's been having to live with this that you've been demanding this of, that person gets, they go from pleading, they get desperate, they get frustrated, they get bitter, they get resentful and now that's coming at you that heightens the threat that you feel toward your idol and now what are you, what happens?

Ah! Now we've got two people competing. I know, I am not making marriage sound very good and my girls. It's beautiful when it's in Jesus.
All you gotta do is marry a great Christian guy. They're out there. Right, Doug? They're out there. Listen to your parents, girls. Lucy, listen to your dad and your mom.

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Yes, amen. Good point. Absolutely. Even in friendships you see this, right? Now this would happen in friendships and of course I had no clue what was going on. So folks, this is for all, it's why we can all sit here going, hmm, boy, he is reading our mail.
He says this, achievement was never meant to give us identity. So when it replaces our true biblical identity, it leaves a harvest of bad fruit. Now we could say that about anything.
[32:13] That's on page 87 right before the last little part there, the last few sentences. So last sentence in that paragraph break there toward the end.

Over on page 89, I'm just giving you some highlights here for something I want to do with you in just a sec. No, let's go past that one. Let's go to page 91.
This is, so one of these relationship, what did he call it? Common identity replacements. An identity replacement. I am my success. I am the sum total of what I can produce.
What I can succeed in. You hear people all the time say, oh, I could never do that. I am so fearful of being in front of people. You heard this? I had this.
And look what I do now. That's so ironic. Right? I had to deal with that. My greatest fear was that I'd get up there and have a booger in my nose. And people would go, oh my gosh, dude.
[33:19] Or, I'd get up there and I'd say something that would be ridiculous. And now people have to live with the fact that I said something ridiculous. Don't you have these fears? Don't you wake up at night sometimes and you've had a nightmare where you've been running around in the mall in your underwear and you can't find a place to hide?

Me neither. I just made it up. You read about that kind of stuff. But you hope you're not that person. Yeah, Jeff, they call them perverts or something like that.
Right. Alright, what I'm saying is on page 91 that these are the kinds of things that we end up having our idols form an identity that replaces the identity that we have in Jesus.
Now, when we say that, it's a functional replacement. It's not an organic or spiritual replacement. You can't think of it like the idol kicked Jesus out of your life and you've got to get saved again. That's not what we're talking about. You're living like Jesus is not your God. But you found a way to be loyal to something else in this area of your life because I can't trust Him to do this.
[34:39] So, you know, I don't want to be up in front of people because I'm afraid to be in front of people because I might say or do something. Do you see how me-centered that is? It sounds like Moses.

Who am I? Okay, that's actually a good biblical example. But it's things like that. And we get so used to making excuses about them because we feel justified in it.
And then we can find other people who would say, oh, me too. I'm absolutely terrified of that. I'm terrified of being in front of people or being around people and saying something that's going to make me sound stupid.
Alright, look. This is what happens on page 91. I am my relationships. You define yourself by the people around you. Now, what he means is I'm not defining myself by your good attributes so that those good attributes become challenges to me to up my game in that area of my life and so I'm defining my life by the goodness that I see in you.
That's not what we mean, is it? No. I'm threatened by you because I'm desperate for your approval. I'm so insecure that I'm desperate for your approval.
[35:51] I'll even go to the lengths of avoiding you if I think that I cannot get your approval or I'll ever be in your company and I'll say or do something that will meet with even a look of disapproval.

I'm going to avoid you like the plague. We can get there. I've met these folks. I've had feelings like this myself. This is the one thing that sets man apart as being in God's image.
He is a relational God and we are relational beings so we're always going to relate. We want to relate to people. But what will happen when you make relationships the defining element of who you are?
In other words, people pleasing. People approval. Some aspect of the relationship with another person where it's more about what they can give to me in feeding my idol than about me serving them in the Lord.
There's some aspect of how I view you and how I relate to you where I have an expectation, Vanita, thank you, an expectation that you're in some way going to stroke my idol.
[36:58] I might not even be aware of what that idol is but I know when you threaten it. I know when you threaten it and I'm going to come at you if you threaten my idol. You're going to feel my

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disappointment.

You're going to feel my anger. You're going to feel my resentment. You're going to hear my bitterness. You see? This is human life. It's very real.
We all do it at different levels with people. You'll start using people rather than loving them. People will either be objects that help stroke your idols and reaffirm you and reassure you and what you've decided about who you are and how you function and what's important to you.
People will either validate you in what you've formed. Now remember, this is a false system that we may not even be fully aware of.
It hasn't been brought to the fore yet. That's coming next. And so he says on page 92, 2 Corinthians 5.9 cuts through all that.
[38:06] Therefore, right in the middle of the page 92, second paragraph break from the top, therefore we make it our aim. What are you supposed to be doing?

What should your sights be on? Therefore we make it our aim whether present or absent to do what? Be pleasing to Him, Jesus. To be pleasing to Jesus. Then he gives several examples from the life of Saul and Pilate and Peter.
And then we go over on page, what are we on? Are we still in chapter 5? I'm going to stop there. Now go back to 4 if you would. Yep, let me go back to 4.
I know I'm pressing this, but I want you to see something here. Alright, in 4, he starts out with the first sentence, nothing but God will satisfy your heart and yet your heart is prone to idolatry.
James 3.16. Here's what I'd like to do. Let's go to James chapter 3, or chapter 4. James 3.4, we're right here by it in Peter.
[39:09] And we're going to do James 4.1-10. James 4.1-10. And I'm going to ask Matt if he would.

Matt's been teaching out of James for some time now. I'm going to ask Matt, you are going to be forever the James guy. That's just the way you broke in, brother. We've got to get through it first, he says. James 4.1-10.
Matt, would you read that for us? Absolutely. What is the source of quarrels and conflict among you? Is not the source of your pleasures that weighs war in your numbers? You lust and do not have until you commit murder.
You are envious and cannot change until you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive because you ask of wrong words. You may spend it on your pleasures.
You adulterers. Do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility for God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.
[40:06] Or do you think that scripture speaks to no purpose? He jealously desires the spirit which he has made to dwell in us. But he gives a greater grace. Therefore, it says, God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble.

Submit, therefore, to God. Resist the devil and he will flee for the end. Draw near to God and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.
In miserable and mourn and grief, let your laughter be turned in the morning and your joy to gloom.
Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord and he will absolve you. Okay, now Matt, if you'd skip over to chapter 3 and do 13 through 18.
3, 13 through 18. Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds and the gentleness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth.
This wisdom is not that which comes down from above. It's earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.
[41:14] But the wisdom from above is for pure and peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruit, unwavering, without hypocrisy, and the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Now, on 58, toward the top, James 3.16 says, For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.
Just a slightly different translation from what Matt just read. He says, One of the places where chaos shows up most quickly and painfully is in our relationships with those closest to us. Notice the first one in the list deals with marriage, husbands and wives, kids, parents, co-workers.

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They're the ones who bear the brunt of our idolatry while we think they're only causing us trouble. and getting in our way. They're frustrating us. They're blocking us. They're not helping us get what we want.
Have you ever felt this way in any of your relationships, folks? Have you ever had any of these thoughts toward those around you, especially those closest to you? And out in the margin, what I did was I wrote in my margin here, this paragraph using James 3.16, it sets the reality.
[42:24] So what he's doing is now he is setting or painting or fixing the reality when it comes to how idols affect our relationships. Alright, that sets the reality.

Now go to the shadow box there. Conflict exposes our idols. That's the reality of what we're seeing as conflict in our relationships.
James 4.1, what is the source of those quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source you? He doesn't take the source and say it's the people around you that aren't doing the things you think they should do and meeting your expectations and desires and such.
He says, no, the conflict is the war going on inside your own heart. Inside your own heart. Here's what Tripp says. Do you have any conflict in your life? Do you experience moments of extreme irritation towards someone you otherwise love?
Are there people who simply push your buttons more than others? Do certain things drive you crazy on a daily basis? We all say, no, absolutely not. What's he talking about?
[43:28] Why does it seem that people, things, and situations are in our way? I double underline that. In my way. You're either in my way or you're helping me along my way.

Those are the only two choices. Why do we seldom go through a day without some experience of conflict? Well, the answer to all these questions is this. Here it is. We think of ourselves as our own and we are more committed to the purposes of our own kingdom than we are to God's.
Now before you say, but, but Pastor Jeff, but Pastor Jeff, remember these things like to hide. They camouflage. They sneak around.
They attach themselves to otherwise good things. We need to recognize that the people in our way, here it is. here is the golden nugget.
He's going to repeat this throughout this book. These people, in our way, have been sent to us by a wise and sovereign king.
[44:32] Boom. He never gets a wrong address and he always, always chooses just the right moment to expose our hearts and realign them to His.

Over on the top of 59, God always chooses the right moment to expose your heart. Not just to afflict you or whip on you, but to expose your heart.
Not your wife's heart, not your husband's heart, not your kids' hearts. That will happen. Your heart. Why? So that He can realign it to His.
You're out of alignment. This is how God brings us to submit. Because at the root of all idol worship is rebellion.
Rebellion. And so God is using these situations. He is using these God-ordained people. These God-ordained appointments, circumstances, situations, trials, hardships, whatever, however you want to define it.
[45:43] He is actually orchestrating those people and those events in your life to expose the rebellion of your heart in a certain or given area. Particularly with regard to relationships with people.

With other people. So that He says down toward the bottom of 59, the last paragraph break before the shadow box. But Ecclesiastes 7.14 says that in the day of prosperity be joyful, which we're good at He says.
But the verse continues this way. In the day of adversity consider this. Surely God has appointed one as well as the other. We looked at this last time. The conflict that you're facing right now with the people in your life is a divine appointment.
A divine appointment. It didn't just happen. It was on God's calendar because shadow box, God's timing is perfect. God's timing is perfect.
Over on 60, you didn't create a picture, three or four lines down from the top. You didn't create a picture. He's using the idea of a dark room and developing film.
[46:53] When you went into the dark room to develop the film, you didn't create a picture when you walked into the dark room. What did you do? You exposed the picture that was already there.

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You brought to the surface what was already on the film. The same is true of your heart. So often, it takes darkness, harshness, conflict, pain to expose what was there all along.
You see how we point outside of ourselves when all along what God is saying is, turn that puppy this way. I'm exposing your heart in this conflict.
The more you focus on the other person, the more you focus on the problem, the more you focus on the situation or the circumstances, those are simply my tools.
The people, the circumstances, the hardships, the trials, whatever you want to define the situation as, those are simply God's appointed tools to do what?
[47:50] To show you your heart. What comes out of your mouth? What comes out of your life when God begins to squeeze you with these circumstances, with this person, with these people?

God is showing you yourself. Idols, I said to myself here, I wrote myself a note, idols are active spiritual forces of evil set against God and his ways.
It's that set against God thing that God is trying to show us. The thing we're making friends with is God's enemy. And it should be our enemy as his child.
You with me on that? The conflict with that other person is simply exposing what had been lying dormant in your heart all along. This is how God uses conflict.
Your closest relationships will become mirrors reflecting your own heart issues back to you. I'll say it again.
[48:55] Your closest relationships. Now I'm talking about close in the sense of like if you're married, you may not feel close to your spouse when things are rough or tough or tumbly or whatever, but the people that are closest to you in your life, your kids, your spouse, your closest friends, whatever, those closest relationships will become mirrors reflecting your own heart issues back to you.

You've heard me talk about this before. The head-on collision with that other person is just flushing out the idols of your heart, stirring them up, sifting them out, and he says on page 60 there, that's good.
That's surprising, isn't it? That's a good thing. God is revealing what is otherwise unknown to you. You might know the turmoil, you might know the conflict, you might know the pain, you might know the angst, but trying to get to the root of that.
And so what do you find yourself doing? You find yourself moving in a cycle of this. You often hear people describe it like that. I feel like I'm on a gerbil wheel. I feel like I'm on a roller coaster.
I just always end up back at the same place and then it all starts over again. The pain cycle, the meltdowns, the wheels coming off. And then we argue and we fuss or we talk or we do this and it never really gets fixed or resolved and then it's just a matter of time where we're back up at the top of the circle and then we're back down again.
[50:29] You see that? This is why. Because we're not dealing with the root. So God needs to expose it to us.

At the top of 61, this is like God using a wake-up call. It's a sledgehammer for self-deception. God is taking a sledgehammer to what is deceiving you.
Folks, if God could really show you the ugliness of your idols, would you give them up? See, sometimes He has to use a sledgehammer to break through the hard bedrock of what you've constructed to keep your idols safe.
Even from you. Even from you. That's how insidious this is. You have an active spiritual enemy doing spiritual warfare against your very soul.
And if He can't unsave you, at least He can keep you all wrapped up in yourself. Christians saying that they worship God and they love God and all this kind of thing, when in reality their functional gods are more important to them than Jesus.
[51:40] they function by these false gods more than they do by the Lord. That's where your anxieties and your worries and your insecurities, your demands, your irritability, your impatience, all of those are markers and symptoms that somebody in your life is threatening your idol, your sense of security, your comfort zone.

they're tapping on the hard shell of what you've built to safeguard those idols from everybody. And sometimes the tapping can get really hard. I was in a counseling situation this morning.
Last night. It all runs together because I've had more than one. from outside our church. And I can't give you, you know, can't talk about it much. Just to say that the very, these are very dear friends of

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ours.
The very thing they brought to us was this thing in their marriage in spades. And God used a very distressing situation that happened between the husband and the wife to bring to the fore the idol worship that had taken root in their marriage.
And to say that it was devastating is an understatement. And we spent quite some time on the phone talking it through and trying to get to the point where we could see repentance and some sense of hope for building back.
[53:27] And the thing is, this has been going on, the man said, for more than five years. Building and building and building and building.

And admitting, you know, I fooled myself. I was self-deceived. I tried to tell myself this and this and this. See? This is how this works. So God has to take a sledgehammer to it.
And these circumstances in people can sometimes be God's sledgehammer. He says right above the shadow box on 61, but God loves us enough to pick the perfect time to smash our pious platitudes, to strip us of our self-righteous notions, to leave us standing before Him naked and embarrassed with our unruly idols.
Those are hard moments, but necessary. Because our hearts in the shadow box need regular realignment. The reason is because at the end of that first paragraph on page 61 there, that's because we don't really see what's in our hearts until God takes us through some dark time, through some harsh trial that develops and exposes what was in our hearts all along.
It could be a health trial, folks. And you find out quickly in your health trials, believe me, where your loyalties lie, who you're really trusting.
[54:55] When everything else is like God pulls it out from underneath you and all you can do is lay there and hope you heal, man, I'll tell you, that can mess with your head and your heart.

And you find out real quickly where you're grounded. It could be that. It could be a relationship trial. God chooses the right time, location, and even the right people to expose our hearts and realign them to His.
One of the things that I was able to say to this very loving, kind brother in the Lord when I was counseling him last night was everything that you've been telling me that you've said and done recently that has given such hurt to your wife, all of that has been in the way of a response to what you have told me she's been saying to you now for years.
And it is ramped up over time because it started out as a kind of cautionary plea so as not to deflate you kind of thing.
Because she wants to be your biggest fan. And so she didn't want to pop your bubble. She's trying to figure out a way to get in there and make that work with you kind of thing. I know I'm being a little ambiguous but trust I can't divulge all this.
[56:20] So I was able to finally say to him, all that time when your wife was saying these things to you, as those things began to change and her words ramped up, ramped up, ramped up, and you became more and more threatened, more and more like that.

What? Until it finally became a how dare you kind of experience. all of that I was able to say to him, that was her being used by God to give you the warning signs of idols in your life, brother.
But you chose to ignore them and you chose to see them as your enemy. When what was happening was God was using the closest person in your life to get your attention and start warning you.
And you didn't heed it. And now look where you are. And he was able to say to me in almost these exact words, everything I trusted in and all that I thought I was doing to cause my wife and my children and the people around me to respect me have turned dark and gone exactly the opposite way and I ruined everything.
Hello, that is exactly what idols do. And they'll keep you there and they'll pick and they'll pick and they'll pick. And finally, the coup de grace.
[57:44] That's what idols do. They look for the moment to put the bullet in the brain. I'm done. I'm done. Don't Christians divorce?

That's why James is so important. What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you brothers and sisters? The Bible answers it emphatically. The source of the quarrels and conflicts that you have in your life with other people whether it's on a shallow level or a deep level or whatever it is.

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The source is your own inner war. It's the war raging inside of you with your desires and passions and expectations that you foist onto other people in the way of demands.
That's where he takes you. That's where he takes you. Look at the top of 65 or bottom of 64. Bottom of 64.
Last sentence. I was ignorant of my idols and I didn't realize the ugliness of my own heart. Top of 65. The lines between God's kingdom and my kingdom had become blurred.
[58:55] What I thought I was doing with pure motives and for the glory of God was tainted with my own kingdom agenda of I have to be well thought of by everyone at church. He's a pastor.

He's in the limelight as it were. And here he's here's the insidious part. It felt good. You see it felt good. Look you wouldn't have idols if they didn't rub you right in some way.
They're giving you something that you want. This is one of the reasons that we become so vulnerable to idols. We want a certain thing. Perhaps a certain thing that God does not want for us. But because we're bound and determined to get it we just find a false God that will give it to us. But the hook is this. The false God doesn't want to give us what we want. The false God wants to take over.
And define us. The false God wants to become our identity. It wants our worship. They're worship stealers. Your idols change the way you see and treat everyone around you.
[60:03] Page 67. There were two thrones and two kingdoms in my heart. See this is James 4. The war was within me.

I blamed other people but the war was within me. If you turn over to page 71 you see a diagram of what he's talking about here and then I'm going to give you a handout before we close.
He asked the question over on 70. What are you craving? Look at your relationships and ask this question. Where am I having conflict? Because those become the signposts where God is doing his work.
Those become the places where God's trying to get your attention to show you your heart. Your idols hijack legitimate desires and turn them into ugly demands.
And that's where the conflict comes from. It's in your own heart. You've turned it into a demand. Look at the graphic there on 71. You start out with a desire. Folks it could be a good desire.
[61:04] He uses the example of I want my spouse to love me. Nurture me. Respect me. Appreciate me. Value me. Those aren't bad things are they?

Are those bad things? Yeah. I want those in my marriage PJ. With Suzanne. Right. But look what happens. I wish.
I wish. I wish I could experience this. I'd like to have this. We're a little weak in this area. I'd like to see some improvement here or whatever. The I wish morphs into what?
A demand. The I wish becomes a demand. I begin to convince myself that I have to have this. If I'm going to be happy. If I'm going to be satisfied.
If I'm going to be joyful. I don't look for that from Jesus. I need to get that from what I've determined I need. Demand. I will. That's the next step.
[62:01] I must. Now the wish has become a demand that I've convinced myself has become a need. So that if I must have this and if I don't get it I can't be happy.

I can't be satisfied. I can't be at peace. I can't serve. This is dominating me. This is coming to define me. Then the expectation that Vanita mentioned.
The expectation. You should. Now I'm foisting off on you. What I have come to determine is an I must for me. And so now you are going to be one of two things in my life.
You're going to be someone who cooperates with the I must or you're going to get in my way. And if you get in my way I'm going to let you know it. I'm going to let you know it. The silent treatment you know he lists a whole bunch of them in the book.
Legitimate desires turn into demands. We relabel it a need. Then over on 72 the expectation kicks in. And then disappointment leads to punishing each other.
[63:05] Why? Because we weren't designed to meet expectations that only God can meet. I set Susanna up for failure early in our marriage because I began to demand and make expectations of her that I didn't realize I was requiring something of her that only God could meet.

Now God could meet them through her but the way that I was handling it was I was bypassing the whole God thing. So Alonza it became my mission in life to get her to submit and realize what the mission was all about.

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And being from Texas she wasn't having it. She wasn't having it. The disappointment here is almost a oh no you didn't.
Oh yes I did and I will do it again kind of thing. And then it spirals down. Look at the graphic there. Because you didn't now I will. Or because you didn't now I won't.
Folks this is marital conflict. Alright. So here's here's let me give you these. Now these just came right off of Bigney's website.
[64:17] So if you want to go there you can see these. But I'll hand these out real quick. Some of you were asking about how do we recognize this and how do we begin to identify the way this pattern works.

They'll pass them around. Just take one. And I think there's enough for most of the adults. Y'all might have to share a little bit. I think there's enough to go back that way.
Travis there you go bro. Just take a quick look at this guys and gals. We're not going to camp out here because I knew you could take this home and review it. But use this in conjunction with what we've been talking about.
Look over on the left side under the idol of comfort and recognition. Now I'm going to use this one because this one is very commonplace.
Okay. I'm not picking on anybody in here. If you think I've read your mail. I'm not. This is the idol of comfort and recognition and it's evidenced he says by self pity.
[65:23] Now one of the reasons this in complaining. One of the reasons this is helpful is because look at look at the top there where it says evidenced by. You may be tempted to think that the idol in your life is self pity or complaining.

I have the idol of complaining. What you want to do is look behind the behavior the symptomology. What what is what is your your pity for yourself.
Poor pitiful me. I'm not getting what I want. I'm not getting what I need. I'm not getting what I deserve. You know I'm not asking for the moon here kind of thing.
And then you complain about it. You you just find ways to keep talking about it and keep talking about it. And it and I've done this and I've been around people who do this saying entirely too much in moments of despair fear or frustration.
What happens is folks we start verbally. I'm sorry this is crude if we start verbally vomiting because it's all in here. And we need to get it out kind of thing.
[66:25] All right. This is very common for all of us. Examples. There are specific areas where I see this sin in my life going on and on to someone about parenting woes or some leadership responsibility I'm facing.

Poor pitiful me. This isn't fair. It's not working out the way it's supposed to. I'm immensely more qualified. I don't know. Guilty of exaggeration and excessive drama and negativity.
Saying too much at times when people ask how I'm doing. It's just it just starts coming out. What's the wrong thinking? Well ask yourself. Here's the self-talk. What am I saying to myself?
What am I believing? Well it's things like this. Boy I have it so hard. I'm I'm so overwhelmed. I can't do all this. It's not fair. People don't value me.
My wife doesn't appreciate me. You know. New thinking. Here is where we start attacking the root. It's what we're thinking. It's how we're reasoning in our heart.
[67:25] We're going after the heart. God is faithful. He is in this trouble. And he's up to something good. He's using these circumstances to reveal things about me.

Times I look away from God and look too much to me. I spend more time talking about me than I do about him. Because I feel so weak and overwhelmed this is a perfect time for God to display his power and greatness in me.
I don't need to solicit pity from other people. God sees me, loves me and has not abandoned me. How can I serve this other person right now? It's not all about what's going on with me. Don't dump on them. Seek to bless and edify.
Now look I've got to give you a caveat here. Because what you can see in this when you're in the throes of this stuff is I'm not supposed to go to my brothers and sisters and talk to them about how I'm struggling.
That's not what he's saying is it? No please do do that. Please do do that. But be teachable and be humble and be receptive so that when the people or persons around you start helping you see what's going on you'll be willing to receive it as the truth and love of the Lord and begin to see

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change.
[68:37] You'll begin to change the way you think about the Lord in this. See you have two choices in this trouble. You can either keep you can either keep what's the word arts in my book not responding but where did I write it?

Ah here it is. You can either keep reacting to life. You're just a reactionary. You know you're going through life boom boom or you can respond you're going through life boom okay see you're measuring you're thinking you're allowing the truth of God to calm your spirit calm your soul there's no need to panic there's no need to be anxious I don't have to make it about me I don't have to be insecure because I don't have to have their approval I have God's approval I can be here and I can serve them and I don't have to worry about if I'm going to say something wrong or do something wrong or whatever and then I don't have to go home because I feel like I blew it and go home and now take it out on the people around me which is how it works.
You have two choices you can either react to life or you can respond you can have a sense of the peace of God helping you to respond in truth to the circumstances and people that come into your life.
It's your choice but you can train yourself to do this in the Lord. New actions look I'm not going to say everything that I feel in the moment I'll sift see this is response you're engaging your heart in this to say now wait a minute I have a choice here to make it about me or to make it about the Lord so that even as I talk about my situations and issues I can still do it in a way where I'm thinking about the Lord the Lord's working.
This was a challenge even for me y'all when I was going through the health thing with my back and trying to sort you know I've never been through anything remotely close to that in my life I'd always been very healthy.
[70:51] Alpha Gal was probably the closest that was a tough one but I had to think about this when people would ask me well intentioned how are you doing you know or somebody would text me or call me or email me and have you done this with your health stuff you don't want to sit there and you know because you can feel that way you can just feel like I don't know I kind of feel like I'm at the end of my rope.

I would say to Suzanne with tears sometimes I would just not all the time just everyone I would say honey please just come over and sit with me and hold my am I going to get I'm getting better right I'm getting better because I didn't feel like I was getting better you know yesterday I could get up and go from from the chair to the front door and I could look out and think about walking and then I'd go back today I can't even get out of the chair you see but where's the Lord in that and this is the question I asked me and the question I ask people when I work with them I hear the story and I listen and I go this this is the question of the day where is Jesus and all that and oftentimes this is the answer I get good question you know I kind of forgot about him see ding ding ding ding ding there's an idol there somewhere because it ain't about Jesus but it's about something that's what this sheet's helping you do it's helping you look at symptomology do I have slides for this I think I do sorry I think I have a slide for this Greg you can't I printed it because you can't really read it very well that's it okay so that's what we've been looking at now if you do the slide that has the questions on it
Greg yep look at this now here's the worksheet that you can use to help you think about this as you as you confront these issues in your life remember the first thing you're going to do is you're going to you're going to consider the situation the circumstance the people that are involved the conflict that's going on and you're going to ask what is this revealing about me and the first thing you want to ask yourself what is this revealing about me is think about the context the person the conflict whatever and ask yourself this what are the symptoms what what am I showing in my life that yes no no no no no no no no no I didn't print this one out for you because I got a slide for it and you can go online and print it out for if you want to I just know it's not in the study guide this is Greg you know what we need to do what you sent to me Greg sent this to me from Bigney site thank you okay so you want to look evidenced by the sin where or how is this manifested in my life you see that up there how is this manifesting in my life so here it is Suzanne and I are in a in a moment we're having a conflict and
I'm thinking in the in the moment about all right what is this conflict revealing about me because James says what are the sources of quarrels and conflicts among is it not your desires your passions that war within you so I go okay Lord what's going on in me right now well Lord I have no

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idea if you don't show me what's my first step my first step is to say well how did you respond to Suzanne I was impatient I was irritable and I was accusatory okay what do those sinful responses point back to in your heart what are you defending and I say I don't know okay what were you thinking in the moment that that brought you to say those things you were thinking thoughts that were then expressed in words what were the thoughts how dare she challenge me in that who does she think she is challenge what my integrity your integrity was threatened because your wife pointed out a sinful thing and asked you to yeah you see what I'm doing my self-talk begins what is your wrong thinking what am I saying to myself what am I believing I'm just trying to get behind the symptoms to deal with my self-talk what am I saying what demands am I making of them what did she violate what did she violate what what unspoken rule of my own life did she violate that caused me to go and get irritable impatient accusatory assign motives to her finger point blame shift you know I think mine back in the day my as I think about it now my preferred retreat was lecture lecture let's not think about that so what's the new thinking now here you're going to get real specific I need for my thinking to be driven more and defined more by the truth of the Lord because it's the truth that's going to make the difference I can't just simply think my way into a new life I need to think biblically new actions what new actions need to reinforce my new thinking if my new thinking is my new plan now I need an action that will that will serve to support the new thinking it will become the manifestation it will become the show the demonstration of my new thinking so rather than irritability accusatory blame shifting impatience I have some new thinking that's going to help me address what that is what God says that is and now my new actions are going to be I'm going I'm going to now speak words of peace I'm going to step back and I'm going to practice drawing out hun why would you say that see now now I'm diffusing hun why why would you say that what what what prompted you to bring this to me you see does that sound more humble more receptive she might say did you do you realize that when this and this happens you get this way you say these kinds of things and you behave in this manner and that's happened and I go nope and then I'm like bring it tell me just tell me no you say and what would you like to share with me today Suzanne you know I don't know you find a way to you find a way to be receptive about it because again what are you thinking you're saying to
yourself well I know what this is all about God is ordaining this moment through my spouse or my child child or my friend or whatever to bring out to me something that I need to recognize that is otherwise hidden and God's using the circumstance and ordaining and appointing the person and the time and the moment to bring this out and show me because this is an anti-God deal in my life this is an idol this is rebellion and then he has verses to memorize so now you're arming yourself with truth that you can rehearse in your heart to help you deal with whatever it is the specific thing the more specific you are the more success you'll have the more generalized you are the more you'll flounder so if you find yourself floundering one of the top reasons is because you're still lacking specificity you really need to get to where you can nail that idol to the wall and it's very clear boom boom boom that's it right there okay all right is this helpful
[79:14] Mitch what you thinking brother it's hurtful I said helpful it is hurtful it is there it is hurtful isn't it why is it hurtful guys yeah surely Mitch isn't the only one thinking that all right yeah yeah well why is it hurtful Mitch what are you thinking yeah that's okay that's good yeah yeah yeah yeah and so this is great Mitch thank you so the last encouragement that I'll offer you is this you need to take them one at a time so he's going to spend the rest of the book trying to help you say back up take a breath find one and work on it don't bite off five idols at a time they'll overwhelm you so pick one pick one bring it to the

Lord and say Lord you've identified this in my life I need to pick a jumping off place here it is folks it could be a person you're idolizing a person in a way because of what's behind what you want them to give you do for you reassure you of build you up in and it might have started off as a good thing but it got inordinate real quickly and now it's something that's become a must and now you're defined by that must that need and you're setting them up for failure because every time they fall short of it according to your expectations and designs and now there's so pick one pick one go back to the list where you had the heart and you had four or five listed and find find maybe the top one maybe go after the juggler right at the beginning okay I know I sped through a lot of the the content for this and we didn't do all of four but I gave you the stuff that I felt like was the most pertinent for tonight okay Greg what's the agenda for next week did we ever okay so what Greg and I will do he'll he'll he and I will take measure I won't be here next week

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I'll be at the ACBC conference so pastor Greg will will be handling whatever and we'll see he's also got to preach Matt's getting out of town so it's it's down to my my brother back there so you guys know we announced if we if you didn't hear from the members meeting Matt is elder in training we identified Matt some time ago and went to meet with he and Jessica and they prayed through it and so Matt is currently in training to become an elder not yet an elder but being trained to become one we're hoping that maybe by spring or summer there'll be an induction service that we'll have for him for eldership but he's out of town right now too and can't fill the pulpit so Greg and I'll compare notes put it in the e-news in them so look for it this week and then announcements over the weekend about what we'll do next Wednesday night what will be happening next Wednesday your assignment will be in there and all that okay all good thank you for a little extra time that we had let me pray we'll be dismissed we're here and and then yes is this it you're gone

Saturday you won't be here Sunday oh brother okay so I say that like it's the end of the world no I'm just I'm sad you know how can I not be sad so let's make sure that we're praying for this couple is as they go Saturday you'll be taken in where he needs to be what will Arlene be with you do you think not not sure yet okay but you'll have the kids with you so you won't be alone and you come home okay okay Caden good good man brother well let's pray together and I'll pray for a Derek as well father God thank you for these precious souls our friends thank you for our church family and this the opportunity to talk through some of the more salient points about identifying idols I you know Lord I'm very aware that Satan wants to do everything he can to sabotage this he doesn't want this teaching going out he doesn't want us to do it he doesn't want us to understand he doesn't want us to implement it take it seriously he's always trying to thwart the truth so we stand against all of that with the weapons of our warfare the spiritual armor that you have given us as we look to you in faith as we wield the sword of the spirit in truth as we put on our belt as we shod ourselves in righteousness father thank you for giving us all that we need to do battle against these wicked and evil idols that like to hide and lurk in the shadows and camouflage and masquerade as good things root them out Lord search us test us examine us help us to take stock careful stock of our spiritual lives knowing that if we don't these things will overtake us and enslave us and they will keep us from being the gospel witness that you've put in us to be I come to pray for my brother Derek for Venita for the family for the kids as Derek deploys Lord as he takes on this responsibility as as he answers this call and provides for his family in a way that is that is sacrificial

I pray that you will bless them and safeguard them protect them I pray that you will use our church family particularly the sisters in Christ in our church to rally to Venita and to minister to her and encourage her I pray that you will continue to protect and safeguard this child forming in her womb Lord and that at the right time you will bring this child into their family into the world for us to be blessed in this way with them thank you for the gift of this precious soul that is forming inside of her I pray that you will give Derek a calm spirit knowing that Jesus is in control of his family and that Jesus loves his wife and kids even more than he does as he deploys I pray that you will also give him a sense of the safety of your arms that you will watch over him and protect him in his duties that you'll help him to be successful and faithful in his walk with you that he'll maintain the integrity of his heart that you'll keep him pure in every way I pray that you'll use Caden as the man of the house which he is growing into a fine young man to minister to his mom to step into his dad's dead and protect this family and serve his mom and his and his siblings and I pray father that our church family will take great joy in gathering together to meet these needs help us to minister one another in the love of Jesus and to trust you in that process it's in Jesus name we pray and for his glory amen amen thank you may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may
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