

# Study Guide

## *Idolatry and the Image of God*

### Purpose of This Study

To understand **what idolatry is, why God rejects it, how it deforms human beings, and how true worship restores God's image in us through Christ.** I. Big Idea Overview

### Main Truth:

Human beings were created to reflect God's image. When we worship anything other than God, we become like what we worship. True worship restores life, clarity, and obedience through Jesus Christ.

## I. Opening Reflection

1. Why do good intentions not always make a gift acceptable?
2. Why does God care *how* He is worshiped, not just *that* He is worshiped?
3. Can you think of modern examples of worship that might be sincere but misdirected? **Key**

**Principle:** Worship is for God, not for us. God determines what pleases Him. **III. What Is Idolatry?**

### Definition

**An idol is anything that takes God's place in a person's life by receiving the trust, loyalty, or obedience that belongs to God alone.**

### Discussion Questions

- How can something good (success, family, comfort, religion) become an idol?
- Why is worshiping the *true God* in the *wrong way* still offensive to Him?

### Key Scripture

- Exodus 20:4–5
- Jeremiah 2:11
- Hosea 4:7

## II. Idolatry at the Beginning: Adam and Eve

### Key Insight

Idolatry existed **before physical idols existed.**

Adam and Eve:

- Rejected God's Word
- Trusted the serpent instead
- Placed themselves as judges of right and wrong

This was the **root of idolatry:** trusting something other than God.

### Discussion Questions

1. In what way did Adam and Eve "worship" the serpent?
2. How did replacing God's judgment with their own effect their relationship with God?

### Key Scripture

- Genesis 1:26–28
- Genesis 3:1–6

### III. We Become Like What We Worship The Golden Calf (Exodus 32)

Israel worshiped a calf and:

- Became stiff-necked
- Broke loose
- Needed restraint and correction

They took on the **character of the idol they worshiped**.

**Psalm 115 Principle** Idols:

- Cannot see, hear, speak, or feel Worshipers:
- Become spiritually blind, deaf, and numb

#### Discussion Questions

1. In what ways does idolatry deaden moral and spiritual sensitivity?
2. Can you see evidence of this in society—or in yourself?

#### Key Scripture

- Exodus 32
- Psalm 115:4–8

### IV. Isaiah: Worshiping God and Idols at the Same Time

#### The Problem

The people of Isaiah's day:

- Worshiped the true God outwardly
- Worshiped idols inwardly
- Followed man-made rules instead of God's heart

#### God's Judgment

Because they persisted in idolatry:

- Their hearts grew harder
- Their spiritual blindness increased
- Isaiah's preaching exposed, not softened, them

#### The Cure God Desired

- Repentance
- Exclusive worship of God
- Destruction of idols
- Restoration of spiritual sight

#### Discussion Questions

1. Why is divided worship especially offensive to God?
2. Why must idols be destroyed, not merely managed?

#### Key Scripture

- Isaiah 1:29
- Isaiah 6:9–13
- Isaiah 29:13
- Isaiah 30:15, 22
- Isaiah 32:3

## **V. Paul's Teaching: Idolatry and Restoration (Romans) The Exchange** Humanity:

- Exchanged God's glory for images
- Exchanged truth for a lie
- Worshiped the creature rather than the Creator

### **Result:**

God "gave them up" to spiritual corruption.

### **The Reversal (Romans 12) Through Christ:**

- Bodies become living sacrifices
- Minds are renewed
- Worship becomes spiritual and acceptable
- Moral discernment is restored

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What does Paul mean by "God gave them up"?
2. Why does true worship involve the body, not just belief?

### **Key Scripture**

- Romans 1:20–29
- Romans 12:1–2
- Psalm 106:19–20
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## **VI. Living Application Signs of Idolatry**

- Diminished sensitivity to sin
- Moral confusion
- Self-justification
- Loss of spiritual joy

### **Signs of Restoration**

- Renewed conscience
- Hunger for righteousness
- Joy in obedience
- Desire to please God

### **Reflection Questions**

1. What competes with God for your trust or loyalty?
2. Where has God restored sensitivity in your life?
3. What idols might God be calling you to destroy?

## **VII. Final Summary**

- Idolatry deforms God's image in us
- We become like what we worship
- God rejects divided worship
- Christ restores life, clarity, and joy
- True worship renews the mind and transforms the heart

### **Closing Thought:**

Worshipping Jesus will never make you less human—it makes you fully alive.