

## Disappointed, Dominated and Deformed

*Then God spoke all these words: I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery. Do not have other gods besides Me. Do not make an idol for yourself, whether in the shape of anything in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth. You must not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the fathers' sin, to the third and fourth [generations] of those who hate Me, but showing faithful love to a thousand [generations] of those who love Me and keep My commands. - Exodus 20:1-6 HCSB*

Idols disappoint because they always promise more than they can deliver. Those who make idols will be disillusioned because their creations are false and lifeless<sup>1</sup>. We think that if we wear a certain brand of clothes, we'll be popular. Or, if we drink a certain type of beer, "life doesn't get any better than this." Or maybe...if we buy this toothpaste, we'll have sex appeal. But anytime we put our expectation in something other than God, we will be disappointed. Only God can fill the vacuum in our hearts.

Idols will dominate us. Paul said, "Before you knew Christ you were controlled by dead idols, who always led you astray."<sup>2</sup> Notice the emphasis on the words "controlled" and "always led astray."

Another word for idolatry is "addiction." We can become addicted to work, sports, sex, drugs, etc. Idolatry, regardless of its form, will lead us astray. We may seek a job promotion to the point that we neglect our families. We may feed a habit so much that it destroys our health. We may become so concerned for the approval of or disapproval of others that it dominates our lives. That's not just co-dependency – that's idolatry!

Idols will deform, change and warp us. Why? Because we become what we value most. I call this the Law of Focus. We become our mental focus. David said, "Those who make idols become like them and so will those who trust in them."<sup>3</sup> We shape an idol and then it returns the favor.

A rich young ruler came to Christ and said, "What must I do to follow you and have eternal life?"<sup>4</sup>

Jesus gave an odd answer, "Sell everything, give it to the poor and come follow Me." Jesus never gave this set of instructions to any one else – ever. Why did He say it to this man? Because Jesus knew this man had an idol in his life – money, his bank account.

What are you holding on to today? A relationship, a lifestyle, a career, a habit? An idol! Idols will distract you, dominate you, disappoint you and they will eventually destroy you. God says, "Don't idolize anything! Be faithful to me!"

---

<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah 10:14

<sup>2</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:2 (GN)

<sup>3</sup> Psalm 115:8 (GN)

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 19:16-30