

How to be Used by God to Change Lives for Eternity
The Heart of it All
I Thessalonians 1:9-10, Revelation 2:1-7

Introduction

1. If you want to understand why you do the things you do, you have to begin with an honest examination of your heart.
 - The heart is an “idol factory” whose idols must be identified and rooted out for godly change to take place.
2. In His letter to the Ephesian Church the Lord Jesus gave three keys to overcoming the idolatry of the heart.

The Message

1. Remember from where you are fallen. Vs. 5

- a. Remember your sin and God’s mercy. Jer. 17:9
- b. Remember the price the Lord paid for you on the cross. Jn. 3:16
- c. Remember your “first love” for Christ.

2. Repent of your spiritual idolatry. Vs. 5

- a. Identify the idols in your heart. Col. 3:5-9
- b. Identify the source of the idolatry: self. Eph. 2:3
- c. Confess and forsake idolatry as sin.

3. Return to the things you did at first. Vs. 5

- a. Invest private time in Bible reading and prayer. I Pet. 2:2
- b. Renew your mind with Scripture meditation. Rom. 12:2
- c. Engage in personal and corporate worship. Ps. 18:1-3

The Challenge

1. The key to overcoming spiritual idols in the heart is to develop a love for the Lord that is greater than the idols. Col. 3:1-3
 - When you set your heart on loving Christ the idols lose their power over you.
2. What idols have taken Christ’s rightful place as #1 in your life?
 - Turn from those idols today. Make loving Lord the burning desire of your heart!

If human conflict is rooted in spiritual adultery, change must begin by bowing before God in humble repentance for the idols that have replaced Him in our hearts. - Tripp

I Thessalonians 1:9-10 - For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

Revelation 2:1-7 - "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: 'The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands. 2 "I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. 3 I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. 4 But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. 6 Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. 7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.'

Jer. 17:9 - The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

Jn. 3:16 - "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Col. 3:5-9 - Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 On account of these the wrath of God is coming. 7 In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. 8 But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices

Eph. 2:3 - among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

I Pet. 2:2 - Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation--

Rom. 12:2 - Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Ps. 18:1-3 - I love you, O LORD, my strength. 2 The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. 3 I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies.

Col. 3:1-3 - If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.