

Example by StudyDriver

Source: <https://studydriver.com/from-flesh-to-faith/>

From Flesh to Faith Example

When one thinks of an “idol” or a “false god”, many different images can come to mind; images such as: human-like statues, animal-like figures, things made of gold and bronze, money, and items of worth. What doesn't always come to mind are things like family, friends, popularity, hobbies, electronics, sex, relationships, and the biggest, which is one's own flesh.? What exactly is an idol then? An idol is literally anything that becomes more important than God. When people think about false gods, the image portrayed is an image of a person bowing down to their false god and worshipping it, which is true. But bowing down and worshipping false gods can be as little as deciding to look at inappropriate content on one's phone instead of finding satisfaction in God's Word. It can be choosing to send that inappropriate photo if that's what it takes to gain approval. And it can be as little as choosing to sleep in instead of waking up early to go to church. These idols may be small, but anything being put before God is seen as big to Him, the Creator of the things one worships.

One can see these idols in their daily lives, but what did idolatry look like in the Israelites Society? What does idolatry look like in American society today? And how do these two completely different societies compare and differ to one another? God speaks a lot about idols and false gods in His Word. In Exodus 20, God speaks to the

Israelites and gives them the Ten Commandments. The very first Commandment God speaks on is the commandment of idolatry saying, "You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth" (Bible, ESV, Ex. 20:3-4). God makes it crystal clear that no gods of any shape or size can be put before Him. God continues by saying, "You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God" (Bible, ESV, Ex. 20:5). Not only is God saying not to put anything before Him, but He is saying that they shall not bow down or even serve them. Why is God saying this? The reason God said this is because God is a jealous God.

But if God is perfect and sinless, then how is He a "jealous God"? God can be anything that He wants to be, but in everything He does, He is completely holy and sinless. God isn't jealous because of something He lacks, wants, or needs. He is a jealous God when His people give to another thing what ultimately and rightly belongs to Him. The Israelites had a habit of turning to other idols and turning their backs on God, even after He delivered them from 400 years of slavery in Egypt. God was with the Israelites and never failed to show them His sovereignty, yet they were convinced that God was not enough for them, that they needed more. One can see this almost everywhere in American Society today. People live as though God and the world owe them something; and that everything they have is because of something they did to earn it, that they do not need God to guide their steps because they're fully capable of leading themselves. In the New Testament, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 4:7, "What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?" (Bible, ESV, 1 Corinthians 4:7). Nothing people have is by their own doing, but by God's doing. Both the Israelites and America today can be compared to one another because they both tend to fall into worshipping the creations over the Creator. Idols always come back to the prioritized flesh of the individual.

Though Israelite society and American society can relate in many ways, they can also differ in many ways. One can see the differences in their chosen idols. Both societies idols revolve around the flesh and not God, but the Israelites portrayed theirs through the golden calf that they made with their melted rings and earrings. When God sees the Israelites have made an idol and worshipped it for His original works, God spoke to Moses saying, "Go

down, for your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. They have turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them" (Bible, ESV, Ex. 32:7-8). The biggest take away from this verse is that idols pull people away from the path that God has set for them, and they pull them away quickly. The Israelites took the exact words of God and put them in the mouth of their golden calf, which shows that not only do idols pull people away from God's path, but they blind people from seeing and hearing what only God can do and say. A lot of people in American Society don't exactly make golden calves to worship over God, but the same type of worship can be seen in the way that one lives their daily life.

A very big idol seen today is popularity and desiring the approval of others and wanting that acceptance and worshipping it. This is also known as people pleasing, which can be seen as, people serving; and when one is serving anyone or anything over God, he or she is breaking God's commandment of not bowing down or serving any other god (Bible, Ex. 20:5). In American society today, the approval of others can be seen as the golden calf that the Israelites worshipped. Society today gives glory not only to the approval of others, but also to the seemingly innocent things, such as cell phones and any electronic devices. Though these devices can make life simpler and more convenient, without a healthy amount of accountability, devices can not only be an idol, but give you the images and freedom to have even more idols all within one. These other idols can range from innocent things such as games, videos, and music, which are all good things in themselves but too much of anything is bad if it is put before God, and even the innocent things, if abused, can become extremely corrupting. Idolatry is a serious matter. It's very dangerous and can come in all shapes and sizes, and once idolatry becomes a struggle, it will always remain a struggle. One can understand the seriousness of idolatry by just looking at the Israelites in Exodus 32.

They watched as the Lord delivered them from 400 years of slavery, they walked on dry ground through the sea that the Lord divided for them, they watched bread fall from the sky because God knew they were hungry, they even drank water from a rock and yet, they still thought that wasn't enough for them. Their idols could never do what God had done for them but they still ran to what was only temporary. That's where society today can look back and gain wisdom. Will this world ever be stripped of its idols? No, not until the Lord comes back. Will idols

and false gods try leading people away from God's path? Yes. Can one fight off these idols alone? No, but God can. That's where these idols and false gods fall short. A false god who could deliver, would not be created by man who couldn't deliver himself. For the Israelites, that golden calf could not split the sea for them to walk through. For American Society today, the approval of others cannot provide satisfaction because the worth of one's self doesn't belong to anyone but God. Humans are not big enough or strong enough to tear down these idols, but God is and He has already overcome them, people have just built their idols so tall that they cannot see God for who He really is.

People need to realize that only God is enough for them. Nothing or no one can take the place of God in one's life. True and genuine worship is not viewing God as the one who gives rewards, but viewing God as the Reward. It's not about what life can give but about what God has already given. Putting these corrupting idols away will require hard work and a lot of sacrifices, maybe even really hard sacrifices such as, relationships, hobbies, the amount of time spent on devices, physical satisfaction, and even friendships. But remember that God sacrificed His own Son so that the people that He loved could have a future and have the freedom to worship the one true God. In order to gain God and His guidance, one must lose themselves, and their own desires. This may hurt, but God is enough, and He will always be worth losing what was only ever temporary.

Works Cited

Hooper, Jodi. "God Gives the Ten Commandments"

<https://bible.org/seriespage/7-god-gives-ten-commandments-exodus-20-deuteronomy-5> Published 29 June, 2012

Deffinbaugh, Bob. "Israel's Worship" <https://bible.org/seriespage/14-israel-s-worship-exodus-201-7> Published 13 May, 2004 ESV Bible. ESV, Crossway, 2016.