

LOVE THE LORD



Lesson Thirty-three - What curses do we bring upon ourselves as a result of idol worship?

August 2023

Summary of key points

- The first time we read about a curse in the Bible is in Genesis 3.
- God created mankind to increase in blessings but sin brought curses onto this earth.
- Curses result in adversity, tragedies, disasters, sickness, and mishaps.
- Idol worship is a direct rebellion against God's Law and evokes curses (includes examples).
- Idol worship yokes us to Satan and demons, and leads to spiritual oppression, defilement, and deceit.
- Many cultural and family customs cherished by Asian believers are rooted in idol worship, which God hates.
- The Bible also clearly states in black and white that anyone who practises idolatry will not be allowed into heaven. This includes people who consider themselves followers of Jesus.
- We need to repent of idol worship and pray for those who are still practising idol worship.

Watch the lesson online

<https://youtu.be/x7aGK1Gbuos>

Transcript

Welcome to lesson 33 of Love the Lord where we examine the evil or misfortune that the Bible warns us that we will invite into our lives as a result of taking part in idol worship. In other words, what are the curses that will fall on us and our families?

We will begin by inviting God to speak to us personally through this study. Please follow along as we pray together. Click pause at any point if you need more time.

First, let's thank God for His perfect character and His perfect will for us.

Next, please tell Him about the things that have been stressful and ask for His help and guidance.

Let us put down our burdens of sin and confess the ways we have sinned against God and against others, and ask for His forgiveness.

Please also confess the ways others have sinned against us, and forgive them in Jesus' name.

Next, let us ask God to purify and open our hearts to receive His teaching.

Finally, please repeat these words, "In Jesus' name, I silence all distractions and voices that are not from God. Amen."

Let's begin the lesson for today. What curses do we bring upon ourselves as a result of idol worship?

The first time we read about a curse in the Bible is in Genesis chapter three after Adam and Eve put greater faith in what Satan had to say about God than in God Himself.

Because of Adam's and Eve's rebellion, the ground became cursed as a result and childbirth pains increased exponentially. These curses affected not only Adam and Eve themselves, but also all their future generations, up to today.

Genesis 3:17 And to the man he said, "Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat, the ground is cursed because of you. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it. (NLT)

God created mankind to increase in blessings but sin brought curses onto this earth, and even creation and nature suffers as a result.

Isaiah 24:4-6 The earth mourns and dries up, and the land wastes away and withers. Even the greatest people on earth waste away. The earth suffers for the sins of its people, for they have twisted God's instructions, violated his laws, and broken his everlasting covenant. Therefore, a curse consumes the earth... (NLT)

Blessings increase with righteousness. Curses increase with sin.

Hosea 10:12-14 I said, 'Plant the good seeds of righteousness, and you will harvest a crop of love. Plow up the hard ground of your hearts, for now is the time to seek the LORD, that he may come and shower righteousness upon you.' "But you have cultivated wickedness and harvested a thriving crop of sins... Now the terrors of war will rise among your people... (NLT)

When we plant good seeds of righteousness, we will harvest a crop of God's love. When we cultivate wickedness and sin, we reap many terrors during our time on earth. God's Law is always balanced, just, and fair.

- Curses result in adversity, tragedies, disasters, sickness, and mishaps that cause great misery and hardship for families and countries.
- Some cultures refer to curses as bad luck or misfortune
- Curses are usually attached to one or more persons, places, and even objects.
- These get passed on through our generations in our families.
- Curses are not random.
- They can be traced back to rebellion against God, either in our generation or the generations before us.

Thankfully, the Bible tells us what the root causes may be.

The Bible tells us that we will be cursed if we turn away from God and worship other gods and idols.

Let's read from Deuteronomy chapter 11 verses 27 to 28 together, *"You will be blessed if you obey the commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today. But you will be cursed if you reject the commands of the Lord your God and turn away from him and worship gods you have not known before."* (Deuteronomy 11:27-28 NLT)

In this lesson, we look at curses that come as direct consequences of idol worship, not the obscene words we speak, not the miseries we wish upon others, or the spells or hexes people and witches and mediums cast onto people — although the same word, curse, is used for them all.

God's Law sternly warns us to be careful not to break the covenant of the Lord that He has made with us and not to cherish idols of any shape or form. He forbids His children from participating in idol worship and tells us that idols will corrupt us.

Deuteronomy 4:23-25 So be careful not to break the covenant the Lord your God has made with you. Do not make idols of any shape or form, for the Lord your God has forbidden this. The Lord your God is a devouring fire; he is a jealous God... do not corrupt yourselves by making idols of any kind. This is evil in the sight of the Lord your God and will arouse his anger. (NLT)

Deuteronomy chapter 4 warns us, saying "This is evil in the sight of the Lord your God and will arouse his anger."

Deuteronomy 32:15-17 Then they abandoned the God who had made them...They stirred up his jealousy by worshiping foreign gods; they provoked his fury with detestable deeds. They offered sacrifices to demons, which are not God... (NLT)

We are all precious to Father God but the worship of idols and various gods only keeps us in bondage to Satan and his demons. This deeply grieves Him and provokes His fury. Not only do we abandon God, we show no respect or consideration for the price Jesus paid on the cross, to pay for our sins, so we no longer need to remain in Satan's accusing grip. Jesus has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness. Praise God! This is no trivial matter.

Colossians 1:13-14,21-22 For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins... You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body... (NLT)

Some of us may find today's lesson challenging because what you are about to see is that many of the cultural and family customs that Asian believers cherish are actually rooted in idol worship, which God hates. You may also start to notice the family or social patterns that result from worshipping and sacrificing to demons in your own homes and families.

Acts 17:24-25 "He is the God who made the world and everything in it. Since he is Lord of heaven and earth, he doesn't live in man-made temples, and human hands can't serve his needs—for he has no needs. He himself gives life and breath to everything, and he satisfies every need. (NLT)

First, let us remember that the God we worship made the world and everything in it. Since He is Lord of heaven and earth, He doesn't live in man-made temples, and human hands can't serve His needs—for He has no needs. He Himself gives life and breath to everything, and He satisfies every need. He is great, mighty, compassionate, just, and holy — there aren't enough words to describe His perfection and majesty.

Yet in our rebellion against our most sovereign and holy God, mankind has invented other gods to worship and idolise. We have built temples for these idols and started rituals that we believe will connect us to the gods or forces in the heavens or the universe.

Deuteronomy 4:16-19 So do not corrupt yourselves by making an idol in any form—whether of a man or a woman, an animal on the ground, a bird in the sky, a small animal that scurries along the ground, or a fish in the deepest sea. And when you look up into the sky and see the sun, moon, and stars—all the forces of heaven—don't be seduced into worshiping them... (NLT)

Let's refer back to God's Law. Deuteronomy chapter 4 warns us to not corrupt ourselves by making an idol in any form—whether of a man or a woman, an animal on the ground, a bird in the sky, a small animal that scurries along the ground, or a fish in the deepest sea. And when we look up into the sky and see the sun, moon, and stars—all the forces of heaven—we should not be seduced into worshipping them.

We will take a little time now to reflect on these verses and then list the human beings, animals, astrology, or forces of the universe that this world venerates, creates legends around, sings songs about, and credits for its existence. Please click “pause” now and take as much time as you need.

1. Man
2. Woman
3. Animals
4. Bird
5. Fish
6. Sun, moon, stars
7. Forces of heaven

Welcome back. What idols have your family and the generations before you been associated with? Have they venerated the god of war, the goddess of mercy, the dragon, the phoenix, golden carp for good luck, or the immortals in the heavens?

We will now go through the curses that the Bible warns will fall on our families as a result.

We will notice that families that worship idols and demons generally have a bitter and negative outlook on life.

Deuteronomy 29:17-18 ... I am making this covenant with you so that no one among you—no man, woman, clan, or tribe—will turn away from the Lord our God to worship these gods of other nations, and so that no root among you bears bitter and poisonous fruit. (NLT)

There is little real peace. Family relationships seem to always be divided and acrimonious. Basically, one could describe the family relationships as bitter and poisoned.

Deuteronomy 29:17-18 ... I am making this covenant with you so that no one among you—no man, woman, clan, or tribe—will turn away from the Lord our God to worship these gods of other nations, and so that no root among you bears bitter and poisonous fruit. (NLT)

Life problems seem to come one after the other. There doesn't seem to be a prolonged period of peace and joy.

Psalms 16:4 Troubles multiply for those who chase after other gods... (NLT)

Many family members suffer from health problems, physical ailments, and untimely deaths.

Deuteronomy 28:14,21-22 You must not turn away from any of the commands I am giving you today, nor follow after other gods and worship them... The Lord will afflict you with diseases until none of you are left in the land ,, The Lord will strike you with wasting diseases, fever, and inflammation... (NLT)

There are also patterns of depression or anxiety disorders, which they try to cope with by using alcohol, substances, and addictions such as gambling.

1 Samuel 16:14 Now the Spirit of the Lord had left Saul, and the Lord sent a tormenting spirit that filled him with depression and fear. (NLT)

There is also a family pattern of adultery and sexual immorality through prostitution.

Hosea 4:13-14 They offer sacrifices to idols on the mountaintops. They go up into the hills to burn incense... "That is why your daughters turn to prostitution, and your daughters-in-law commit adultery. ... your men are doing the same thing, sinning with whores and shrine prostitutes... (NLT)

Many members of the family may struggle with feelings of shame and worthlessness. There isn't a radiant glow of God's light, hope, and joy in their appearance.

Psalms 34:4-5 I prayed to the Lord, and he answered me. He freed me from all my fears. Those who look to him for help will be radiant with joy; no shadow of shame will darken their faces. (NLT)

Basically, family members experience little or no peace or joy.

2 Kings 9:22 ... Jehu replied, "How can there be peace as long as the idolatry and witchcraft of your mother, Jezebel, are all around us?" (NLT)

Curses and patterns from idol worship

- Bitter outlook
- Poisoned family relationships
- Life troubles multiplied
- Health problems, physical ailments, untimely deaths
- Depression and anxiety disorders
- Sexual immorality
- Feelings of shame
- Gloomy 'shadow' over face
- No peace

In case any of us still have unbelief that the worship of idols and demons can lead to mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual problems, here are some demonic spirits mentioned in the Bible that manifest in such ways.

There are evil spirits that torment people mentally. They can generate confusion, dizziness, or foolishness, lead to erroneous thinking, and cause us to lie to ourselves, for example. Sometimes, they can even provoke headaches.

Mental manifestations

- Spirit of mental torment | 1 Samuel 16:14
- Spirit of confusion, dizziness, foolishness | Isaiah 19:14
- Spirit of error | 1 John 4:6
- Spirit of lies, deceit | 1 Kings 22:22, 1 Timothy 4:1, 1 John 4:6

Then there are demons who stir feelings of despair or sorrow, fear and jealousy.

Emotional manifestations

- Spirit of despair or sorrow | Isaiah 61:3
- Spirit of fear | 2 Timothy 1:7
- Spirit of jealousy | Numbers 5:14

There are also demons that cause physical handicaps and sicknesses, as these examples show.

Physical manifestations

- Blindness | Matthew 12:22

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- Deafness | Mark 9:25
 - Muteness | Mark 9:25
 - Orthopaedic issues | Luke 13:11
 - Deep sleep | Isaiah 29:10
 - Epilepsy | Matthew 17:14-18
 - Torment | 1 Samuel 16:14

And then there are demons that keep people enslaved to addictions, sexual behaviours, people-pleasing, and the things of this world. Evil spirits can provoke people to act treacherously or to be unfaithful in their relationships. They will tempt us to defile and corrupt our worship of God by turning to witchcraft, as well as false signs and wonders. Demons can appear as people who have died, to frighten or deceive us. These are what the Bible calls familiar spirits but what we mistakenly call ghosts.

Spiritual corruption

- Spirit of slavery | Romans 8:15
- Spirit of prostitution or sexual debauchery | Hosea 5:4
- Spirit of treachery or betrayal | Judges 9:23
- Antichrist spirit | 1 John 4:3
- Spirit of impure worship | Zechariah 13:2
- Spirit of divination or fortune telling | Acts 16:16
- Signs and wonders | Revelation 16:14
- Familiar spirits ie. disguised as ancestors | Leviticus 20:6

No one wants to live with such spiritual oppression, defilement, and deceit.

God has lovingly warned us through the Bible to flee from the worship of idols. That means we should break free from and avoid any association with it in the future.

1 Corinthians 10:14 So, my dear friends, flee from the worship of idols. (NLT)

God, the Father, has also lovingly given us Jesus, His Son, to pay the price of our rebellion of worshipping idols, and to redeem us from the curse of the law by giving us the Holy Spirit, who will come and convict us of the things we need to repent of and lead us on the path of righteousness. The Holy Spirit is a marvellous blessing and gift to us.

Galatians 3:13-14 But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When he was hung on the cross, he took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing... so that we who are believers might receive the promised Holy Spirit through faith. (NLT)

God is a God of His Word. If He promises to bless us for obeying His commandments, He will.

Numbers 23:19 God is not a man, so he does not lie. He is not human, so he does not change his mind. Has he ever spoken and failed to act? Has he ever promised and not carried it through? (NLT)

At the same time, if He has written out all the curses into His Law for worshipping idols, these things will also come to pass. Nothing that can stop them from coming up on our families, until we repent Jesus' name and turn back to God. God's Word will never fail.

Deuteronomy 28:14-15 You must not turn away from any of the commands I am giving you today, nor follow after other gods and worship them. "But if you refuse to listen to the Lord your God and do not obey all the commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come and overwhelm you: (NLT)

Such curses are passed down in our own families for four generations. This is part of God's Law and He does not break His own law for anyone, even those who have been faithful to Him. He may keep us from the worst of the curses but some curses still do operate on some level, until we confront them and renounce them in Jesus' name.

Exodus 20:5 You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations of those who reject me. (NLT)

God overlooked our ignorance about worshipping idols and demons in the past, but now He commands us everywhere to repent. We have no excuse to go on practising idolatry because God's Law on idol worship has been very clearly written in black and white.

Acts 17:29-32 ... we shouldn't think of God as an idol designed by craftsmen from gold or silver or stone. "God overlooked people's ignorance about these things in earlier times, but now he commands everyone everywhere to repent of their sins and turn to him. For he has set a day for judging the world ... (NLT)

The Bible also clearly states in black and white that anyone who practises idolatry will not be allowed into heaven. This includes people who consider themselves followers of Jesus.

Revelation 21:1,27 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth... Nothing evil will be allowed to enter, nor anyone who practices shameful idolatry and dishonesty—but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. (NLT)

But many of us are still blinded by Satan to the things that God calls idols. All of us have been involved in some form of idolatry without knowing what we were really doing right in front of God's nose. 2

Corinthians chapter 4 verse 4 says, "*Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe.*" (2 Corinthians 4:4 NLT)

Satan has been deceiving the whole world. The Bible does not exaggerate when it shows us that the whole world is under Satan's spell and dominion.

Revelation 12:9 This great dragon—the ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, the one deceiving the whole world—was thrown down to the earth with all his angels. (NLT)

Let's look at some examples. In the Bible, God speaks out against man made idols so many times that we can feel His anger and frustration. It is impossible to list all the Bible verses where He has warned, mocked, and challenged mankind about our worship of idols.

Deuteronomy 4:25 ... do not corrupt yourselves by making idols of any kind. This is evil in the sight of the LORD your God and will arouse his anger. (NLT)

Sadly, many still turn a deaf ear. They continue to burn incense to idols and insult God to His face all day long.

Isaiah 65:3 All day long they insult me to my face by worshiping idols in their sacred gardens. They burn incense on pagan altars. (NLT)

Some build shrines, temples, and altars in their home, their fields, their offices or on hills. These can be altars for the dead, false gods, ancestors, animal spirits and so on.

Jeremiah 13:27 I have seen your adultery and lust, and your disgusting idol worship out in the fields and on the hills. (NLT)

Family members share in eating the food offered to idols or ancestors and take part in rituals to honour them, which God's Word tells us are sacrificial offerings made to demons.

1 Corinthians 10:19-21 Am I saying that food offered to idols has some significance, or that idols are real gods? No, not at all. I am saying that these sacrifices are offered to demons, not to God. And I don't want you to participate with demons. (NLT)

We may be aware of people who bring young children to be dedicated to various guardian gods, or they may ask fortune tellers to select the baby's time of birth and name. In God's eyes, this is not very different from sacrificing children to Molech, which is another name for Satan.

Leviticus 20:2-3 ... “If any of them offer their children as a sacrifice to Molech, they must be put to death... because they have defiled my sanctuary and brought shame on my holy name by offering their children to Molech. (NLT)

Some also bring the sick friends and relatives to drink magic potions, blessed water, or drinks served by temple priests, which are what the Bible calls the cups of demons.

1 Corinthians 10:21 You cannot drink from the cup of the Lord and from the cup of demons, too. You cannot eat at the Lord’s Table and at the table of demons, too. (NLT)

Then there is the rampant following of idols of destiny and fate. People consult idols for fortune, money, luck, academic results, and love, which God despises.

Isaiah 65:11-12 “But because the rest of you have forsaken the Lord and have forgotten his Temple, and because you have prepared feasts to honor the god of Fate and have offered mixed wine to the god of Destiny... You deliberately sinned—before my very eyes— and chose to do what you know I despise.” (NLT)

This is how we end up with beliefs based on horoscopes, zodiac signs, and so on, which is essentially the worship of the sun, moon, and stars as having the power to determine our destinies, our personalities, and our future marriages. God calls this evil and deserving of death.

Deuteronomy 17:3,5 For instance, they might serve other gods or worship the sun, the moon, or any of the stars—the forces of heaven—which I have strictly forbidden... the man or woman who has committed such an evil act must be taken to the gates of the town and stoned to death. (NLT)

This is the same for the festivals that worship the sun and the moon, or the idols of the sun and moon, which God says He also hates. Does any of this sound familiar to you?

Zephaniah 1:5 For they go up to their roofs and bow down to the sun, moon, and stars. They claim to follow the Lord, but then they worship Molech, too. (NLT)

Often, the devil deceives people with romanticised folk tales, myths, or superstitions and deceives people into worshipping and honouring God’s creation, rather than God Himself.

1 Timothy 4:7 Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives’ tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. (NIV)

Other superstitions involve jewellery that people wear. People put their faith in the supposedly magical powers of crystals, pearls, jade, as well as other stones to bring prosperity, healing, love, and so forth —

not knowing that such necklaces, bracelets, pendants, and other jewellery items only attract demonic spirits to be attached to them.

Ezekiel 13:18 ... You tie magic charms on their wrists and furnish them with magic veils. Do you think you can trap others without bringing destruction on yourselves? (NLT)

Or they believe they can read the future by looking at tea leaves or reading someone's face or palm, and so on. God says that such predictions are worthless and foolish.

Jeremiah 10:2-3 This is what the LORD says: "Do not act like the other nations, who try to read their future in the stars. Do not be afraid of their predictions, even though other nations are terrified by them. Their ways are futile and foolish... (NLT)

Some fortune tellers are known for being accurate in their readings and advice, and so we might be tempted to ask when is a good time to hold a wedding, organise a funeral, and start a business, for example. We need to keep in mind that Satan will tell us whatever we want to hear, as long as he can enslave us.

Deuteronomy 18:13-14 But you must be blameless before the Lord your God. The nations you are about to displace consult sorcerers and fortune-tellers, but the Lord your God forbids you to do such things." (NLT)

This is how Satan also gets people to seek guidance from the dead. We need to keep in mind that the dead do not have the ability to communicate with the living, as shown in Job chapter 14, Ecclesiastes chapter 9, and Psalm chapter 146. It is familiar spirits that pose as dead people, in order to deceive the living.

Isaiah 8:20,22 But shouldn't people ask God for guidance? Should the living seek guidance from the dead? Look to God's instructions and teachings! ... wherever they look, there will be trouble and anguish and dark despair. They will be thrown out into the darkness. (NLT)

If Satan doesn't succeed in getting us to call on our dead ancestors for example, he will tempt us to summon spirits or maybe even angels. Some of us may not be aware that we do not have the authority to summon and command angels like God does, and that Satan himself is a fallen angel. We may not be aware of the spiritual power that we have actually called into our lives.

Leviticus 20:6 "I will also turn against those who commit spiritual prostitution by putting their trust in mediums or in those who consult the spirits of the dead. I will cut them off from the community. (NLT)

In addition to trying to deceive us into trusting spiritual beings, Satan will lure us and many others into following different thinkers and philosophies on life that sound good and wise, but all these are from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ.

Colossians 2:8 Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ. (NLT)

Demons may also lead us to believe that religious and pious self-denial will make us more spiritual, when all this doesn't lead us closer to God. It's only the Holy Spirit who dwells inside us who leads us into communion with God the Father.

Colossians 2:18-19 Don't let anyone condemn you by insisting on pious self-denial or the worship of angels, saying they have had visions about these things. Their sinful minds have made them proud, and they are not connected to Christ, the head of the body... (NLT)

Another example is religious chanting, which is a form of self-hypnotism. Prayers are in essence, conversations with God from our hearts. Chanting blocks real prayers.

Matthew 6:7 "When you pray, don't babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. (NLT)

We may have been brought to worship false gods and demons through our family or friends and may feel aggrieved that we should suffer the consequences, but let us remember that they too have been deceived by Satan as well.

Isaiah 43:11-12 I, yes I, am the LORD, and there is no other Savior. First I predicted your rescue, then I saved you and proclaimed it to the world. No foreign god has ever done this. You are witnesses that I am the only God," says the LORD. (NLT)

Thank God that in Jesus' name, we can all be set free as long as we know how to pray to repent of idolatry and renounce all practices and ties to Satan and his demons.

Ezekiel 14:6 "Therefore say to the people of Israel, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Repent! Turn from your idols and renounce all your detestable practices! (NIV)

In addition, we also need to completely demolish all items in our possession that are related to demonic idols. Because each one of us is personally accountable to God for our own actions, we can pray and ask God to cleanse us of our sins — but unfortunately, not that of our family members or friends. We also do not have the right to destroy their idols unless they give us permission to.

Exodus 23:24 Do not bow down before their gods or worship them or follow their practices. You must demolish them and break their sacred stones to pieces. (NIV)

What we can do is to pray for them to personally turn to God for themselves and be baptised in the Holy Spirit. Only when they have the Holy Spirit inside them, will they have the conviction from God to keep the demons out of their lives for good.

John 16:8 And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment. (NLT)

When we repent of our own idolatry, it is important that we are meticulous in listing all the different ways we have sinned against God. Jesus has said that not even the smallest detail of God's law will disappear until its purpose is achieved. Satan will use this against us and pounce on any minor excuse to oppress us.

Matthew 5:17-18 "Don't misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God's law will disappear until its purpose is achieved. (NLT)

We only need to have infringed God's Law just once for the enemy to use that to accuse us day and night.

Revelation 12:9-10 This great dragon—the ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, the one deceiving the whole world... For the accuser of our brothers and sisters has been thrown down to earth—the one who accuses them before our God day and night. (NLT)

Satan and demons may also tempt us to calculate, covet after, and lust after the financial value of our idols. These can include expensive jewellery charms, coins or stamps commemorating the zodiac, decorative items, carvings, paintings, statues, and so on.

Deuteronomy 7:25 "You must burn their idols in fire, and you must not covet the silver or gold that covers them. You must not take it or it will become a trap to you, for it is detestable to the Lord your God. (NLT)

God's Word calls for complete destruction of such items. Let us not fall into the trap of trying to recover their monetary value, gold or silver by recycling or reselling such items. If we do, we show that we love the things of this world more than we love God. Let us honour God's will and feelings about such things, and no longer provoke Him.

Deuteronomy 12:30-31 do not fall into the trap of following their customs and worshiping their gods. Do not inquire about their gods... You must not worship the Lord your God the way the other nations worship their gods, for they perform for their gods every detestable act that the Lord hates... (NLT)

We hope today's lesson has opened your eyes to the many traps of idolatry that Satan lays out for us to fall into. We have not been able to cover all of them but we can be confident that the more that you study God's Word and are led by the Holy Spirit, the more you will be filled with the wisdom from God that you need in order to not fall for the devil's scams.

If today's lesson has prompted you to remember the idol worship that you or your family has been part of, we now invite you to make a list of all the idolatry that you need to renounce and repent of before God, and ask for His forgiveness for grieving and provoking Him. Your ties with Satan and demons can be broken in the powerful name of Jesus Christ, with these simple steps.

1. Repent of every act of idol worship, one by one
2. Renounce all spiritual ties to demonic objects, rituals, temples, spiritual masters
3. Command all demonic spirits attached to your idol worship to leave you in Jesus' name
4. Destroy all related items
5. Ask God for forgiveness and for curses to be broken

Because idol worship can blind our minds, making it harder for us to remember the things we have done, let us ask for help from the Holy Spirit. Let us pray this prayer together.

"Holy Spirit, today I dedicate my body to You as Your holy temple. Please forgive me for filling it with the works of demons through idol worship. Thank you for Your grace and patience towards me. I invite You to show me all traces of idolatry in my life, even the things that I may have forgotten or not been aware of from my family heritage. Thank you for Your faithfulness and kindness. In Jesus' name, amen."

Now that you've prayed this prayer, make a list of your own or your family's idolatry. Refer to these 18 points, if you find them helpful. Include the rituals you have taken part in, even as a child or an innocent bystander. Satan and demons behave like bullies and scammers, they are no respecter of innocence or ignorance.

Examples of idolatry that God hates

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| 1. Man made idols | 4. Food and rituals offered to idols |
| 2. Burning incense to idols | 5. Child dedication, birthday and name |
| 3. Shrines in homes, fields, and hills | 6. Temple potions, drinks |

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|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 7. Fate and fortune | 13. Consult fortune tellers |
| 8. Horoscopes, zodiac signs | 14. Consult the dead |
| 9. Sun and moon festivals | 15. Summon spirits, angels |
| 10. Myths and superstitions | 16. Philosophies |
| 11. Jewellery charms, stones | 17. Pious self-denial |
| 12. Read the future | 18. Religious chanting |

Then use your time during your small group discussion to repent, renounce and destroy all traces of idol worship in your life together with your group members.

We are here to strengthen and encourage one another. Remember to be as meticulous as you can be. This is a prayer you only need to do once, unless you fall back into the trap of idol worship again and need to ask God for forgiveness again. You will find that repenting of idol worship will usher in greater intimacy with God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Expect greater evidence of the fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life. Your group prayer time is surely one to look forward to.

At the same time, we also need to be prepared with answers for close friends and family members who ask us to join them in idol worship in the future. How can we respond in respectful, gentle and firm ways to reject them?

1 Peter 3:15-16 Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ. (NLT)

This is one of your two reflection questions for your group discussion. Please prepare your answers and watch the testimony that follows. We pray that you'll be blessed. See you next time.

Time for reflection

1. How will you respond the next time your family asks you to join in worshipping idols or the dead?
2. What items do you have that you need to destroy and discard, in order to remove Satan's footholds?

Watch the testimony for this lesson



Personal notes