

Sin and Atonement

Class 4

Idolatry and things we pursue

Recommended Reading:

**Counterfeit gods
By Tim Keller**

Anything more important to you than God... anything so central and essential to your life that, should you lose it, your life would feel hardly worth living .

We think that idols are bad things, but that is almost never the case. The greater the good, the more likely we are to expect that it can satisfy our deepest needs and hopes. Anything can serve as a counterfeit god, especially the very best things in life.

When people say, "I know God forgives me, but I can't forgive myself," they mean that they have failed an idol, whose approval is more important than God's.

Fear-based repentance makes us hate ourselves.
Joy-based repentance makes us hate the sin.”

When anything in life is an absolute requirement for your happiness and self-worth, it is essentially an ‘idol,’ something you are actually worshiping. When such a thing is threatened, your anger is absolute. Your anger is actually the way the idol keeps you in its service, in its chains. Therefore if you find that, despite all the efforts to forgive, your anger and bitterness cannot subside, you may need to look deeper and ask, ‘What am I defending? What is so important that I cannot live without?’ It may be that, until some inordinate desire is identified and confronted, you will not be able to master your anger.”

People "at the top" are eager to attribute their position to their own intellect, savvy, and hard work. The reality is much more complicated. Personal connections, family environment, and what appears to be plain luck determine how successful a person is. We are the product of three things- genetics, environment, and our personal choices- but two of these three factors we have no power over. We are not nearly as responsible for our success as our popular views of God and reality lead us to think.

As many have learned and later taught, you don't realize Jesus is all you need until Jesus is all you have.

If you marry someone expecting them to be like a god, it is only inevitable that they will disappoint you. It's not that you should try to love your spouse less, but rather that you should know and love God more.

Money is one of the most common counterfeit gods there is. When it takes hold of your heart it blinds you to what is happening, it controls you through your anxieties and lusts, and it brings you to put it ahead of all other things.

If you want God's grace, all you need is need, all you need is nothing. But that kind of spiritual humility is hard to muster. We come to God saying, "Look at all I've done," or maybe "Look at all I've suffered." God, however, wants us to look to him—to just wash.

**What are dominate subcultures
in the unbelieving world of the
Bay Area?**

What are their idols?
