

# Living God's Greater Story – Increasing gospel fluency to fight idolatry

## At any given time we are a mixture of beliefs

Some beliefs are anchored in the timeless truths of the Gospel and some beliefs are shackled to shifting and broken creation. If we always believed that Jesus **was** better, **is** better and **will make** it better (or to put it another way – that we **have** been saved, **are** being saved and **will be** saved by the life, death, burial and resurrection of King Jesus) we wouldn't have any problems 1) Living God's greater story, 2) Loving his people or, 3) Prioritizing God's mission.

But every day, sin, idols, excuses and pursuits for 'lesser' stories get in the way. In short - we disbelieve the gospel and God's promises.

Consider the following list of idols that either prevents the gospel from being central in your life, or which keep you from living as if it is. After you prayerfully read through the list a few times, star some of the idols you wrestle with, serve or worship most.

## HEART IDOLS

### “Life only has meaning/I only have worth if...”<sup>1</sup>

<b>Approval</b> <i>I need to please God/others/myself</i>	<b>Control</b> <i>I need to run this No one else can do this</i>	<b>Insecurity</b> <i>I don't want people to know _____ I'm not good enough for _____</i>	<b>Reputation</b> <i>I need to be important/good in others' eyes</i>	<b>Success</b> <i>I need to win/be the best/accomplish _____</i>	<b>Logic</b> <i>This makes sense It's what culture says is right</i>
<b>Security</b> <i>I value my safety This makes me uncomfortable</i>	<b>Pleasure</b> <i>This feels good/makes me happy I like _____</i>	<b>Knowledge</b> <i>I need to learn more/see every detail/think about well _____</i>	<b>Superiority</b> <i>I have to show you I'm the best/know the most</i>	<b>Recognition</b> <i>You need to know how good I am</i>	<b>Entitlement</b> <i>I deserve this I earned this</i>
<b>Busyness</b> <i>I need my schedule to be full/to be needed</i>	<b>Consumerism</b> <i>I want _____. I take but don't give I want what works for me</i>	<b>Aloofness</b> <i>I'll stay removed/won't commit/won't open up/won't submit</i>	<b>Selfishness</b> <i>I do what I want, when I want I am # 1</i>	<b>Independence</b> <i>I'll do it myself/I don't need you Don't tell me what to do</i>	<b>????????</b>

Now that you've starred potential areas of idolatry, take some time to prayerfully fill out the following chart. I've filled out the first as an example so you have a better idea of the exercise.

**In confession write out the following:**

- 1) The idols you worship
- 2) The false truth(s) are you believing in?
- 3) How does your belief and behavior negatively impact your life?

**In repentance turn towards:**

- 4) Write how Jesus is better than your idol. Say it out loud!
- 5) Prayerfully come up with a specific gospel behavior that fights against your idol. Ask community for help if you're stuck.
- 6) Write out how this new behavior displays the beauty of Jesus

1) Idol Starred	2) False Truth	3) Impact on my Life	4) How is Jesus better than the idol	5) New Gospel Behavior <i>(be specific)</i>	6) How new behavior Displays the Gospel
<b>I'm entitled</b>	<i>I think I deserve more than I have; I think I have to earn things</i>	<i>I'm disappointed in others when I don't get things; I'm focused on myself; I don't think of others.</i>	<i>Jesus lived the perfect life I couldn't. He deserves everything.  He provides for me; gives me all I need; doesn't make me earn his blessing</i>	<i>Over-tipping for bad service  or  Loving a serving a difficult person</i>	<i>Your generosity reflects God's generosity. Like God, you bless those around you even though nothing was earned.</i>

## Gospel Application

Prayerfully pick one idol to focus on in the coming weeks and commit to engaging in intentional gospel behavior (e.g. loving and serving the difficult people in your life to help combat your idolatry of entitlement).

Maintain a record of your intentional attempts so you can keep track of your progress as you grow.

Share your idol with at least one other person in your community and ask them to pray for you. Keep them updated on your journey of repentance.

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<sup>1</sup> This material is not original to me... it's sourced from many, most notably Jeff Vanderstelt and Tim Keller.