



His Plan

Focus God wants us to live in His presence all the time, but sin can pull us away from constant communion with God. Though we don't make idols of wood or stone like they did in the Old Testament, it is possible for our imagination to keep our thoughts away from God. Certain thoughts or ideas can become idols and set up strongholds in your heart.

Fun Do you have an idea for an invention? If so, what would you construct? What problem would you like to solve or make easier?

Review Key Scriptures: Ezekiel 14:1–11

1. Presumption

Ezekiel 14:3

Presumption makes plans to serve an idol. We end up thinking more about how we can serve that idol more than we think about God, and then we take advantage of grace, instead of truly repenting. Consequences and punishment from sin pass from generation to generation. When you don't stand against sin, you can become a hypocrite, serving God becomes inconvenient, and other gods then come into your heart.

2. Estrangement

Ezekiel 14:5

Estrangement is like spiritual adultery. We are in a marriage relationship with God, and giving your heart and soul to an idol, instead of God, is like adultery. Sin does not affect God's love for you; it affects your love for God. God doesn't want you to be separated from Him by serving something other than Him. You are not a bad person if you feel convicted of idol worship. God wants to bring your heart out of a spiritual adulterous affair and turn it back to Him.

3. Spiritual Deafness

Isaiah 59:2

When we sin, we're separating ourselves from intimacy with God, and that causes spiritual deafness. And when the demonic spirit behind an idol speaks, we often listen to it rather than to God. Sin turns down the volume on the Holy Spirit and turns up the volume of false truths. And you often believe you are hearing God.

Group Dynamics Idea Ask the Holy Spirit how your group can express personal thanks to God during this Thanksgiving season. He may lead you to sit together quietly in His presence. He may prompt members to contact an unsaved friend who needs some loving encouragement. God takes pleasure in your group's obedience to His leading.

Discuss

1. Define spiritual adultery with God. Is God's love for us affected when we have a stronghold? How does idol worship affect your love for God?
2. Why does Satan use a person's imagination to set up an idol inside the heart? Read Jeremiah 3:14. How does idolatry interfere with a Christian's relationship with God?
3. Read Romans 13:14. Explain why making provision for sin leads to idols in the heart.
4. List some ways the demonic spirit behind an idol brings confusion when trying to hear God. How can a Christian who has allowed idol worship turn his heart back toward God?
5. In Ezekiel 14:5, God wants to "seize the house of Israel by their heart." How does this relate to God's command in Exodus 20:4?
6. Satan's plan is to form a stronghold through images kept in the heart so that we will walk away from God. What is the result described in Isaiah 59:2?
7. What's the difference between someone with an idolatrous heart that leans toward convenience and serving more gods and the Christian who repents to God and receives joy?

Take Home As we conclude, remember the following:

- God's love for people does not diminish.
- The Holy Spirit wants constant communion with you.
- God's plan for you is good.
- Sin has consequences that separate us from intimacy with God.
- God wants to turn your heart toward Him so that there is neither distance nor separation between you and Him.

Prayer Lord, we turn our hearts to You. Show each of us any idol that we've allowed in our hearts to separate us from You. We want no other gods before You. Help us to love and serve You with all our hearts. In Jesus' name, Amen.

New Leader Tip As you speak, focus on the faces of your members. Friendly eye contact conveys acceptance and helps to maintain their attention. If you see that someone is not understanding your point, pause with patience. Explain again using different words or invite your members to ask a question before continuing. The kindness and friendliness you extend will affect their hunger to hear God's Word.