

# Family God's Way #3 - Worldly Threats to Family

by Bob Hoekstra

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*The world is posing serious threats to family God's way, and we must be aware of idols and false gods, including self-love and money worship, and deny ourselves to follow Jesus.*

**Duration:** 58:33

**Scripture:** Exodus 20:3-12, Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 7:35, Colossians 3:17

**Topics:** "Idolatry", "Faithfulness"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the prevalent idol of pleasure in today's society. He highlights the obsession with recreation, amusement, and material possessions, which often lead people to prioritize their own enjoyment over their relationship with God. The preacher emphasizes the importance of not forgetting the Lord and warns against pursuing other gods. He also addresses the issue of idolizing celebrities and the worship of sex, urging believers to be aware of these idols and to remain steadfast in their faith. The sermon draws from biblical references, such as Deuteronomy and the book of Judges, to support the message.

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## Transcript

In this visit, we're going to look at worldly threats to the family. The world is not cooperating with God's plan for the family. The world is trying to set aside the family, bring in alternative approaches to the family.

In fact, I think the news just came out today, our state legislature is wiser than God, you know, and new ways now to define the family. Well, the world is posing serious threats to family God's way. One way they're doing it is by setting up idols, false gods, not always visible, visual ones, tangible ones, but just as idolatrous, false gods that are seducing many believers to follow after them.

We must be aware of these false gods, the Lord reveals them in His Word, and we must flee from them. Now, that was exactly the kind of word that was being given to Israel here now in Deuteronomy 6 as they're about to go into the promised land and are to establish their households under the guidelines of the Lord for His glory and for His purposes. And in Deuteronomy 6, verses 10 through 15, Israel, the people of God of old, received the word about the gods of this world.

And there's a message here for us we'll see carried right into the New Testament as well. So it shall be when the Lord your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build, houses full of all good things which you did not fill, hewn out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, when you have eaten and are full, then beware, lest you forget the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage. You shall fear the Lord your God and serve Him and shall take oaths in His name.

You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are all around you. For the Lord your God is a jealous God among you, lest the anger of the Lord your God be aroused against you and destroy you from the face of the earth. Now in verses 10 and 11, the Lord is promising to provide for His people as He places them in the land and prepares to use them there.

In verse 12, the Lord gives them a warning, beware, watch yourself, lest you forget the God who delivered you. As sure as God delivered Israel of old out of the bondage of Egypt and the world system, so the Lord has delivered us from bondage to sin and death. And the world was once our home, it no longer is.

We have a new and living way to walk with God. And we must not forget the Lord who delivered us. Then in verse 13, God's people were told to fear Him, to respect Him, to have reverence toward the Lord God Almighty and to serve Him and to take oaths in His name, or that is swear by His name, that is depend on Him and give allegiance to His name.

Colossians 3.17 brings that right up into a clear, concise New Testament pattern and command, that is whatever we do, we're to do in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Do it representing Him, do it trusting in Him, do it drawing on His resources, doing it being His people here on earth serving Him. And then verse 14, God said, Do not go after other gods.

Now there's only one real true and living God, but there are all kinds of false gods, counterfeit gods, idols of humanity, objects of allegiance and devotion. Wherever a man bends his knee, giving respect, allegiance, priority, attention, obedience, investment, giving of himself, those are acts of worship. And we're not to go after other gods.

In fact, it's elaborated here with the phrase, any of the gods of the peoples around you. We are the people of God in this day and age, the church of Jesus Christ. We know and are to serve the true and living God.

But all around us are the gods of the peoples. Everyone is worshiping something or someone or combinations thereof. Man was created to worship.

It's in us. My wife and I ministered and served in Dallas, Texas for 14 years in the 60s and 70s, and one of the great objects of worship there was the Dallas Cowboys. I mean, people would say and do the most amazing things concerning the Cowboys.

And if you behave that way about the true and living God, they thought you a bit crazy. But if you go kind of insane in public about how great the Cowboys are, they thought, well, you're just a normal, good Dallas citizen. I mean, people have their gods.

They're all around us. But we who know the true and living God, we are not to go after any of the gods of the peoples around us, of the world system. As Christians, as Christians in families are looking to the day that God will establish our families, we're to be certain that our families do not bend the knee to the false

gods of this age.

And that's the great temptation. It's the great tactic of the enemy to tear down our homes by getting us to bow the knee of allegiance, of honor, of devotion in other directions than our Lord God Almighty. Verse 15 here says that to do such is disastrous because the Lord God is a jealous God.

Jealous not in a human, petty sense, but jealous as only God can be jealous, in a holy, pure, loving way. There's no carnal jealousy in the Lord. But His jealousy is holy and pure.

He has a loving desire for His people to know Him and serve Him and He's very jealous of His people and that love relationship and rightly so. It's a godly jealousy. It's a love that should not be compromised.

God knows it and He wants us to know it. So these were the words of the Lord God Almighty to Israel, His people under the Old Covenant. But all of these things of Israel are shadows of the substance to come and all of the things they went through, we go through with our Lord Jesus Christ.

To bring this right up into the New Testament age in which we live, Romans 12.2, do you remember? Romans 12.2. And do not be conformed to this world. We are not to be conformed to this world, to its value system, its lifestyles, its idols, its altars of worship. We're not to take on the ways of the world.

We're not to seek after the things they seek after. We're not to give allegiance where the world gives allegiance. We're not to bend the knee where they bend the knee.

We're to bow and worship and serve and love the Lord God Almighty with all of our being. And 1 John 5.21 puts it this way. 1 John 5.21, last verse of that powerful little epistle.

Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Keep yourselves from idols, the children of God. We are to stay away from the idols of the world and its systems of value and allegiance and devotion that are all around us.

Now, what are the idols of the world today? What are the false gods that people are bowing down to today that we're not to bow down to? Where are the unsaved, those who do not know the Lord Jesus Christ? Where are they putting their love? Where are they putting their energy? Where are they putting their devotion? Where do they give their worship? That is, their honor and their allegiance. Where do they invest the attention that is due to God alone? Whenever we see that in the world, we know we're looking at a false god, an idol. And we must be aware of them.

We must not follow in the path of idolatrous living that the world cannot avoid because they do not know the true and living God. And only life lived in worship to Him and service to Him and obedience to Him rescues us from idolatry to a true life of worship. In 2 Timothy 3, there's a list of characterizations of humankind in the last days.

Here toward the end of the church age. In this list are some very clear descriptions of idols of the world all around us. May the Lord give us insight.

May He convict us. May He guard us. May He keep us from idols.

You know, family life has its challenges and some of them are inevitable. And God uses them to build our faith and to exercise us spiritually and to have us grow up with Him. There are some kind of problems, though, we are to cleanse and purge our households of.

For example, any problems of idolatrous living or bowing down to false gods. There are some problems our families have to face, just like every person must face certain challenges. Growing up is a challenge.

Learning is a challenge. Being changed is a challenge. Loving God in a world that either is disinterested or hates Him is a challenge.

There are all kinds of built-in difficulties for Christians. But there are some we're not to have in our lives and we're to note them, be aware of them, and flee from them. That's what we're looking at tonight.

And this applies particularly in Deuteronomy 6 under the context of the household unit. But, of course, this would apply to any believer. If you're a single person and you recall that the Scriptures say in 1 Corinthians 7 that singleness is for the securing of undistracted devotion to the Lord.

1 Corinthians 7.35 Then let the Lord speak to you tonight. Undistracted devotion to the Lord. One thing that can distract us are the altars of allegiance and the false gods of devotion and worship in the world all around us.

They're enticing us. They're inviting us. Come bend the knee at our altar.

It's important. You need it. You'll love it.

And if you have to keep that Christianity, okay, but just be practical, you know. Kind of work it all in together. May the Lord make us alert to those invitations and flee from them.

What are the gods of this world? The first one listed in our study outline is no doubt the most popular idol of this age and one we might not think of if the Scriptures didn't make it clear, and that's the idol of self. 2 Corinthians 3, verses 1 and 2. But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come. In the last days, toward the end of the church age, near the coming of the Lord, when our time for work is about over and laboring in the harvest field, the times will get to be perilous, dangerous, difficult to live in, you know, like now.

And the reason is, for man will be. The reason the days will be difficult will be because of the characteristics of mankind. Because people will be like this, therefore it's going to be very difficult, and it's one more sign that time is running short.

And if you've studied this passage or read these verses lately, surely your heart heard the Lord say, we are in these days, are we not? What's the number one characteristic of humankind listed here describing the last days? Verse 2, for men will be lovers of themselves. Now this makes self a false god and idol. Why? Because we are to love the Lord our God with all of our being.

And then as He fills our hearts with His love, Romans 5, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, we're just to pour out that love of God toward others. And that's it. Loving God with all of our being because He's worthy, then as He fills us with His love, pour it out on others.

That's the way to live. But in the last days, men will be lovers of themselves. Lovers of themselves.

What's God's plan for self? It isn't to love it. It's to crucify it. Luke 9.23 and elsewhere, Jesus said, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

What does the Lord say should happen to self in that call to discipleship? And remember, discipleship is what the kingdom of God is all about. The church is a band of disciples sent out to make disciples. It's not a cluster of church members sent out to get more church members.

It's a band of disciples gathered around Jesus, being discipled by Him and sent out to make more disciples. The call to discipleship sets forth these terms. Number one, deny yourself.

The self-life, our individual, independent, Me-centered life is to be denied. We're to say no to it. It's another way to say repentance.

Lord, all of us like sheep have gone astray. Each one has turned to his own way. Lord, I repent.

I tell you, that's wrong. I shouldn't be going my way. I should be going your way.

And I turn to you, Lord, and I say no to myself, my way, my path. Also no to my righteousness. Oh, my righteousness, Lord, it's like filthy rags.

I say no to it. I can't know you through my merit. I can't make heaven above or walk with you now on my own.

I deny myself. I say no. I can't.

It's not in me. I'm sinful. I'm unrighteous.

I need forgiveness. We're to deny self. Say no to it.

Say it isn't what God is calling for. That it needs God's mercy and grace and transforming, changing power. We're to deny our own sufficiency, our own will, our own glory, our own resources.

We're to say no to self. And even more than that, the next condition, we're to take up our cross daily. The words Jesus spoke after these says, Those who lose their life for his sake, find it.

Those who try to guard and protect and keep and build their own life, they lose the whole thing. So the Lord's talking about death. Dying that we might live.

Not just no to self, but I deny self as the life that I need and the life that's acceptable. In fact, Lord, I cling to your cross. I make it my cross.

I want myself on that cross with Jesus Christ. Romans 6 and elsewhere says, We who believe in Jesus, when he died, we died. When he was raised, we were raised to newness of life.

And so it's a new life God wants us to walk in. A life he gives by his grace and flows from his Son. A self life will never be acceptable to God.

We're to say no to self. Even let that life go to the cross of Jesus Christ. We're to have nothing left but one option.

Jesus said, and follow me. When you say no to self, let your own life be put on the cross. What's left? We don't have a life left that's all our own.

We're raised with Christ to live by his life. Romans 5.10, the saving life of Christ. The reconciling death of Christ.

Turning enemies into friends. Then the saving life of Christ flowing through us. Making Christ like young ones who grow up like the Lord Jesus Christ.

Living by his life. We follow him. The only thing left for a Christian is follow Jesus.

Look to him for forgiveness. Look to him for direction. Look to him for righteousness.

Look to him for hope. Look to him for strength. Look to him for protection.

Look to him for fruitfulness. It's Christ in us, the hope of glory. It is tragic that the world worshiping self is not fled from by the church of Jesus Christ.

You know what's happening in the church today? Many in the church are bowing the knee to the idol, the false god of self. Characteristic of mankind at the end, lovers of themselves. We've never had an age like this one.

Where people openly flaunt self-love. Now self-love has been a problem for mankind since Satan took a look at himself in heaven, said, hey, why am I guarding the throne of God? I'm rather something. I ought to be on that throne.

And he said, I will, I will, I will, I will be like the Most High. And he wasn't and he won't be. And he fell.

So he went into the garden and started to talk mankind into how they could be like God. They just get away from that tree of life. Get into the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Get out there and learn for yourself. Make it your way. Don't live on that tree.

That's all from God. Get out there. You can do it.

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Learn it yourself. Work it out your own way.

And from that time on, man has been tempted to live his life designed and defined by self-love. We've come to the Lord Jesus Christ. Now we know we're to love the Lord God Almighty with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength.

We're not to love self. That's our problem. Not our hope.

Not our remedy. Not our strength. That's our curse.

It's going Satan's way. He fell in self-love. He got all caught up in himself.

It's an idol of this age. Now in our day and age, people write songs about loving themselves. And the most famous heroes of our land are those who are the most proud and self-exalted.

It's tragic. But far more tragic than that is when the church starts playing that game. The church is now teaching people that what they need to do is learn how to love themselves.

The reason your life is so tough is you've been too hard on yourself. Listen, how much harder can you be on yourself than to say no and be executed on the cross? Jesus calls us to the ultimate radical solution for

our self-life. Say no to yourself and put it on the cross of Jesus Christ.

Now the church, instead of inviting people to the cross of Christ for salvation and for discipleship, they teach them how to save their lives so someday they can lose them. Instead of lose it all, that they might find it in Christ. And many are tempted to bow down at the idol of self and say, You know what I really need to do? I need to learn to love myself.

How could we ever fall for it? Because we're facing a deceiver. And in our flesh is that remnant of Adam, that, oh yes, let me be in the middle. Let me be the object of love and attention.

The idol of self. What we've done in our humanistic, psychological age, exalt self and esteem self. Often it's not quite as blunt as worship yourself, you know.

Make yourself your object of devotion. It's put more palatably. We say you need to learn or gain a higher self-esteem.

And it's just rampant in our culture. And the church is bringing it in like it's a great new God that we never heard of. Teach us how to love ourselves.

We need to rest in the love of God. Learn what Christ esteem is all about. Holding Him highly.

And resting in this fact. He died for us. He loves us.

He'll never leave us nor forsake us. He's promised to meet all of our needs. He's preparing a place for us in glory.

We should be so caught up with the Lord Jesus Christ and resting in His work and His provision and worshipping His person that when anyone would dare bend our knee, entice us to the altar of self-love, self-esteem and self-worship, we would flee from it. When you go into most Christian bookstores and find shelves teaching Christians how to get into these things, you can see how subtle it is, how popular it is, how easy it is to get caught up. The idol of self.

May the Lord deliver us from such. May we be aware of it and flee it. Here's another idol here in this passage.

Another idol here. Men will also be lovers of money. It seems like so many of these things in 2 Timothy 3 are just elaborations of self-love.

Loving money is just a way to bless self. Give me that money so I can do me good. Long ago in the Psalms it says, men will praise you when you do well for yourself.

You get rich and selfish and self-centered and the whole world will say, what a man. And all heaven goes, how tragic and pathetic. May we remember to have heaven's viewpoint on these things, not the world's.

Lovers of money. We're to love God, not money. But in the world around us, people are chasing money, scheming how to get more money, dreaming about money, craving money.

It's the love of money. And don't let the enemy of your soul or the old foolishness of Adam logged in our fleshy brain give you this thought, well, at least that one doesn't affect me. I don't have any money.

Remember, it's not money that is the root of all evil. It's the love of money. I can remember times when I was pitifully broke.

In fact, I was worse than broke. I was in heavy mindless territory. But it didn't shake my love for money.

Maybe it had failed me a little bit along the way, but it's probably just a matter of learning. Let's go after some more again. I remember doing crazy things.

You know, when you'll borrow money from a bookmaker to buy a get-rich-quick franchise that sells pie-in-the-sky self-help, you're great, keep telling yourself ideas, I mean, you're getting pretty desperate after money. And yes, that was a personal testimony, I'm sorry to say. But, praise be to God Almighty, He can deliver us from things like that.

I remember when I first got serious about paying that bookmaker back. It's when people were threatening to kill him. I thought, oh man, I'd be scared to death in that place.

And he said, you know, if you don't get that money to me quick, they may be after you next. Praise God for His mercy. He got his money.

And I got salvation. I tell you, if that isn't the grace of God, the way He works. The love of money.

It's like a god. Money can be an idol. Just as sure as you would put all your coins, melt them and make a little statue out of it and bow down.

Mammon. Mammon. Lovers of money.

It leads to a life of materialism. It feeds on greed. It generally leaves most in debt, chasing it.

It produces among believers poor stewardship, weak giving, irresponsibility with money, and always has this matter of covetousness hanging around. Covetousness. I've got to have a little more.

I forget who the billionaire was they asked, you know, and he just kept working and working to get another million, another ten million, another hundred million, another billion. And somebody said to him, how much is enough? And his classic answer, I don't even know if he knew what he was saying, was just a little more. That's exactly how it works.

The love of money. What an idolatrous path to go. And do you remember, if you want to jot it down and read it, Colossians 3.5 says, covetousness is idolatry.

Just straight out. It's wonderful. The Lord doesn't leave some of these things at all to our imagination.

Covetousness, it's idolatry. Wishing, wishing, wishing, chasing, wanting more money, it's serving another God. Many a Christian home is getting undermined by the idolatrous behavior of self-worship, self-exaltation.

And many Christian homes are getting undermined by the idolatry of bowing the knee to the idol of money, living for it, instead of letting it be used for Almighty God. Another idol, next one on our list, also here in 2 Timothy 3, pleasure. Verse 4, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.

One of the very popular idols of the world all around us is lovers of pleasure. We live in an age of recreation and amusement. Television, movies, videos, video games, toys that cost thousands of dollars,

trips here, there, and everywhere.

They'll probably start having Christian weekend tours to Vegas or something next, you know. And there are probably enough believers going there already. It would be easy to get a tour up.

It would be a little more conspicuous. Maybe it would be better that way, you know. We live in an age of recreation and amusement.

People are lovers of pleasure. So many people just work to underwrite their games. That's a tragedy.

God has ordained work as something He uses on us and uses us on. People are living just getting through the job just so they can make it to the weekend and have enough money to make the weekend count. Or waste, depending on how you look at it.

We're to beware of that. Watch out for the gods of this age. It seems like the great driving motivation in so many Americans now is the three-day weekend.

Oh, honey, only four more weeks and there's a three-day weekend. It's almost like there's fasting and praying until the three-day weekend. And really, I think the Day of Atonement for America now is that unusual time when the calendar unfolds a four-day weekend, can you imagine? High Holy Day and the worship of pleasure.

Now, God lets us have fun and it's not that God is a killjoy. I mean, none of us really knew what joy was until we came to the Lord. I never laughed so hard in my life until I got saved.

I spent a lot of time before that crying. And not that there haven't been plenty of tears with the Lord. Jesus was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

But it isn't a matter that you idolater or I saw you smiling. It's not that. We have reason to laugh.

We have reason to rejoice. Rejoice in the Lord always again, I say. Rejoice.

This is the end of side 8. To listen to the rest of the message, please turn the tape over now. I never laughed so hard in my life until I got saved. I spent a lot of time before that crying.

And not that there haven't been plenty of tears with the Lord. Jesus was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. But it isn't a matter that you idolater or I saw you smiling.

It's not that. We have reason to laugh. We have reason to rejoice.

Rejoice in the Lord always again, I say. Rejoice. It's not a matter that God doesn't want us to have fun.

He gives us reason and opportunity to joy. And He's freely given us all things to enjoy. But not to live for.

Not to be motivated by. Not to sell out our souls for. Not to compromise our values.

Not to love in place of God. Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. The world wants to get our homes caught up in this.

The world wants to get our children caught up in this. It's pulling hard at them. Come bow down here.

You know in America, the arcade is probably replacing the church as the primary gathering place to worship. Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. Here's an interesting idol.

The next one on our list. Religion. Boy, we have an enemy who has no scruples at all.

If he can't get us sunk out into the deepest parts of degradation, he'll go the other way. Okay, let's make you an upstanding, righteous-looking idolater. Let's get you bowing down to the false god of religion instead of to the true and living God.

Oh, he's caught millions if not billions around the world in this. 2 Timothy 3.5 Speaking of having a form of godliness but denying its power. A form of godliness but saying no to the real power, the reality of true godliness.

What is the power of godliness? It involves realities of heaven and the kingdom of God like the cross of Jesus Christ, the Word of God, the Holy Spirit, the name of Jesus. These speak of the power of God, the reality of God. There are many who have a form of godliness.

They seem to be doing God-like looking things. I mean, they go to religious meetings. Some of them even carry that funny book, that Bible.

Some even do it more than once a week, can you imagine? But some doing all that, do it denying the power of God. And it's sad that many fellowships and individual churches and denominations of churches that have gone what is often referred to as the liberal route, instead of conserving the truth and reality of God, they've liberalized, you know. Hey, let's be more open-minded.

You know, when they open up and everything pours out, it's gone. And they lose what it was all about. Let's just be open to each other.

You know, it won't be long. There'll be churches called Christian churches. You'll be able to be a high priest of Satan and also have membership in the local Christian fellowship too.

I mean, that's how it's going. Some of the most ungodly things in the Word of God that are an abomination to God. Churches now not only welcome them as they are without any need to change, but they're even ready to ordain them to lead the people.

Now, you can have a form of godliness, you know, a church building and talk about God and even put the name of Jesus in granite on the building. Even raise a cross up on the steeple and there still be no reality of God in that gathering place. It's possible.

But it's too easy to say, oh yeah, that's what happens in all the liberal denominations, you know, so glad that's not me. Well, if it's not us, praise the Lord. But let's not let the world, the flesh, or the devil entice us into dead religion in our own life, in our church life, or in our homes.

We too are vulnerable to this idol. Just cranking through the motions and sometimes the rationale behind it all is, well, you know, the kids need exposure to things like this. They need to be well-rounded.

It would be a little crass just to send my kids off there like many of us used to do. Some maybe still do, you know. So I'll endure.

I'll take them there a little bit, you know. After all, it's one part of the ingredient of life. It can be dead religion at home.

You know what it is? It's idolatry. Having a form of godliness, but denying its power. Saying God words and doing religious-like things and setting aside all the reality of Jesus Christ in it.

In fact, in many ways, it's one of the most deadly idols because it looks like you're so close. In fact, you must be there. And yet the power is denied, so there's no reality.

It's bending the knee to religion, not to the reality of God. And of course, this is big in our land. It's big around the world.

But we are not to bow the knee to the idols of this age. Here's another unusual one. The next one on our list, the idol of creation.

And this we read about in chapter 1 of Romans. The idol of creation. Verses 20 through 25.

For since the creation of the world, His, God's invisible attributes are clearly seen. The Lord reminded us of this earlier in the evening. Being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.

Because although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God. That is, they knew God was there just by looking at what He made. But they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Professing to be wise, they became fools and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. They began to worship likenesses of creation and creatures instead of worshiping the Creator. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever.

Amen. See, we are to worship and serve the Creator. We are created in such a way that when we look at creation, creation speaks to us and says, a mighty and eternal true God made this.

Some people say, oh, I don't think everybody gets that message from it. You know how we know they do? Because God tells us that's what happens. God built this into creation and into humanity as a part of His creation.

He made man to get the message from creation that God, glorious and eternal, made it all. And then the conscience with conviction of right and wrong, all that brings a sense of accountability. Who is this God? What does He want? What pleases Him? What's right? What's wrong before Him? And He's to be thanked for what He made, bowed down to and sought with all the heart.

But instead, verse 25, they worshiped and served the creature, part of creation, worshiping man or animals or objects that look like one or the other. You know, one of the most powerful religious movements in the world today is the religious movement of evolutionism. That is a way to explain all this with God taken out of it.

I remember right here on a series of Wednesday nights, dear Dr. Morris just proclaimed the great glorious truths of creation here. I think it was for five or six Wednesday evenings not long ago. What a blessing that was.

And there's a message of power in creation of the Creator. Sure, but man has his lies, the lie. The enemy has a way to explain it all with God set aside no matter what the issue is.

It's idolatry. Displacing creation and the Creator is sort of at the heart of Satan's plan. Let's not think of this as creation and the Creator.

Let's think of this as just something that exists and these amazing, intriguing theories on how it just happened to get there. You know, the heart gets hard when we start feeding on those kind of theories. The natural mind kind of, yeah, oh, yeah, oh, right, yes, that's it, now I know.

All the while trying to suppress the truth in unrighteousness. Verse 18, For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness. It isn't that man doesn't have a chance to know the truth.

God's speaking through His creation and man is pushing it down, trying to hold the lid on it. It's like creation keeps sticking out, stuffing it back in with a new theory. It takes work to deny what God has proclaimed through His creation.

And men end up idolatrous worshippers of creation. Schools cooperate in it. The truth of creation can't get it into the schools anymore.

Why? Because the lie has been believed so heavily, it's so popular, it's so politically established, you can't tell the truth. That's how fully it's being suppressed. The government cooperates in this program.

So the systems around us are filled with it. What are we to do? Brothers, sisters, men and women of God, what are we to do? Correct these things at home. If you can't send your children to a place where they'll be taught the truth, and if you're not in a position to school them at home and teach them yourself, and they must be in the public school system, you know what we must do? Tell our kids the truth at home.

Kids, the teacher, sweet Mrs. Jones, you know? She's probably well-intended, kids, but do you know what? She's been fooled and deceived and tricked. We need to pray for her. We need to lovingly pray for her.

We don't hate her. We're sad for her. And she'll be explaining to you how everything got here, and she doesn't know the truth about how it happened.

Straighten it out at home. If we don't do it, moms, dads, with our kids, the world will invite our kids to bow down and worship creation instead of the Creator. And they'll explain to them at the altar there, it wasn't really created.

In fact, it's more sophisticated if we call it Mother Nature, Mother Earth. Forget the Father God imagination, kids. Let's get sophisticated.

It's time to grow up. Let's fall in love with Mother Earth. If we don't tell the kids the truth, they'll be invited to that altar right while their hearts are tender and pliable.

God protect us from the altar of worshiping creation. Here's another idol, sex. Now, it's interesting.

All of these, in a sense, God created or allowed like selves. He created individual people, and He's allowed money to be even used for His glory. And pleasure, oh, He gives us so much pleasure.

In His right hand are pleasures forevermore. Religion, true religion, it's ordained of God in the Word of God, worship of the true and living God. Creation, He made it.

Sex, He designed it too. Of course, the world talks about safe sex. You know what we should be talking about? God-ordained sex.

Major difference. It isn't how safe is it, it's how godly and appropriate is it. Romans 1, 26-29 speaks about this.

For this reason God gave them up to vile passions, those rejecting His truth. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature, what is unnatural. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another.

Men with men committing what is shameful, and boy, here's a sober word, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, see, they're trying to chase God out of their thinking, God gave them over to a debased mind. God's judgment is, you refuse me, all you have left is the depravity and the debased thinking of a godless, unredeemed mind.

God gave them over to a debased mind to do those things which are not fitting, being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, and so on. Sensuality, fornication, adultery, homosexuality, these things are abounding. And we may not have stopped to think that all of these are part of an idolatrous world bowing the knee in the wrong place to the wrong direction, giving allegiance, giving devotion, setting values in ways that God has prohibited.

It's a false system of worship. Back through the ancient centuries of history, idolatrous worship has been characterized so often in what way? With religious prostitutes in religious temples of prostitution. Sex has been one of the tragic, overwhelming idols of humanity.

And in this day and age, it's certainly on a runaway course. Everywhere you look, it's anti-abstinence. Who would have ever thought that to urge someone to do what God ordained, don't get into sexual relationships until God puts you with your mate for life and then with thanksgiving in your heart to God, pour out your love for each other that way and thank God for the joy and pleasure of it.

Instead of that, people are irate if you talk about abstinence. What are you? Are you from the 15th century or something? Safe sex is the great goal. What a tragic farce.

Filled with deceit from the start to the finish. Even the techniques and the instruments used. Safe? Listen, if you don't get a physical disease, you just get eternal judgment.

That's safe? Wow. And even the things that are supposed to protect physically, they don't. Oh, they're hit and miss, but they don't.

What a deceit. Oh, the things man will do to build up his worship systems and to get others to pledge allegiance to their God. Sex in advertising.

I mean, whether you see a commercial or a magazine advertisement, you can't tell by first glance at all what the product is they're selling because you can take a half-clothed woman and sell everything with it these days. Sell tires. Toothpaste.

A vacation trip. Who knows? It may end up on the back of some church bulletin someday. A liberated church.

Sounds kind of far out, doesn't it? Don't be shocked if it happens. MTV. Boy, there's a worship orgy.

All together now, we will crank up the worship band. And we'll bow down at the altars of sex and self and money and cruelty and brutality. Oh, and we'll pipe it into your home for you.

You don't even have to come out and get it. Wow, what a system. Where do we go to worship? Television? Sex idols? Can you imagine a nation that worships idols like Madonna and Michael Jackson? They're high priests and high priestesses of the worship of sex.

It's amazing how many idolize them. It should be to us an abomination. Pornography? Oh, this is a serious idol, the idol of sex.

One more idol to beware of, to be warned about, of the gods of the world all around us. It's the last verse of the book of Judges. It's the idol of relativism.

The idol of relativism. Do you remember this statement at the end of the book of Judges? In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

In those days Israel had no king. Who was to be the king of Israel? God, the Lord God Almighty. He did eventually grant kings and first they had a very carnal fleshy one in Saul and then the Lord showed them a man after his own heart that if they had to have a king, they needed one from God that was godly.

But Israel had no king at this time. So everyone did what was right in their own eyes. In this day and age we call that relativism.

And so it is today. People do not have the true king of their lives, the Lord Jesus in the world around us. So people make up their own values.

No longer are there any absolutes. Nothing is all right or all wrong. Everything is what's right for you? What's true for you? Listen, that's not the question.

What's true for God, that should be true for everyone. And anything else is worshipping a lie. Relativism is rampant in our country and it's coming into the churches.

And it waters down the preaching and teaching of the Word. The Word is too clear. This is right, that's wrong.

Things aren't relative, they're absolute. There's heaven and hell. There's light and dark.

There's condemnation, guilt and it needs forgiveness. Absolutes. But now it's situation ethics.

You ask someone, you know, is this right or wrong? And they say, well, tell me the situation that it's applied to. In this one it might be wrong to lie, but here it might be right. Situation ethics.

It's really the standard in America now, in fact around the world. And you know what? The school has developed as they are willing to... There's no separation of false church and state. Of false religion and state.

No separation of idolatry and state. Hey, bring in the idolatry. Let's put it in all the systems of man.

And now in the schools they offer... Isn't this wonderful how the schools are now helping us raise our children with values clarification? It's so wonderful that they do that because we've been confusing our kids. They've been getting to school and they aren't clear on their values. We've given them some thou shalt and thou shalt not and they're all confused.

They don't know what's right and wrong. So they get into class and the teacher says, we will now have values clarification today. You know what values clarification really is? It's values eradication.

It's kind of saying to the kids, what do you believe in? Where did you get that? Your folks gave you that? I mean, really? Must have got it from your grandparents. That's so old-fashioned. Think it through.

Let's clarify these values. You want to have real clear values, right? And obviously these things you've heard, I mean, do you really believe those? And child after child it's talked out of the absolute realities of God, what's right and what's wrong. Values clarification.

And toleration. In relativism, in a world of relativism, where you worship this idea of relativity, nothing's absolute. I bow down to the fact that everything to me is relative and I sort it out myself.

In other words, I'm God. I decide what's right and wrong. Do you know what the great doctrine of that religion is? Tolerance.

Let's just tolerate each other. Let's just tolerate each other. There's only one place it seems anymore that intolerance is blazing like a bonfire in the world today.

You know where it is? Concerning you. You are intolerable. You're one of those born-again Christians.

You believe in absolutes. You think there's a heaven and a hell. You think you know God.

Well, that's intolerable. The only thing that is no longer tolerated, it seems, is absolute truth. That's how strong the idolatry of relativism is in the world around us.

Idolatry is strong in the world today. We as the people of God are to beware of it. Our nation is falling apart.

The seams are splitting. The fabric is fraying because we're bowing down and giving allegiance as a nation to the gods of this age. The gods we have listed are worshiped mightily in our land.

And this is producing and allowing things like abortion, drugs, divorce, violence, no respect for life, racism, child abuse, crumbling justice system, economic problems up to our ears nationally, lying, cheating, and all of this heavily threatens the Christian family. We must be aware. We must heed the counsel of our last verse for the evening, 1 Corinthians 10.14. Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

Oh, may the Lord make us alert to all of these idols that are just inviting us to come bend the knee at their altar. And may we, as we see them, flee from them and shine the light of God exposing them. And then

one final thought in application and conclusion.

Maybe there are some things tonight that we in our own hearts before the Lord need to confess, repent, and flee from. Perhaps also there are some priorities that we need to reevaluate. And also last, there may be some matters that we need to prayerfully discuss as husbands and wives.

Maybe leading to a family proclamation of truth with our children that drives some idols out or at least keeps them back from our households. Let's speak to the Lord about this. Father, we want to worship and serve the true and living God.

We see idolatry all around us. Lord, it's screaming out to us. Come get involved.

This is okay. This will be good for You. Lord, help us not to bend the knee to the idols of this age.

Show us where they are. If they're in our homes, show us how to purge them and seek Your cleansing. If they're attempting and pulling and calling us, may we cry out to You for strength and grace.

Pray for each other for victory and escape. And Lord, touch households in these areas. Protect our homes.

Protect our children. May we bring them up and may we be those who worship and serve the true and living God, Him and Him only. May we be like Joshua.

As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

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