

POD INTENSIVE SESSION 5

Differences between Idolatry and Setting an Image in One's mind

By Mark Virkler

This document is designed to help you understand the differences between seeing in the Spirit and idolatry in your heart. God commanded the Israelites not to “make a graven image or any likeness of what is in heaven about or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God” (Exodus 20: 4-5).

There is obviously no problem in receiving a vision from God **as one prays and waits before Him**. This has occurred throughout the Bible, one example being found in Revelation 4:2. In this passage, John receives a heavenly vision of Christ, given by God, and as it unfolds, John becomes actively involved, dialoguing with heavenly and angelic beings and participating in the vision (Rev. 10:8-10).

Webster's Dictionary defines a Graven Image as “an object of worship, carved usually from wood or stone”. Obviously, the scene we set in our minds is not carved wood or stone, or worshipped, but simply serves as a stepping stone to the living flow of divine images.

God incarnated Himself in Jesus of Nazareth, “the image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15). This God/Man then lived out a full life in our midst, showing us pictorially, over and over, the “radiant glory of God” (Heb. 1:3), revealing to us, image upon image, the kindness, gentleness, mercy and power of God. God is not only invisible; He is also visible in Jesus Christ!

Now we have an image that is not a man-initiated representation of the likeness of God, but a God-given picture, perfectly portraying Him to us in the multiplied stories He has recorded for us. We can turn to the Gospels, open to the story of His choice, and see the invisible God in visible action. Often the story itself will give us the precise answer to our need in the moment. Often, when we inquire of the Lord in behalf of praying for another person, the Lord will give us a picture or scene that occurred in a story told to us in the Gospels. We do not worship the picture of scene given us, but the One who gives us the vision in our minds.

John “looked to see” (Rev. 4:1) what the Lord wanted to show Him, the Holy Spirit took over, and a heavenly vision unfolded before him. We too, can look to see what God wants to reveal to us. David gave us great examples of the desires of his heart to seek God's face and know God intimately. We also have the privilege and responsibility to seek God's face and know Him

intimately in the “delight of the Fear of the Lord” (Isaiah 11:2).

The goal is for you to more clearly see God’s images, thoughts and themes for your life so that you can live out Romans 12:1-2. Below is a chart highlights scripturally the differences between Idolatry and setting an image in one’s mind that is inspired by God through the Holy Spirit in your life. Take time to explore the various scriptures revealed below and ask God to show you His thoughts and plans for your relationship with Him as you walk with Him. Ask God show you what is in your heart and if there are idols residing in your heart that keep you from being the man or woman that God has called you to be. Reading Psalm 139: 23-24 is a great place to start with asking God to examine your heart and reveal what is in it so that you can turn and follow Him with your whole heart and see His images, pictures and scenes as He wants you to see.

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	IDOLATRY	IMAGE
AUTHORIZED BY	Man (Exod. 32:1)	God (Exod. 25:8-22; Col. 1:15; Heb. 12:2)
THE GOAL	Worship the Idol (Exod. 32:8)	Never worship the image; use image as stepping stone into divine flow (Rev.4:1)
THE ACTION	Idol remains dead (Isa. 44:19)	Divine flow is promoted (Rev. 4:2)
THE PRAYER	Pray to idol (Isa.44:17)	Never pray to image; as divine flow is activated communication with God is established (Rev. 4-22)
THE PURPOSE	To worship “the thing” (Isa. 44:15)	To focus your heart before God (2 Cor. 3:18; 4:18)
THE ATTITUDE	Stiff-necked; proud of heart (Exod. 32:9)	Seeking God humbly (Prov. 2:1-5)
THE CONTROL ISSUE	Manipulating God; magic (1Kings 22:20-23)	Watching God in action; Christianity (Rev. 4-22)

Share with your advisors and POD group any new revelations that God has shown you as a result of reviewing the above captioned scriptures.