

Before next time...

A. We expect to find community by attending church services or Growth Groups. The trouble is, because of our idols and the habits of our heart, even church events can become places where individuals focus on themselves in the presence of others'. It takes deep reflection and costly commitment to make community life work as Christ meant it to. *QUESTION: What might it involve if I am to truly love my brother and sister as Christ commands? What might that look like on a Sunday? What might that look like in Growth Group? What might that look like outside of 'meetings'?*

B. Look up the following texts. How do they help you to understand what our life together as Christians ought to be like?

Romans 12:3-8; 10
James 1:19

James 5:9
1 Thessalonians 3:12

Romans 15:7
Galatians 6:2

C. How do these comments help you understand Christian community?

- *'The first service that one owes to others in the fellowship consists in **listening** to them. Just as love to God begins with listening to his Word, so the beginning of love for [others] is learning to listen to them... Listening can be greater service than speaking... There is a kind of listening... an impatient, inattentive listening, that... is only waiting for a chance to speak and thus get rid of the other person.'* Dietrich Bonhoeffer
 - *God's people at the global level and locally need to capture God's vision of sharing their resources with the needy in their midst. When believers realise that others will care for them if they unexpectedly find themselves impoverished, they can be freed to give more generously in times of plenty.'* Craig Blomberg
 - *'God will be constantly cancelling our plans by sending us people with claims and petitions. we may pass them by, preoccupied with our more important tasks, as the priest passed the man who had fallen among thieves, perhaps - reading the Bible.'* Dietrich Bonhoeffer
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Session 3 Idolatry The Sin Beneath The Sin

Recap and Bible Study

Last time we discovered that there are three ways to relate to God - irreligion, religion and the gospel. The irreligious don't repent at all, the religious only repent of sins, but Christians who've understood the gospel of Jesus repent of both their sins and of their righteousness. We also saw that it is only the gospel that can change our hearts. This session continues to look at how the gospel can change our idolatry...

Would anyone would like to raise anything from the 'before next time'?

- Read together Romans 1:18-25

1. Why do our minds and hearts become 'futile' and 'darkened' (v21)?
2. What are some of the results of idolatry, according to Paul? Has this been true in your experience?
3. What things do we learn about the wrath of God here?
4. So why do we desperately need the gospel? (v16-17 & 18)
5. John Calvin says that we are a constant 'factory of idols'. What are some of the idols (god-substitutes, things that we worship and find our worth and value in, and live for)?

Watch the DVD

Use this space to jot anything down you find helpful from Tim Keller

Was there anything from the DVD which was new to you, or which you thought was particularly striking? Anything you were not sure about?

1. Tim said, *“If you really want to change... Jesus Christ must become your over-mastering positive passion.”* When and how have you found this to be true in your experience or in the lives of others you know?

2. Archbishop William Temple once said, *“your religion is what you do with your solitude.”* When you are alone when can you fill your time thinking about? Where do your thoughts go naturally, instinctively and habitually? How does that help to identify your idols?

3. Tim said, *“Under every behavioural sin is the sin of idolatry, and under every act of idolatry is disbelief in the gospel.”* Do you agree? What are the implications for how we really change our hearts and lives?

4. Psalm 115:8 says that those who make idols *‘will be like them and so will all who trust in them’*. How is this so? Why is this a great incentive to let go of our idols and to love Jesus in their place?

5. What are some of the steps, practically, that we can we take to increasingly turn from our idols and make Christ King and Lord of our entire lives?

Spend time in prayer

- *pray for the particular idols we can battle with in our lives*
- *pray for each other during the week regarding your idols*
- *pray that we might continually repent from our idols and rejoice in Christ*