

When Good Things Become An Idol

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Have you ever considered that even a good thing can become an idol? The reality is that a good thing can become a bad thing when it becomes the ultimate thing. The problem is that there is only one ultimate thing: God. When pursuing something good becomes a priority over pursuing the one who is good, we create an idol that can't save us or help us, and that ultimately leads us on a path away from God.

Even a good thing like love can turn into a bad thing

All of us would say that love is a good thing. There isn't a person alive that doesn't need or want love, but even love can become an idol. That seems almost shocking to hear, doesn't it? How can love be an idol? After all, love is such a good, even great thing. The story of Jacob shows us how this can happen. Jacob's life was empty because he had no love in it. Maybe some of you feel empty right now because your life is devoid of love. Jacob had always looked for love but he couldn't seem to find it.

Genesis 29:16-18 *Now Laban had two daughters. The older daughter was named Leah, and the younger one was Rachel. There was no sparkle in Leah's eyes, but Rachel had a beautiful figure and a lovely face. Since Jacob was in love with Rachel, he told her father, "I'll work for you for seven years if you'll give me Rachel, your younger daughter, as my wife."*

Jacob finally found the love he had desperately looked for when he met a good looking woman named Rachel. It was love at first sight. He hoped that Rachel would finally fill the void in his heart. Unfortunately, the good thing of love turned into a bad thing. Jacob had an idol, a love-goddess that he called Rachel, and his hope was that she would deliver the happiness he had dreamed about. Rachel was not just going to be Jacob's wife, she was going to be his savior and fill the void for all the love he had missed out on.

Genesis 29:20-21 *So Jacob worked seven years to pay for Rachel. But his love for her was so strong that it seemed to him but a few days. Finally, the time came for him to marry her. "I have fulfilled my agreement," Jacob said to Laban. "Now give me my wife so I can sleep with her."*

Idol worship blinds us from seeing straight

Unfortunately for Jacob, his manipulative father-in-law Laban decided to trick him. At the wedding, Laban switched the older daughter, Leah, in place of the younger one, Rachel, while it was dark so that Jacob unknowingly married Leah instead. When he woke up, he immediately understood that he had been tricked and manipulated by his new father-in-law. You might ask, "How could Jacob have been so stupid, so foolish, and so blind?" Here is how: Rachel had become such an idol that Jacob was blinded from reality and couldn't see Laban's treachery.

This is true for us as well. When we are consumed by something that is meant to be good, we become blinded to how it is affecting us and the consequences it can have. We may even go so far as to compromise our beliefs and stray away from how God has called us to live our lives, all because that good thing became the ultimate thing.

Idols come crashing down and so do the people with them

When a good thing becomes a priority over God in our lives, people are going to get hurt and relationships are going

to be damaged. Idol worship always leads to damage and destruction.

Genesis 29:30 *So Jacob slept with Rachel, too, and loved her much more than Leah.*

Part of the collateral damage in Jacob's idol worship was poor Leah. She was the ultimate victim in this tragic tale. Her father Laban didn't love or want her and gave her to a man that didn't love or want her. Laban used her to make a seven year financial profit. She experienced the pain of a father who idolized money and a husband that idolized her sister's beauty.

Isaiah 30:13 *Calamity will come upon you suddenly-like a bulging wall that bursts and falls. In an instant it will collapse and come crashing down.*

Idol worship always ends badly, always. When the wall comes crashing down, there is a lot of collateral damage done to people we claim to love and care about. Idol worship will end up hurting people and damaging relationships, so is it worth it? The desire to be loved, and even to love, is a good thing, but often becomes an idol because we first and foremost seek to fill that desire with things that are not God.

Only God can fill your deepest longing to be loved

Jesus fully understood the desire to be loved, and he lived a life of rejection and loneliness to show that God is the only one we need. Don't short change yourself and fill that need with temporary, fleeting love that we experience here on earth. After all, the love we feel from others is a reflection of the truly fulfilling love that God has for us. Instead of pursuing that reflection, pursue the one who it reflects from. All of us were created with a deep longing to be loved, and Jesus is the only one who can fill it.

Discussion Questions:

1. *Watch the video together or invite someone to summarize the topic.*
2. *Name some good things, that if taken too far or made too important, could become a bad thing.*
3. *What do you think you need or what do you think needs to change in your life in order for you to be happy?*
4. *Are there any things in your life that get more attention than God? Explain.*
5. *Can you think of any way that you have been blinded by an idol in your life and it lead to difficult consequences? Explain*
6. *Read [Daniel 3:1-18](#) Think of some of the things that our culture encourages us to worship. Do you think it is ever unpopular to refuse to worship what our current culture worships? How do you think the three men in this passage had the strength to go against the King?*
7. *Read [1 Corinthians 10:14](#). What is the clear instruction in this verse? How can you apply it to your current situation in regard to the idols in your life?*
8. *Read [1 Corinthians 10:23](#). Can you identify some things in your life that may be permissible but that are not beneficial for you? Explain*
9. *Write a personal action step based on this conversation.*