

Modern Day Idolatry

Imaginary gods—part 1

September 27, 2026

We begin a new series entitled, “**Imaginary gods.**”

DAY 1: The 1st two commandments

1. Perhaps when you were in school you studied Greek mythology and Roman mythology. For centuries, mythology was man’s misguided way of trying to explain how life our works.
2. Prior to those centuries, people relied on manmade idols to try to explain life and imagined that allegiance to these idols made life work for them. There were different idols made for just about everything. Needed more kids to work the farm? There was a fertility idol for that. Needed better crops at harvest? There was another fertility idol for that? Needed rain? The rain idol.
3. When Christianity grew across the middle east and up into Europe, mythology and idolatry was slowly replaced by Christianity. Why? Because Christianity better explained **reality!**
4. Idolatry is relying on anything except God as our ultimate hope, purpose, meaning, and satisfaction. We imagine a substitute(s) for God will do just fine.
5. Idolatry is trusting someone, something, or any combination of them.
6. Instead, we are created to have God as our real source of ultimate satisfaction, purpose, meaning, and joy. This is expressed as the highest priority in the Ten Commandments. Here are the first two.
Exodus 20:1 And God spoke all these words:
² “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. ³ “You shall have no other gods before me.
⁴ “You shall not make for yourself an **image** in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. ⁵ You shall **not bow down** to them or **worship them**; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶ but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.
7. What strikes you about these two commands?
8. What do you find yourself trusting for your ultimate peace and joy?

DAY 2: God's moral law

1. The secular world imagines a world without absolute truth. Instead, they believe that they can define their own truth.
2. The world God created is based on absolute truth. There are what we call “the laws of nature and nature’s God. These laws define reality, how life and human nature work.
3. These laws can be found in the bible, but they can also be found in our hearts!

Jeremiah 31:31 The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah.

³² It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the Lord.

*³³ “This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the Lord. **“I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts.”** I will be their God, and they will be my people.*

*³⁴ No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord,’ **‘because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.’**” declares the Lord. “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”*

4. God’s moral laws are like the laws of science—physics, chemistry, biology, etc. They are immutable, unchangeable, like the law of gravity.
5. If we break physical laws the consequences are sometime immediate, like jumping off a cliff or diving into a shallow pool head first.
6. But sometimes the consequences are not immediate. A lifetime of smoking may not cause cancer or emphysema for a long time. A lifetime of drinking alcohol may not cause any immediate consequences, but don’t be surprised when you hear a diagnosis of cirrhosis of the liver.
- 7.. When it comes to God’s moral law we can break it at will, often without any immediate consequences that we can see. Then we draw an awful conclusion—“we can do what we want as long as we don’t hurt someone else.”
8. What strikes you from the verses in Jeremiah 31, especially v. 33?

DAY 3: The rotten deal

1. Everyone “worships” someone or something. Worship is usually thought of as religious activity at a religious place of worship. But worship is more than religious activity.
2. We were made to worship. Worship in this sense is something our heart does. What has our highest value? On what is our greatest hope to find real life? Satisfaction? Joy? Inner peace? A strong sense of identity? Genuine, sacrificial love? Meaning? Purpose?

We **are** creatures who worship.

3. We all seek all of these things whether or not we’re consciously doing so. We can’t help but pursue those things. Each of us develops a “strategy” of how we’re going to find meaning, purpose, identity, peace, satisfaction, etc. The strategy is seen in what and who we give our heart and soul to most. That is “worship.”

4. But there is something catastrophically corrupt in every human heart. We want to define what is most important to us and what we will give ultimate loyalty to, what our real hope is for finding lasting happiness, inner joy, peace, satisfaction, etc. And it’s not God, the Creator. It is some aspect of what is created. We **imagine** we know better.

5. All of us make bad deals, bad trades, bad decisions regarding absolute truth:

*Romans 1:18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who **suppress the truth** by their wickedness, ¹⁹ since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.*

²¹ *For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but **their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.** ²² Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³ and **exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images** made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.*

²⁴ *Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. ²⁵ They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and **worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator**—who is forever praised. Amen.*

²⁶ *Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. ²⁷ In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.*

²⁸ *Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so **God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done.** ²⁹ They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹ they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. ³² **Although they know God’s righteous decree** that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.*

6. What strikes you from this passage in Romans?

DAY 4: Absolute truth gives us answers to life greatest questions

Psalm 119:89 The unfolding of Your word gives light. It imparts understanding to the simple

1. For all of human history philosophy has delved into the great questions of life.

- What is real?
- How did the world come into being?
- What does it mean to be a human being?
- What is the purpose of life?
- Is life meaningful?
- What's flawed in human nature?
- Is there dignity in human nature?
- Can human nature be transformed?

2. Over the millennia, philosophers have expounded their theories in search of answers to these questions.

Finding answers to these questions is either based on
speculation or revelation!

3. But there has never been a source of absolute truth that gives us final answers to these questions. The bible does! The bible tells us...

- a. There is a Creator, a real God, who provides the essential and true answers to these questions, not mythology, idolatry, or the trendy philosophies of the day. The world is not here by accident.
- b. The universe is orderly, the product of a rational mind. The world is not random.
- c. Human dignity is true because we are created by our Creator and made in the image of God.
- d. We have answers to why evil and suffering exists.
- e. Our identity is not, nor can ever be satisfactorily based on our wealth, status, usefulness, sexuality, or the product of our imagination.
- f. The bible tells us that human beings have both dignity and depravity. It accounts for our "better angels" and human corruption. Dignity and depravity are described by Creation and the Fall.
- g. History is not an endless loop of humanity going nowhere.
- h. God is telling the larger story of redeeming fallen mankind.
- i. There is meaning to life that is rooted in God's love and restoration of fallen man.

4. When secularists try to replace the Creator with anything or anyone created, consequences are inevitable.

5. Secularist insist on living in a world as they **imagine** it to be, not as it really is. When they do so they are kicking against a brick wall that doesn't move. They are kicking against **reality** itself.

6. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 5: “Imagine”

John 14:6 I am the way, the truth, and the life... (Jesus)

1. John Lennon’s song, Imagine, became the secularist’s anthem for my generation. Lennon not only imagines a world described in the lyrics but tried to live a real life in his imagined world.

Imagine there's no heaven
It's easy if you try
No hell below us
Above us, only sky

Imagine all the people
Livin' for today

Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion, too

Imagine all the people
Livin' life in peace

You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the world will be as one

Imagine no possessions
I wonder if you can
No need for greed or hunger
A brotherhood of man

Imagine all the people
Sharing all the world

2. If there is no heaven nor hell, there is ultimately no eternal justice or redemption.
3. If we are only living for today, there is no ultimate purpose or meaning to life.
4. If there is no “religion” (the real God and absolute truth) there is no inherent meaning, no real purpose to mankind.
5. If there are no countries, you will inevitably have a clash of values, cultures and language.
6. Lenon imagines all of us living in peace, without God or religion. Impossible, both on an international scale all the way down to a personal scale.
7. Lenon imagines a world without possessions. That world exists in hell. But here on earth, a life without any possessions is the most primitive existence one can imagine—living under trees, hunting for food, etc. Even homeless people have some possessions and insist on some possessions.

8. What strikes you from today’s devotional?