

The Idolatry of Self

Musings & Random Thoughts

These days I love to sit and 'muse' with my Father. One of Webster's definitions of 'muse' is: to become absorbed in thought; to turn something over in the mind meditatively and often inconclusively. The following article is taken from my musing on the subject of idolatry of self.

Galatians 5:19-21 NLT: "When you follow the desires of your sinful nature (*idolatry of self*), the results are very clear: sexual immorality (*adultery and fornication*), impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other signs like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God." (*italics mine.*)

The Message translation says it this way: "It is obvious what kind of life develops out of trying to get your own way all the time: repetitive, loveless, cheap sex' a stinking accumulation of mental and emotional garbage; frenzied and joyless grabs for happiness; trinket gods; magic-show religion; paranoid loneliness; cutthroat competition; all-consuming-yet-never-satisfied wants; a brutal temper; an impotence to love or be loved; divided homes and divided lives; small-minded and lopsided pursuits; the vicious habit of depersonalizing everyone into a rival; uncontrolled and uncontrollable addictions; ugly parodies of community. I could go on. This isn't the first time I have warned you, you know. If you use your freedom this way, you will not inherit God's Kingdom."

Father's love empowers our freedom from self-idolatry.

Love from other people is essential to our ability to learn to live and prosper in community.

Typically, the more loveless our life experience has been, the stronger our self-idolatry will become.

We are made up of what God has put in us; what others have put in us, good and bad; what life has put in us, good and bad; what we have put in ourselves, good and bad. These all have an impact on who we are and the quality of our life experience.

Those who believe they have a good life will probably not be motivated to work toward a better life.

I believe God created mankind with a need for Him built in our DNA. His absence leaves us with a sense that something is wrong, something is missing. We can be dissatisfied with our life; thus we are always looking, always searching for something that is missing and it is usually unidentified. Therefore, no matter what we try, what we change, how we succeed or prosper, the void is never filled because it is a God thing. Religion won't satisfy it. Performance won't satisfy it. Other people won't satisfy it. No substitute will bring peace to the need. Only God Himself can fill the void and bring complete satisfaction and fulfillment.

Our destiny as human beings is to know God on a personal and intimate basis; living with and for Him and not for ourselves.

I know first hand about the idolatry of self. I became an expert at an early age because my love hunger was extreme.

Have you noticed that self can be a powerful adversary to our relationship with God? Our beliefs, our priorities, or desires and goals, our fears and even our pain can be a huge detriment to having a truly intimate relationship with our Heavenly Father.

Sadly, many of us cheat ourselves out of the wonderful blessings that are available to us as children of God and assign ourselves to a life of religion, frustration, disappointment, burnout and lack of fulfillment because of our self idolatry.

The need to control is idolatry of self.

An entitlement mentality is idolatry of self.

The idolatry of self can cause us to attempt us to use God and other people to get our needs met. It never works. It never satisfies completely. We will continue to be frustrated, disappointed and offended with God and other people because our love hunger is not being satisfied. Besides God and other people resent being used. Thus the idolatry of self drives us on and to our own detriment we try the same things over and over again expecting a different result and none is found. It is insanity.

Sadly, many of us blame God for our problems in life. Then we wonder why we cannot get closer to Him or why He won't respond to us. I have had an alcoholic tell me it was God's fault that he was an alcoholic because God made alcohol. We have had a single mother with several children, all out of wedlock, all with different fathers blame God for her terrible struggles in trying to raise all her kids. She maintains it is God's fault she has all these kids because He made her fertile! I realize that these are extreme examples, but stop and think for a minute, is there any limit to what we can blame God for? Are you blaming God for anything? Are you offended with Him for anything? If so, you are separating yourself from Him! Are you right and God is wrong? If this applies to you, then you have bound yourself to know God and His love for you conceptually from a distance, instead of personally, intimately and experientially. Knowing God loves me because the Bible tells me so is a poor substitute for the real thing! He never intended it to be that way! Conceptual belief is a necessary starting place, but that is all it is – a starting place.

Self-idolatry melts when dipped in the pool of Father's wonderful, powerful, unconditional love for us and all the debilitating side effects of self-idolatry seem to dissolve and disappear as our love hunger is satisfied. Truly the Kingdom of God is at hand to break the power of self-idolatry an escort each of us into the supernatural life experience of Father's love.

If you can see the possibility that self-idolatry is at work in your life, then ask yourself this question – how's it workin' for me? If you can honestly admit that it is not working very well, then ask yourself this second question – am I dumb enough to continue doing what I have been doing and expect a different result or am I smart enough to see that I must change; I must repent for my sin of idolatry and ask God's forgiveness and put Him on the throne of my life! 2 Corinthians 5:15.

Was Cain walking in self-idolatry when he got offended with God for rejecting his offering? Was self-idolatry operating when he killed his brother, Abel?

Husbands who dominate and control their wives and children are demonstrating self-idolatry. Many Christian husbands try and use scripture to justify this position as head of their home and take the position of Boss! This is self-idolatry. This attitude is not rooted in love for others, but love of self. It brings defilement, resentment and division to the family unit. Worse than that, it can separate individuals from God.

The idolatry of self is anti-relationship and is self destructive.

It is just that simple and it's just that difficult. Heaven on earth is found when we truly live for Him and not ourselves.

Self-idolatry is self deception.

The Kingdom of God is at hand to meet our love hunger needs and break the power of our idolatry. Choose this day whom you will serve – God or self. The right choice will bring you abundant life. The wrong choice will bring you continuing disappointment.

The idolatry of self was Satan's sin, wasn't it? It hasn't worked out too well for him. It doesn't have to be that way for us. By the blood of Jesus we have the opportunity for forgiveness, freedom from our sin and new life in our Heavenly Father.

The idolatry of self makes forgiveness of others more difficult.

The idolatry of self makes surrendering our life to God more difficult.

The idolatry of self makes the trap of religion easier to fall into.

The idolatry of self makes serving others more difficult. We usually serve others with a hook on it; that being what we want in return for our service.

The term idolatry of self is just another way of saying a person is self-centered not God centered. To the degree we are self-centered; we do not yield our lives to Father's plan for us. It seems many of us believe that God's desire for our lives is in opposition to our own desires. We falsely believe that He wouldn't take into consideration what is in our heart. He just expects us to give up all we hope for and do whatever He wants from us. Gerri and I have discovered just the opposite is true. Since we have met Father and experienced the power of His love, our desires have become less important. We want desperately to serve and honor Him. In this process He has blessed us by telling us how important our desires are to Him. We are not in opposition to each other. His desires for us include our own desires. We have given up a great deal in making this transition and some of it has been difficult, but we are much the better for it. Let's see...we have given up our love hunger! Wow! That was a biggie! Oh want a relief it is! Father's love continues to satisfy that need. In addition, it is astounding how the empowerment of Father's love diminishes self-idolatry and its affiliated fleshly responses. In other words, the experience of Father's love has been transformational for both Gerri and I, and that is why it has become our passion to share with those who will listen the availability of a blessed life of living loved.

Matthew 5:44 – "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

Have you noticed how difficult that is to accomplish, or am I the only one who has struggled with it? Yet the key to being able to practice this instruction without grudging is Father's love. Jesus gave the instruction, but if self-idolatry is in operation compliance becomes very difficult, if not impossible.

This ends my random thoughts today on idolatry of self. Check back. I sense that this isn't the complete picture from Father's perspective. Perhaps your 'musing' over the subject will birth other thoughts. Let me know if they do!

Blessings,

Roger