

Freedom Prayer Guide 01—

FREEDOM FROM IDOLATRY

GETTING STARTED:

Prior to doing this freedom step, please listen to the following teachings from Antioch Waco's Journey to Freedom teaching series:

- Journey to Freedom: You Can Be Free
- Journey to Freedom: Jesus Came to Heal the Brokenhearted
- Journey to Freedom: The Process of Freedom
- Journey to Freedom: Freedom from Idolatry

In this Freedom Prayer Guide, we are going to take time to prayerfully:

- Identify our own personal idols.
- Confess and repent of the ways we have worshipped idols.
- Replace our idolatry with a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit

REVIEW THE TEACHING:

As a discipleship group discuss what you learned from the sermons.

Key Scriptures from the Teaching:

- "Dear children, keep yourselves from idols." *1 John 5:21*
- "Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God's love for them." *Jonah 2:8*
- "Be careful not to be ensnared by inquiring about their gods, saying, 'How do these nations serve their gods? We will do the same.'" *Deuteronomy 12:30*

As a reminder, the big ideas shared in the sermons are:

- Idolatry is divine honor paid to any created object (Easton's Bible Dictionary)
- Our idols ensnare us
- Looking to idols turns us away from the love the Father has for us
- We need to be diligent to keep ourselves from idols

REMEMBER:

God loves you with an everlasting love (*Jeremiah 31.3*) and is with you (*Hebrews 13.5*). As we go through this freedom prayer experience, we want to encounter God in fresh ways and let Him love us, free us, heal us and transform us (*Revelation 1.4-5*) into people who love Him and love others wholeheartedly (*Mark 12.30-31*).

As we go through each step, be attentive to the Holy Spirit's leadership and guidance.

Opening Prayer:

Have each person in your group use this guided prayer to seek the Lord's help in identifying your own idols.

Heavenly Father, we know that the freedom we are designed to walk in is found as we worship you alone (Matthew 4.10). Please search our hearts, our thoughts and our lives and reveal to us any places we have worshipped or are presently worshipping idols (Psalm 139.23-24) and have opened our lives to the destruction idolatry brings. We want to keep ourselves from idols and to worship you wholeheartedly (1 John 5.21).

CONFESS:

A simple working definition of confession is *agreeing with God's perspective on a topic.*

Scripture gives us a great promise for the power of confession:

- *1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."*
- *Proverbs 28:13: "Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy."*

During this phase of the freedom journey, we want to turn to God's Word and God's Spirit to highlight to us place where we have worshipped idols, and then we are going to take time to prayerfully confess those idols.

Idolatry Inventory:

One type of idol found in Scripture are what are often called idols of the heart. They are things like money, sex, and power and the like. Here is a list of ways people engaged with heart idols in Scripture. As you read, ask the Holy Spirit to give you discernment into areas of idolatry in your own life. Ultimately, the Lord knows the state of our heart better than we do!

1. Idolatry of Personal Desires and Selfish Ambition:

- *Philippians 3.19: For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things.*
- Common current examples: obsessed with sex and sexuality, food, popularity, control, status, success, etc.)

2. Idolatry of Money / Greed:

- *Matthew 6.24: "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."*
- *Col 3.5: Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.*

- Common current examples: obsessed with accumulating money, bank account size, constant anxiety over finances, decisions made with primarily money in mind, etc.

3. Idolatry of Human Wisdom, Philosophy, Intellect:

- *Col 2.8: See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.*
- Common current examples: allegiance to humanistic world view, rationalism, materialism, relativism, fatalism, etc.

4. Idolatry of People:

- *Matthew 10.37: "Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."*
- *Galatians 1.10: "Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ."*
- *1 Kings 11.1-4: "King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter—Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. They were from nations about which the Lord had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been."*
- Common Examples: Obsession with family, Boyfriend, Girlfriend, Children, Friends, Leaders, Celebrities, Influencers, etc.)

5. Idolatry of Pleasures:

- *2 Timothy 3.2-4 – 2: "People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God."*
- Common Examples: Obsession with phones, computers, social media, food, drinks, substances, sports, etc.

Spiritual Idols

A second type of idol found in Scripture are idols connected to other religions and spirits like Baal, Asherah and Molech. Although most of us probably don't have direct experience worshipping Baal, Asherah or Molech, our world and culture is still filled with these types of idols as well.

We can engage actively in them (I went to a shaman to help me connect with the spirit realm.) or passively engage with them (I have a dream catcher above my bed as a decorative piece). Both are ways of practicing idolatry.

Examples of Spiritual Idols

Here is a list of ways people engaged with spiritual idols in Scripture. And while the names might have changed over time, many still engage in this same type of idolatry today.

1. Witchcraft/Sorcery (*Deuteronomy 18.10-12, Galatians 5.19-21, Acts 19.18-20*)

- Common Current Examples: Magic, Witchcraft, Sorcery, Voodoo, Spells and Curses.

2. Mediums or Spiritists (*Leviticus 19.31, 1 Cor 12.3, Revelation 21.8*)

- Common Current Examples: Astrology/Horoscopes, Tarot cards, Palm reading, Witchdoctors, Shaman, Spirit Animals, Ouija Boards, Seances, Dream catchers, Fortune Tellers, Crystals, Clairvoyant, Psychics, Spiritual Psychedelics, Necromancy, and things like these

3. False Religions & Spiritual Practices (*Exodus 20.3-5, 1 Kings 18.21, Jeremiah 11.13, Judges 2.11-13*)

- Common Current Examples: Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Shinto, Hare Krishna, Bahaim, Mormonism (Latter-day Saints), Jehovah's Witnesses, Freemasonry, Christian Science, The Way International, Unification Church, Church of Scientology, Unitarianism/Universalism, Native American spiritism, Wicca, as well as art, artifacts and amulets from these false religions and spiritual practices etc.)

4. Non-Christian Vows, Pacts, Rituals, Initiation Ceremonies (*1 Kings 11.1-8, 1 Kings 16.31-33, 2 Kings 8.16-18, 2 Corinthians 6.14-16*)

- Common Current Examples: Fraternity and Sorority Vows, Gang Initiations, Secret Societies, Freemasons, Rosicrucians, Illuminati, Shriners, Order of Red Men, and things like these)

5. Encounters With Demonic Spirits (*Matthew 4.1-11, 1 Samuel 16.14.23, Mark 5.1-20*)

- Common Current Examples: Rooms or Houses with spiritual beings, night terrors, voices, repetitive thoughts like I'm dumb, I'm ugly, nobody loves me and things like these etc.)

Places of Idolatry:

As you review the above list, prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you any way you have participated in idolatry like those listed above, or other things like these that may not be mentioned on this list. Write down what the Holy Spirit brings to your remembrance.

REPENT:

A working definition of repentance encompasses **experiencing godly sorrow over your sin** (2 Corinthians 7.10), turning away from that sin and turning towards the Lord (1 Thess 1.9), as well as bearing the fruit of genuine change (Matt. 3.8). The Lord extends mercy and forgiveness to the repentant (Isaiah 55.7).

After everyone has prayerfully considered the Idolatry Inventory, bring the group back together and cast vision for how to respond.

As we have identified places of idolatry that have been a part of our past, or that we currently struggle with, we have an opportunity to experience the freeing power of Jesus as we confess and repent of these places of sin and receive forgiveness for our idolatry.

God's Word gives us great encouragement about the power of repentance:

- 2 Corinthians 7:10 (NIV): "Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death."
- Acts 3:19 (NIV): "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord."
- (2 Chronicles 7:14, NIV): "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

As we confess our sins and repent of them (forsake them) we will find fresh mercy, healing, forgiveness and cleansing in our lives and times of refreshing from God's Spirit.

Use your inventory above and the guided prayer below to confess and repent of areas of idolatry and to receive the forgiveness and cleansing power of Jesus.

Guided Prayer of Confession, Repentance and Receiving Forgiveness:

In the name of the true and living God, Jesus Christ, I confess, repent and renounce my worship of the idols of _____ (name them specifically). I know that these places of idol worship are evil and offensive in Your sight. I renounce any and all involvement with the idols of _____ (name them specifically), and I cancel out any and all ground that the enemy gained in my life through this activity. I ask for and humbly receive your forgiveness and the cleansing and freeing power of your blood. Amen.

Is there anything you need to do to practically as a next in bearing the fruit of repentance?

Examples:

- Ephesian believers repented and burned their magic books (*Acts 19.19*)
- The rich young ruler needed to repent and give away his money to get rid of his idolatry (*Matthew 19:16-22*)
- Zaccheus made things right with those he had wronged as he got free of his idols (*Luke 19.1-10*)

REPLACE:

Repentance leads to sin being replaced with new life, healing and renewal.

In the place of idolatry, God wants to fill us with His Spirit, that we might live out our calling for the temple of our body to be filled with His Spirit, not filled with idols.

Use this guided prayer to receive a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit in the place of idolatry.

Jesus, thank you that you want to fill me with your Spirit. I open up my heart and life in a fresh way to your Presence and power. Fill me afresh with your Spirit.

Take time to sit in silence for 1-2 minutes and listen to the Lord. Pay attention to what you sense the Holy Spirit doing in you during this time.

After a minute or two have each person in the group share what they sense the Spirit speaking or doing in them.

RESTORE:

As a temple of the Holy Spirit, we are called to worship and walk with the Lord.

How are you going to walk in this invitation in a fresh way moving forward and not return to the worship of idols?