

LESSON 5 — OVERCOMING IDOLATRY

1. FOUNDATION: THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT

- Mark 12:28–31

- Jesus identifies the greatest commandment:
 - Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength
 - Love your neighbor as yourself

- PRINCIPLE:

- True obedience begins with total love and devotion to God

2. THE SINCERITY OF THE SCRIBE

- Mark 12:28

- The scribe recognizes that Jesus answered well
- Emphasis:
 - Likely sincerity, not deception
- PRINCIPLE:
 - Honest seekers recognize truth when they hear it

3. THE WEIGHT OF THE QUESTION

- “Which is the first commandment of all?”
- Greek: prote panton = first of all
- Context:
 - Jews recognized 613 laws
- SIGNIFICANCE:
 - Out of hundreds of commands, what matters most?

4. THE SHEMA: A CALL TO LOYALTY

- Deuteronomy 6:4–5
- “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord”
- Known as the Shema:
 - Recited daily (morning and evening)
 - A declaration of loyalty to God
- PRINCIPLE:
 - Jesus points back to established truth, not something new

5. TOTAL DEVOTION DEFINED

- Heart = desires
- Soul = life
- Mind = thoughts
- Strength = actions
- SUMMARY:
 - Every part of life is to be surrendered to God

6. THE RICH YOUNG RULER: A CASE STUDY IN IDOLATRY

- Mark 10:17–22
- The man approaches:
 - Running
 - Kneeling
 - Eager
- He claims obedience to the law
- But something is missing

7. THE LIMIT OF OUTWARD OBEDIENCE

- The man kept commandments externally
- But had not surrendered fully
- **CONNECTION TO MARK 12:**
 - Heart, soul, mind, strength were not fully yielded
- **PRINCIPLE:**
 - External obedience is not the same as total devotion

8. LOVE THAT EXPOSES

- Mark 10:21
- “Jesus... loved him”
- Greek: agape (selfless, divine love)
- Jesus’ instruction:
 - Sell possessions
 - Give to the poor
 - Follow Him
- **INSIGHT:**
 - This was not a universal command
 - It was a personal test revealing the man’s heart

9. DEFINING IDOLATRY

- The man was not openly wicked
- But he could not surrender what he valued most
- **PRINCIPLE:**
 - Idolatry is anything placed before Christ
- **QUESTION:**
 - What are we unwilling to surrender?

10. PAUL’S WARNING: ISRAEL’S EXAMPLE

- **1 Corinthians 10:1**
- Israel experienced:
 - Divine guidance (cloud and fire)
 - Deliverance (Red Sea)
 - Provision (manna, water)
- **PRINCIPLE:**
 - Spiritual experiences do not guarantee spiritual faithfulness

11. HOW IDOLATRY DEVELOPS

- 1 Corinthians 10:6
- Israel fell through:
 - Lustful desire
 - Complaining
 - Silence in the face of wrong
- **TWO KEY DANGERS:**
 - Complaining
 - Failure to stand for truth
- **RESULT:**
 - Both can lead to idolatry

12. MORAL FAILURE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

- 1 Corinthians 10:8
- Sexual immorality brought destruction
- **PRINCIPLE:**
 - Sin must be confronted and overcome by God's grace

13. THE DANGER OF COMPLAINING

- 1 Corinthians 10:10
- Complaining leads to:
 - Rebellion
 - Dissatisfaction with God
- **INSIGHT:**
 - Complaining is not ministry
 - It reflects a heart drifting from God
- **RESULT:**
 - Persistent dissatisfaction can lead to idolatry

14. WRITTEN FOR OUR WARNING

- **1 Corinthians 10:11**
- These events are examples for us
- **PURPOSE:**
 - To prevent overconfidence
 - To warn against repeating past failures

15. GOD PROVIDES A WAY OF ESCAPE

- 1 Corinthians 10:13
- Truth:
 - Temptation is common to all
 - God is faithful
 - There is always a way of escape
- **PRINCIPLE:**

- Knowing there is a way out changes how we face temptation
- We rely on God's strength, not our own

16. FINAL TEST: THE GLORY OF GOD

- 1 Corinthians 10:31
- "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God"

- CONNECTION:

- Aligns with Mark 12 and Deuteronomy 6

- LITMUS TEST:

- Is this for God's glory?

- FINAL PRINCIPLE:

- This question filters decisions
- This is how idolatry is overcome