

Freedom in Chains

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[0 : 00] This morning's scripture reading comes from the book of Daniel, chapter 3, verses 1 through 30. And you can follow along your bulletin as we read. King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, whose height was 60 cubits, and its breadth 6 cubits.

He set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. Then King Nebuchadnezzar sent together the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up.

Then the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

And they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. And the herald proclaimed aloud, You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, backpipe, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up.

And whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into a burning, fiery furnace. Therefore, as soon as all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, all the peoples, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

[1 : 49] Therefore, at the time certain Chaldeans came forward and maliciously accused the Jews, they declared to King Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live forever. You, O king, have made a decree that every man who hears the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image.

And whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into a fiery, burning furnace. There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

These men, O king, pay no attention to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up. Then Nebuchadnezzar, in a furious rage, commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought.

So they brought these men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar answered and said to them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up?

Now if you are ready, when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, well and good.

[3 : 15] But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning, fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.

If this be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning, fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.

Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was usually heated.

And he ordered some of the mighty men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning, fiery furnace. Then these men were bound in their cloaks, their tunics, their hats, and their other garments, and they were thrown into the burning, fiery furnace.

Because the king's order was urgent and the furnace overheated, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell bound into the burning, fiery furnace.

[4 : 44] Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He declared to his counselors, Did we not cast three men bound into the fire? They answered and said to the king, True, O king.

He answered and said, But I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt. And the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods.

Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the burning, fiery furnace. He declared, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out and come here.

Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire. And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king's counselors gathered together and saw that fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men.

The hair of their heads was not singed, their cloaks were not harmed, and no smell of fire had come upon them. Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king's command and yielded up their bodies, rather than serve and worship any god except their own god.

[6 : 09] Therefore I make a decree, Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way.

Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon. This is the reading of God's word. Good morning.

If you don't know me, my name is Eric Scott. I'm the youth guy here at Watermark. I am really excited to get to speak with you guys today. Just a little background on me.

I grew up in a small town in the middle of nowhere. The tallest thing in my hometown was trees. And one of the things that I loved to do as a kid was climb these trees.

I would go out. My uncle and aunt had a great climbing tree in their backyard. It had nice low branches to the ground so I could reach them even when I was a little kid. It means I was only this tall instead of this tall. And I would go out there and I would climb up these trees and I would reach up for the next branch.

[7 : 22] I would climb up. And there was just something about being on top of a tree. It felt like I was on top of the world. I felt this sense of freedom being up there. I was away from everything. I could see really far. It was awesome.

The problem was that as I was climbing these trees, I would reach up and grab really high branches and pull myself up and reach up again.

And I would get to the top. I would enjoy the view for a while. I would enjoy being up there. And then it was time to go down. And I realized that the stretches that I made on the way up were not anywhere near as easy to make on the way down.

If you've ever climbed a tree, I'm sure you can relate to this. And so there was this promise of freedom that lay at the top of the tree that I climbed up there for and I reached for and I stretched for and I got up there.

And then I realized that I was trapped. And I would have to get down very, very, very creatively. It would take a significantly longer time getting down. And this freedom that I had been promised at the top of the tree turned out to be a trap.

[8 : 27] And it was only when I finally got back down to the ground that I was actually free and able to live life as it was meant to be lived. And today I want to share with you about a story of some men who had this promise of something greater, something bigger that they were reaching for.

But as they reached for this promise of freedom, of power, of control, it trapped them and it made them slaves. And I want us to see that in this story of three men being thrown into the furnace, the only truly free men in the entire story are the ones who are in chains.

So you just heard the story. There was a king in the ancient country of Babylon named Nebuchadnezzar. He built a huge statue and he said, I want everyone to bow down to it when the music plays.

If you don't bow, you burn. The music plays, everyone comes, they bow down, the music ends. And then these Chaldeans go straight up to the king and they say, Oh king, you made this rule. You said anyone who doesn't bow burns. Well, these three Jewish guys didn't bow. Throw them in the furnace. And the king, it says, he was in a furious rage. I don't ever, ever, ever in my life want to be in front of a king who is in a furious rage.

[9 : 49] Especially if I'm the one who made him be in that furious rage. But he calls these three guys, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, or Rakshak and Benny if you were raised on VeggieTales like me.

And he calls them in to his throne room and he says, What is this? I hear that you did not bow down to the statue like I commanded. I'm going to give you one more chance.

The music's going to play and you had better bow or else I'm throwing you in this burning, fiery furnace. Not just a furnace, but a burning, fiery furnace. I guess it just sounds scarier that way.

He says, I'm throwing you in this burning, fiery furnace. And what God is there that can save you from my hand? Implying that there is no God that can save them from his hand.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego don't even take any time to think about this offer. They say, no need to play the music, king. We've already made up our minds. We're not going to bow. Our God who we serve, he's able to deliver us from your hand.

[10 : 56] But even if he doesn't, we're still not going to bow. We are so confident in him. We are so sure that he is the one true God that we're willing to give our lives for worshipping him.

And the king who started out this conversation in a furious rage, now it says it's filled with fury. And his face was changed because he got even more angry. Again, not a situation I want to be in ever in my life.

In front of a super angry king. And so he commands that this furnace be heated up seven times as hot as it already was. So hot that when the guards go to throw these men in, the guards get burned up by the fire.

They take the three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They throw them into the fire. And the king sits back to enjoy watching these men die. Because he is angry enough that he is going to enjoy watching their death.

But as he begins to watch, he is startled. Because they threw three men into the furnace. And now he sees four. And the fourth looks like a son of the gods.

[12 : 09] And the men who had been bound when they were thrown in there, they were in chains, now are free. Just walking around like normal.

He says, what's going on? He has the door to the furnace opened. The three men come out. They don't even smell like smoke. Their clothes haven't been burned at all. And the king realizes that there is a god who can save from this burning, fiery furnace.

That it is the god that these three men worshipped. And he commands a new command. That no one is able to say anything against the god that these men serve.

Because their god is the one who is able to save from this burning, fiery furnace. So I want to zoom in today on one specific scene from this story.

The scene in front of the king where these men are on trial. But before we get there, I want to talk a little bit about idols. Because this story is all about idols.

[13 : 12] I'm not talking about the statue that the king built and said you need to bow down to it. Yes, that is an idol. Yes, idols can be statues that we bow down to. But biblically, an idol is so much more than just a statue.

Biblically, an idol is anything that controls our hearts more than God does. Anything that is more important to us than God.

Anything that inspires our actions, inspires our thoughts more than God does. Biblically, that is an idol. And because an idol is not necessarily a statue, it means anything can be an idol.

Even good things in life. And actually, the better something is, the more likely we are to turn it into an idol. So here's what I mean. Money. Money. You need money to be able to afford a place to live. You need money to buy clothes. You need money to get around town. You need money to be able to eat. And so we look at money, and there's a strong pull to say, Hey, if I can get enough money, I'll just be set for life.

[14 : 25] If I can get enough money, I will be safe. I will be comfortable. I'll be set. And so we take a good thing of money, and we trust in it to keep us safe and secure and comfortable for the rest of

our lives, and we turn it into an idol.

Or again, maybe a relationship. We say, you know, I like having people around me who know me, who get me, who love me. If I find a significant other that can complete me, then I'll be set.

I'll be comfortable for life. I'll be accepted for life. I'll have someone who's always there for me. Or maybe we take something like being a good moral person.

Obviously, being a good moral person is a very good thing. But because being a good moral person is such a good thing, there's a tendency that we can look at where we say, If I can just be good enough, then God has to accept me.

If I can be good enough, then I can make God owe me. And the Bible says that that is taking our good moral behavior and turning it into an idol.

[15 : 36] It's placing that on the level where only God belongs. And with idols, the thing is, it's not just that we go out there for these things, but as we go for them, they enslave us.

They spin out a new set of definitions of life that defines everything in terms of themselves. So the person who's seeking money, who wants more money in their bank account, in their checkbook so they can spend it all, all of a sudden, everything in life becomes about the bottom line.

Will this make me more money? Will this cost me money? That is the lens through which the person who idolizes money sees all of life. Something that may be immoral or borderline illegal.

If it makes us more money, it's okay to do it as long as we don't get caught. because life is seen in terms of how much money is in the bank.

Or the person who idolizes relationships, finding their identity in this significant other. You wake up in the morning and you feel that your life has meaning because you're in this relationship.

[17 : 04] You're a slave because you can't get out of it. You're trapped by it. Even if it becomes a bad relationship, maybe it becomes abusive. And it's not safe for the person to stay in this relationship, but they find their meaning and definition in life in the fact that they are with this other person.

And so even though it's not safe for them to still be in this relationship, they know that if they leave this relationship, their whole sense of who they are as an individual will be lost. They're a slave to their desire for this relationship, and they're trapped.

Or being a good moral person. Again, like we said, being a good moral person is a very good thing, but when we put it as the ultimate thing in our lives, we begin to see all of life by the letter of the law. And Jesus very clearly taught that the purpose that God gave us the law for is so that we would love God and love others. And if we're constantly focused on keeping the letter of the law so that we can come across as a good moral person, we'll overlook loving others.

We'll overlook loving God for the sake of doing the right thing or what appears to be the right thing. And Jesus very, very, very clearly taught that many people will be kept out of heaven because of this attitude that I need to constantly be a good moral person.

[18 : 31] Because he says, no matter how good you are, you can never be good enough for God's standards. So idols can be anything.

Anything can be an idol. Good things are more likely to become idols because the better something is, the more likely we are to believe that it can save us, that it can give us what we truly want in life. And when we start following an idol, it spins out a new definition of life for us that defines all of life in terms of itself, and makes us its slave.

Everyone with me so far? Yeah? All right. So now, we're going to jump back into the story, having that background on idols. We're going to look at different characters in this scene and see how they have been enslaved.

First up, we have the Chaldeans. Now, if you remember, the Chaldeans were the ones who ran in and said, oh, king, oh, king, oh, king, there's these men. They didn't listen to you. Kill them. A little backstory here.

[19 : 34] The Chaldeans are the locals. In the country of Babylon, their ethnic group is the one who rules the country. And in the end of the previous chapter, these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, had gotten promoted.

They had gotten bumped over these Chaldeans in the hierarchy of the kingdom. Also, these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, are foreigners.

So these Chaldeans come into the king, and it looks like they're just trying to report some people who broke the king's command. But in reality, what's going on is these Chaldeans have an idol of

power.

They want to be as powerful as possible. They want to do whatever they can to grab as much power as they can get their hands on. And they see an opportunity right here where these men have disobeyed the king, these men who are more powerful than them, and they're coming to the king to get these guys out of the way so they can get bumped up higher in the nation.

These men have idolized power in their lives to the extent that they will do anything to get their hands on more power, even if it means killing the men who are higher up than them and who are more powerful than them in the nation.

[20 : 56] They are slaves to this idol of power. They will stop at nothing to be able to get it. They appear to be coming to the king as free men, but because of their desire for power, the way that they see the world is through a lens that means that they have to do this.

They have to do whatever they can to get their hands on more and more and more power. But these men aren't the only ones in the room who are slaves to idols.

If we spin and look at the king, King Nebuchadnezzar, he hears the report that these three Jewish guys are not obeying.

And how does he respond? It says furious rage. Not just a little upset, furious rage. The king wants control.

The king wants to be able to say something and have the people in his kingdom do what he says. And that's not happening. The king gave a command, and these men blatantly disobeyed him.

[22 : 05] These men who were in leadership positions in his kingdom said, no, king, we are not going to listen. When the king heard about it, he lost control because so much of his identity was tied up in him having control over the other people in the kingdom.

And he jumps into this furious rage. He starts making threats against these men because he needs to grab hold of this idol of control in his life.

And the way that he knows how to do that is by threatening, by getting angry. He overreacts to what they have done because he is a slave to this idol of control.

Even though he is the most powerful man in the most powerful position in the entire kingdom, he is a lowly slave to the idols that rule his heart. And in the great irony of this story, the only men in this room who are truly free are the ones who are in chains.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, they knew that their identity lay in their relationship with God. Because of that, when the king gave the command to bow to the statue, they didn't bow.

[23 : 26] Because they knew that their identity lay in their relationship with God, when they were called in before the king and threatened with death for disobedience, they didn't even have to think about it. They said, okay, kill us.

Throw us in the fire. We know that our God is big enough to save us from this fire. But even if he doesn't, we still know that our identity is found in a relationship with him.

And that we want to preserve this relationship. And that bowing down to your statue would break this relationship. So we're not going to bow, even if it costs us our lives.

See, these men were so absolutely, totally free. There was no accusation that these Chaldeans could bring against them that would shake their freedom. There's no threat that the king could make to them that would make them second guess what their relation was with God.

They were willing to be brought before the king. They were willing to burn in the furnace because they were absolutely free, because they knew that their identity was found in this relationship with God.

[24 : 43] Now, I don't know about you guys, but I think for me, I want to live my life with that type of freedom. I'm guessing most of us do too. If we were to look at ourselves and say, do you want to be a slave or do you want to be free?

I don't think that's something most of us really need to think about, right? Like, oh, it's such a tough decision. No, we want to live our lives free. The problem is that so many of us, I would even say all of us, have idols that we worship in our lives either consciously or subconsciously.

And if you don't believe that you do, I want to throw some questions out there for you to think about to help us get our brains moving in this direction. First off, what do I use to comfort myself when things go wrong?

when I feel like the world around me is just caving in? What's my hope that makes me feel like things are going to be okay?

What preoccupies me? What do I daydream about? If I'm sitting there and I don't have my iPhone out to distract me, what does my brain jump to? And if I can't sit there without my iPhone out to distract me, that may be a good indicator where our idols are.

[26 : 08] What just naturally fills our minds when there's nothing else there? Early on, when I meet new people, what do I want to make sure they know about me?

What's that one thing that I find my identity in that I need to make sure everyone knows as soon as they meet me? Is it that I have this much money in my bank account?

Is it that I make these grades in school? Is it that I have this position at this company? Is it that I'm in a relationship with this person? Is it that I've accomplished X, Y, and Z?

What is it that I want to make sure people know about me as soon as they meet me? And finally, what do I really want and expect out of life? What is that one thing that I said, if I had that, I would be happy even if I lost everything else?

What is it that I really want and expect out of life? For me, I've answered these questions differently at different points in my life.

[27 : 22] One of the things that's been a constant theme throughout my life is success. And this translates differently at different stages in life. So when I was a student, I wanted to be successful, so I always worked hard to get the best grades.

And I believed that if I could be successful, then that would mean that I was somebody. If I could be successful, that would mean that I made it. So I would work hard, and every term, I would get my report card and I would look at it straight A's.

Yes! But that happiness, it didn't last. Because I knew that tomorrow, a new term starts.

And if I don't work just as hard this next term as I did the last term, maybe even a little harder, the grades are going to just drop. And then my identity is gone. And so I worked, and I worked, and I worked, and I got A after A after A+, after A, after A, straight through high school.

I got to university and went for my first year and a half, still straight A's. Then, my sophomore year, I got my first B+. and I was amazed because the world didn't end when I got a B+.

[28 : 38] I know, it may sound silly, but I'm in an Asian country, so I think a lot of you can probably relate to that, right? I was amazed.

I got a B+, and the world did not end. I found so much of my identity in my grades. And then I graduated, and I moved on to working.

And all of a sudden, my desire for success in grades that I had been searching for became a desire for success in my job because I realized that all those years of straight A's meant nothing because I hadn't done anything with it.

So I had to go out now and use what I had learned and apply it so I could be successful in a job because, you know, the years of straight A's hadn't really brought me the satisfaction that I had longed for, so it must be that getting success in my job would be where it would come from.

So I came out. I started working really, really hard. And here's the thing I realized. Yeah, my job has its ups and downs, but no successful moment in my job has ever satisfied me for more than, like, two days.

[29 : 53] You have a really awesome, you know, youth event, kids come out, kids get saved, you're like, yeah, that's awesome, and then you wake up the next morning, you're like, I gotta keep going, something else is next. There's never a point where I've made it.

And actually, the points where it seems closest to me making it are the scariest moments because I know that next time the bar will be set even higher, so I need to work even harder. It's a trap. I chase this thing that I want in success that I think will give me this happiness, this satisfaction, and I realize it's just a trap.

It's like being on top of that tree. I work so hard to get up there, and then I can't get down again. I'm stuck. Another thing that I seek my identity in is just having people like me.

And so I change the way that I act around people so that they'll approve of me. I may not speak my mind in front of them because I'm afraid of offending them. The problem is no matter how many people I get to like me today, I have to keep that up tomorrow so that they'll keep liking me.

It's this vicious cycle that never, ever, ever ends. But for some reason I keep convincing myself that maybe someday I will make it. And it's not going to happen. That's the thing that idols do.

[31 : 12] They hold out this carrot in front of us, and we keep running for it. And it's just tied to our head on a string out there so that we can't ever reach it. And the longer that we spend chasing

them, the more we begin to see life in terms of the way that they define life, and the more we become slaves to these idols that we chase.

So, functionally, I'm going to throw this out there. If you disagree with me, you can come tell me why after the service.

But I'm going to say functionally, all of us seek something other than God as ultimate at least a decent amount of time in our lives. It could be things like acceptance, power, control, comfort, money, happiness, success, whatever it is, it's usually a good thing.

But our problem is that we take this good thing and we make it ultimate. We climb that tree, we reach for the higher branches, we get up as high as we can, we're stuck, we can't get down.

Aristotle said, we fear whatever we feel has great power of destroying us or of harming us in ways that tend to cause us great pain.

[32 : 34] We fear whatever we feel has great power of destroying us or of harming us in ways that lead to great pain. When we give these idols this power in our lives, it leads to fear because the more power it has in our lives, the more power it has to destroy us, the more power it has to cause us this great pain, the more hope that we place in something that can fail us, the more we're going to be hurt when that idol fails.

And so I want to go through five steps to finding freedom from our idols. The first one is simply to recognize that we all worship all the time.

I have a quote from a man named David Foster Wallace. He was an American novelist, not a Christian by any stretch of the imagination. And it's a long quote, but it's really good, so I'm going to read it, and I hope that you can follow along.

He says, in the day-to-day trenches of adult life, there is actually no such thing as atheism. There's no such thing as not worshipping.

Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship. And the compelling reason for maybe choosing some sort of God or spiritual-type thing to worship is that pretty much anything else you worship will eat you alive.

[34 : 03] If you worship money and things, if they're where you tap real meaning in life, then you will never have enough, never feel you have enough. It's the truth. Worship your body and beauty and sexual allure, and you will always feel ugly.

And when the time and age start showing, you will die a million deaths before they finally grieve you. On one level, we all know this stuff already. The whole trick is keeping the truth up front in our daily consciousness.

Worship power. You'll end up feeling weak and afraid, and you will need ever more power over others to numb you to your own fear. Worship your intellect.

Being seen as smart, you'll end up feeling stupid, a fraud, always on the verge of being found out. But the insidious thing about these forms of worship is that they're unconscious.

They're default settings. They're the kind of worship you just gradually slip into day after day, getting more and more selective about what you see and how you measure value without ever being fully aware that's what you're doing.

[35 : 15] See, that's one of the greatest dangers about idols in our lives, is that we worship them and follow them unconsciously. I think for most of us it's not that we stop and we make this conscious decision that I'm going to find my identity in wealth.

I'm going to find my identity in a relationship. Maybe for some of us we do this consciously. But for so many of us, it's just the air we breathe. We live in a city that throws so many definitions of where to find worth in our faces.

businesses. We're surrounded by malls that are filled with all of the top brands that send us this message, if you don't own these brands you are not worth anything as a person.

And we subconsciously breathe in these messages without even realizing that's what we're doing.

You know, we have politicians running for chief executive who get up in front of groups of high schoolers and say, there is no reason that when you grow up you can't be the next Li Ka-Sheng.

There's an actual quote from Henry Ting when he was running for chief executive. The city breathes this life into us. This message that you need this money to be worth something as an individual.

[36 : 33] You need this power to be worth something as an individual. You need this comfort to be worth something as an individual. and we unconsciously breathe it in. It becomes our default

setting.

And so the first step to freedom from our idols is just recognizing that we worship all the time whether we're aware of it or not. The second step is to identify the idols that we worship. Not just recognizing in general that we do worship but see what it is that we do worship. becoming conscious of what it is that we're actually worshipping.

Because if we're not aware what it is that we're worshipping we're going to have a hard time switching to something else. And step three is not just to identify the idols but identify the idols behind the idols.

Here's what I mean. It's really easy to look at someone and say oh, this person idolizes money. They live their life for money. But a lot of times people who are seeking money are actually seeking money because of what it can lead them to not just for the sake of having money.

[37 : 44] Money promises us security because I'll never have to worry about whether I can put food on my family's plates again. Money promises comfort because when I have more money I can buy a bigger flat and put more awesome stuff in it and I can be more comfortable.

And if we identify this idol of money but don't identify the deeper idols below it that are inspiring us to seek it we can deal with the idol on the surface level but the thing that's really motivating our heart never goes away and so it'll just manifest itself in another way.

Someone who's using money as a way of seeking security and control of their circumstances who recognizes that desire for money and gives it up but still has this desire for security and control will manifest that in a different way maybe they'll become domineering in their relationships because they feel like if they can be the dominant one in their relationships they can have security and control by controlling everyone else in their lives.

If we just identify the stuff on the surface it's not going to lead to a lasting deep change. We have to identify the idol behind the idol in our lives.

Fourth, dismantle our idols. Like David Foster Wallace said we all know to a certain extent that the idols that we worship and serve are not going to satisfy us.

[39 : 12] On some level we know this but we don't live our lives with this in the front of our consciousness. We forget about it because we'd rather not have to think about it but we need to become aware of the fact that these things will not satisfy us.

So think through why it is that we believe these idols can satisfy us. Remember that none of them are giving us the satisfaction that they promise and none of them ever can or will give us the satisfaction that they promise.

In this step it's not just something that we're going to do once and then be done with it. No, it's worshipping these idols becomes the default setting in our hearts and we unconsciously if we are not putting this at the forefront of our attention we go back into default mode.

The idols that we've been serving for years it's not just like you sit down one time write out why they're no good and then you move on from them. No, you've been dealing with these things for years. I've been dealing with stuff for years.

it takes time constantly reminding success is not going to satisfy you, Eric. Having people like you is not going to satisfy you, Eric.

[40 : 32] I need to repeat these things to myself over and over and over again and we need to repeat these truths to ourselves over and over again so we can remember don't slip into default mode.

the final step is to replace our worship of idols with worship of the true God. See, like David Foster Wallace said, everyone worships all the time.

If we recognize a faulty source of worship in our hearts and we take that out it creates what we'll call a worship vacuum in our hearts. We need something to worship and so if we take out the big thing that we're worshipping but aren't conscious about putting something else in its place something else will just come in.

It's our default mode. So the trick to replacing an idol in your heart or removing it is actually by replacing it. When we look at God the God of the Bible the God who loved us enough to send his son to earth to die for us the one who created us who loves us despite our rebellion against him who forgives us when we turn away from him when we see how awesome he is when we see how strong he is when we see how beautiful he is that's the only way that we're ever going to replace the idols in our hearts is by looking at him and by reminding ourselves that all the things that these idols

promise they can't give us but he can.

all these things that we've been striving for and reaching for we're never going to reach them but he has already reached out to us and welcomed and accepted us.

[42 : 19] There's a pastor in New York named Tim Keller and he says worship is the final way to replace the idols in our hearts.

Let's pray. Father we thank you that you are good. We thank you for these men Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and for the way that they stood up to the king for the way that you rescued them when they stood up for the freedom that you gave them even before you rescued them to trust in you above all the idols that their culture was telling them they needed to bow to.

We pray for ourselves right now as we go out of here and into our weeks that we would be aware of the idols that we're worshipping that we would consciously seek to replace them with worship of you the true God.

We pray that we would see you as more beautiful than we see you as right now that we would love you more than we love you right now in Jesus name Amen. Amen.