

STUDY NOTES

IMPORTANT THINGS // A SERIES AT NEW CITY CHURCH

www.newcityphx.com/sermons

The following content is based on the message “Idol Worship” spoken on 10/23/16 by Oye Waddell at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis of the message but rather a brief look at the main ideas.

Leaders using these Study Notes for group study and reflection should read the Biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective communities.

PRAYER

Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.

THE SCRIPTURE: ROMANS 1:18-31

IDOL WORSHIP IN THE STORY OF GOD

Idol worship is throughout the whole story of God. Adam and Eve did this. Israel did this. God’s closest people did this. Repeatedly, they failed to acknowledge God which led to them substituting other gods in his place. They separated themselves so far from him that they were sent into exile.

We are just like Israel. We worship everything—we just don’t call them idols.

- *Define “idol” from your experience with how others define “idol”.*
- *What are some things that you see our culture worshipping?*

SUPPRESSION

How do we know that we are worshipping idols? When we suppress and fail to acknowledge God. This is the first step in idol worship. When we suppress God, it turns into two things God hates—ungodliness and wickedness. Not only is our relationship with him suppressed (ungodliness), so also is our relationship with our neighbor suppressed (wickedness).

The opposite of suppression is to acknowledge God, which leads to honor and praise.

- *Where is your favorite place to visit in nature? Why?*
- *How have you been able to slow down in everyday life and see God moving around you?*
- *Share a piece of your story. What is a way that God has moved in your life?*

SUBSTITUTION

What do we actually do when we worship idols? We substitute. We step out. When we step out, God gets jealous. He created us to be worshippers, which means we live for purpose. However, in our human hearts, we make good things into the ultimate thing. We substitute the created thing in place of the Creator.

- *What are the some things that you think could be fighting for God’s attention in your life?*
- *Talk about some questions that could help us recognize when good things become ultimate things. (i.e. What are you most afraid to live without?)*

SEPARATION

What is the result of idol worship? Separation. In the end God will ultimately give you up to your allegiance, which will lead to separation. In vss 24 - 31, Paul says that God “gave them up” to their hearts desires, their dishonorable passions, and their debased minds. God basically says “go ahead and worship these.” However, in the end, we can see that worshipping other things leads to economic disorder, social disorder, family disorder, and relational disorder.

The worst thing that can happen to us is that we are given over to what we over desire.

- *Why do you think someone’s success could be the worst thing for them?*
- *What are some things we can do to keep success from becoming idol worship?*

BUT GOD...

Jesus completely flips the idol worship around.

- 1) Rather than being separated from, Jesus came near to us bringing grace and truth.
 - 2) Rather than being substituted for, Jesus substituted himself for our punishment.
 - 3) Rather than being suppressed, Jesus rose again in victory over death so that we can live in close relationship with him.
- *Think about what Jesus did here. What does it do in your own heart to see that Jesus chased after us by flipping idol worship upside down? (As a exercise in worship, have everyone share even if they have the same answer as others in the group)*
 - *Pray and ask God to strengthen us as we seek to suppress the idols in our own life.*