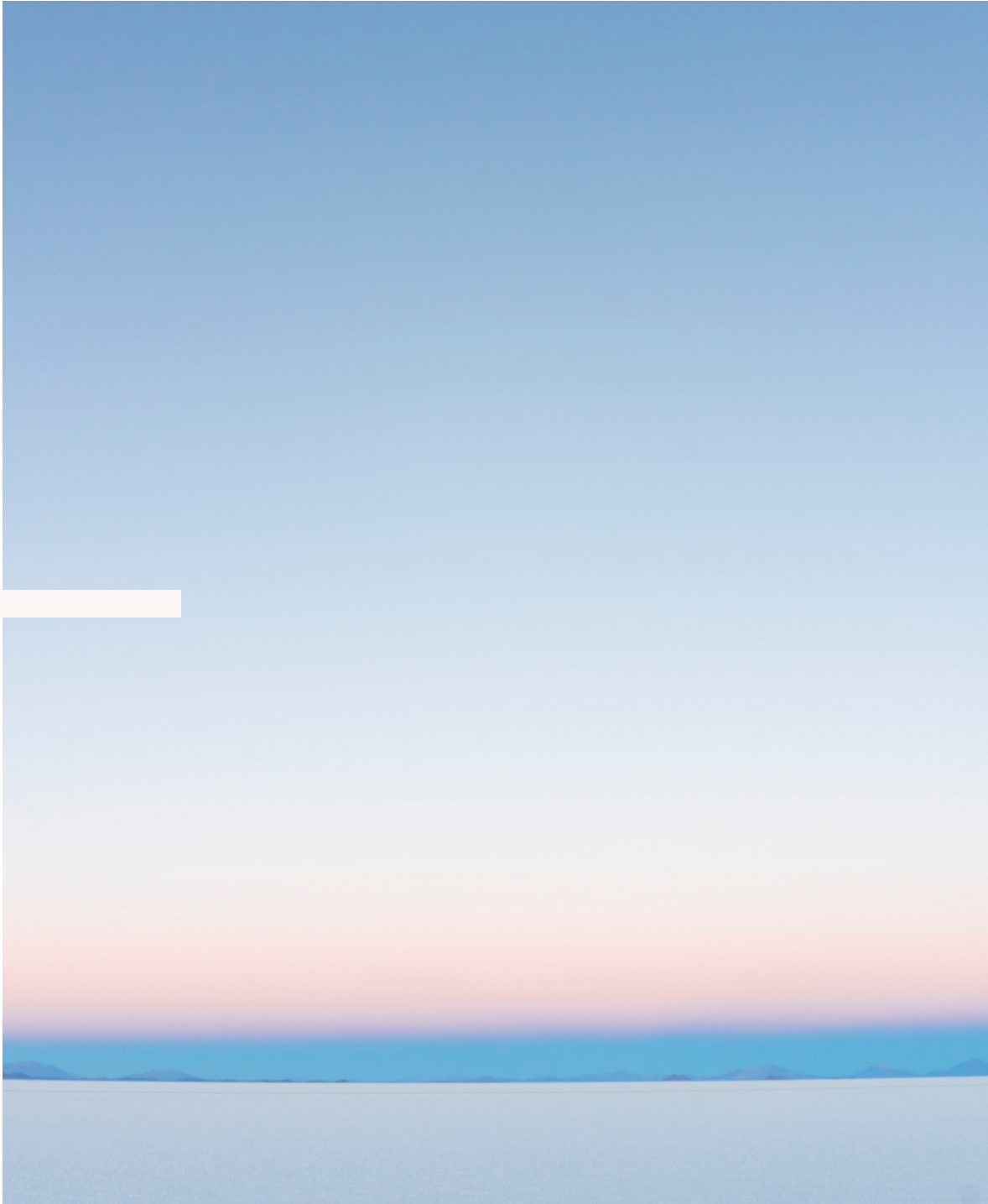


KINGDOM CULTURE



GRACE BIBLE CHURCH

FOLLOW. BECOME. DO.

3

COMPETING
KINGDOMS



PURPOSE: TO EMBRACE THE
WAY OF JESUS IN THIS
CULTURAL MOMENT

KEY VERSE | JOHN 10:10

THE WAY OF JESUS

Matthew 5-7, John 10:1-18

The Way of Jesus Leads to Life. Just as Jesus subverted the idolatries of his culture, he is subverting the idols of our cultural moment. Jesus is upending the powers that oppress and imprison people, exposing death and bringing life. This is bad news for the powers and principalities of this world, and good news for those who long to be set free. Jesus invites us into a radical lifestyle that embodies the Kingdom of God in a world filled with competing Kingdoms.

What is one way that you have experienced Jesus confront something in your life that was leading to death? What did he do to bring life in that area?

IDENTIFYING THE IDOLS OF OUR AGE: CULTURAL, PERSONAL, RELIGIOUS

Matthew 21:12-15, Galatians 5, Ephesians 4:17-5:20

Our world is full of idols. An idol can be anything that dominates, controls, demands, or consumes our heart and imagination more than Jesus. In our experience, we have found it helpful to distinguish between cultural, personal, and religious Idols— each being ways that sin and Satan seek to further disrupt the world's story, our story, and God's story. The purpose of identifying idols is not to call judgement on others but to grow in an awareness of the pervasiveness of idolatries in our lives, culture, and religion. We are inviting Jesus to speak to us, transform us, and awaken us to the way of his countercultural Kingdom in the world we inhabit.

CULTURAL IDOLS

Every human culture has linked itself to sinful mindsets, patterns, and practices. Cultural Idols are the water we swim in. They are the values, systems, and structures that exist behind our fallen culture and feed our personal Idols. They form the metanarratives by which we live our lives and help us define our vision for the good life.

EXAMPLES OF CULTURAL IDOLS

INDIVIDUALISM | Autonomy and independence vs. community and interdependence, the pursuit of self-gratification and the objectification of others

CAPITALISM | Unbridled Materialism, Consumerism, the American Dream, and the pursuit of leisure, pleasure, and treasure

POWER | Control, Domination, Corporatization, Politics and War

SEXUALIZATION | The sexualization of all things: misogyny, sexual identity, pornography industry, and sex as commodity

PERSONAL IDOLS

When the idols of our culture are embraced by our False Self, we build Personal Idols. Like making a plate at a buffet, we all draw from the same choices but build a custom meal catered to our individual tastes. Our upbringing, stories, and histories can all impact which idols we cling to and how the idols of our culture take root in our life. This is why our personal idols remain individualized yet are still rooted in a common experience with our neighbors.

EXAMPLES OF PERSONAL IDOLS

- Shopping: Retail therapy, comparison, keeping up with the Joneses
- Greed: Living beyond our means, credit card debt, acquiring things we don't need with money we don't have
- Fear: Afraid of losing control, fear of failure, loneliness, broken relationships
- Hedonism: addiction, self-medication, escape, and fantasy
- Success: money, status symbols, and workaholism
- Narcissism: The worship of self, selfies, cosmetic surgery, body image obsession, seeking security and identity through the affirmation of others, obsession with being the best or being the exception
- Control: Anger, impatience, dominance, abuse of authority, and manipulation, objectification and exploitation of others

RELIGIOUS IDOLS

Religious idols are those beliefs and practices we employ to quiet our fears and invite inner comfort without having to resort to dependent devotion towards God. They are an attempt to become holy by human effort, and often reduce the definition of holiness to legalistic rule keeping. Religious Idols obscure God's character and are devoid of his presence. Religious Idols can also be Cultural Idols that have been adapted by religion. We often adopt the idols of our culture, redress them in religious language, and resurrect them in place of Biblical Christianity without even realizing it.

EXAMPLES OF RELIGIOUS IDOLS

CONSUMER SPIRITUALITY	church shopping, celebrity pastors, the buying and selling of God
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FUNDAMENTALISM	moralism, legalism, judgementalism, doctrinal superiority, joyless obedience
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PROSPERITY GOSPEL	health, wealth, and prosperity, name it and claim it
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CULTS	Nationalism, Alt-Right, White Nationalism, Gnosticism and Super Spirituality
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What are two idols that resonate with you? Where do you experience these Idols distracting you from or distorting the way of Jesus in your life? What is the version of the good life that this idols is selling you, and what alternative way does Jesus offer?



3

P R A C T I C E



WITH YOUR GROUP

Tonight, we want to create space for your group to check-in on your experience so far, to reflect on the talk, and to prepare for the week ahead.

Checking In

- How has your Daily Time with Jesus been going?
- What was it like for you last week reflecting on your Life Map, either with the group or on your own?

Debriefing the Talk

- What stood out to you from the talk? This can be something that was encouraging, challenging or new to you.
- Taking a look at the personal, religious, and cultural idols, which ones do you identify with? How do these idols distract you from the way of Jesus in your life? Where do they distort the way of Jesus in your life?
- How does the way of Jesus show us a compelling alternative to the idols of the world?
- How can we embody a Kingdom alternative way of living (both personally and as a community)?
- What is one action step you can take to surrender an Idol to God and embrace the way of Jesus in that area?

Looking Ahead

- You've begun to explore together some of the idols you have been able to identify tonight. We want to continue to identify idols through the week. Together as a group, read the practice of "Identifying Idols" that you will be practicing on your own throughout the week.

O N Y O U R O W N

Learning to follow Jesus takes practice. This week, we want to grow in our awareness of the idols that confront us in our day to day. Between now and next week, as you go through your normal life, seek to be awake and aware of the idols that are coming at you from outside or that you find yourself wrestling with on the inside.

Keep a running list in your phone (or in your journal) of idols that you are confronted with each day. If it's helpful, categorize them as cultural, religious, or personal idols. When we gather next week, you will have an opportunity to share your discoveries with others in your group.

Remember, this practice is not meant to bring shame or guilt but to bring awareness so that you can run to Jesus and in his grace and work of his Spirit, rearrange priorities of your heart.

DAILY TIME WITH JESUS

Day One | Luke 17-18

Day Two | Luke 19

*watch video on Luke 19-23

Day Three | Luke 20-21

Day Four | Sabbath

Day Five | Luke 22

Day Six | Luke 23

Day Seven | Luke 24

*watch video on Luke 24