

PUTTING IDOLS TO DEATH

By Stephanie Oliver

SCRIPTURE

Colossians 3:5-11

[5] Therefore, put to death what belongs to your worldly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry.

OBSERVATION

If the one person who walked this earth who could have lived in solitude did not do so, we have to really look at that example He set for us. He gave us an example to surround ourselves with like-minded people who have the same mission. Jesus asked His disciples to drop everything they knew, give up everything they loved and follow Him. He didn't need them, but Jesus knew the disciples (and us) needed Him. They also needed to be surrounded by people who constantly reminded each other where they came from and encouraged them not to go back to their old ways of idolatry. This type of community created a culture of accountability to the gospel mission.

OBEDIENCE

When I was in 7th grade, my friends and I played a fun, lighthearted game. I had to find someone in the room to tell me their favorite quote—some were using song lyrics and movie lines—when one of my youth leaders, a life-long mentor, told me “DIE TO SELF.” As a very self-absorbed 13-year-old, that quote blew my mind. Of all the Sunday school lessons, sermons, and seminars I have listened to over my life, those three words have stuck with me the most. A) It intrigued me so much and B) It's a life-long pursuit. It's a choice and a decision you get to make EVERY. SINGLE. DAY.

Fast forward to married life with four kids. The idol I created was a pattern and a bondage for myself called perfectionism. I have no clue why I had a white-knuckled grip on perfection. Seriously, who did I think I was fooling? We ALL know full well no one is perfect, but I was going down with the sinking ship—all my secrets, all my failures, all my bondage, all my idols—not wanting anyone to see what a mess-up I truly was.

If I could reach out my hand and scream “FREEDOM” at the top of my lungs and for you to grab my hand and loosen your grip on whatever idol you are white-knuckling, it would be the very best gift you could ever receive and the very best gift that was given to me by my Father.

Let it all go. Let it all be lost. Because to DIE TO SELF is to be alive in HIM (Ephesians 2:5). Until you have rid your life of idols, you truly have not, nor will you ever experience “abundantly more than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us” (Ephesians 3:20). Freedom was finally found when I applied 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 to my idol of perfection. When we allow Christ to use our weaknesses and failures for His glory, that’s exactly where He meets us. He wants a willing vessel who is going to allow the world to see it’s not about me—it’s about Christ in me. When you abide in Him, be ready to live in awe and wonder at what He will do through your obedience (John 15:5).

Jesus set the example by doing life with His disciples—we don’t have to white-knuckle life alone. The only true way we will be able to walk in freedom is to do life surrounded by Christ-followers who sharpen us and point our eyes, heart, life to Christ. Close your eyes and think about an Olympic medal presentation ceremony. Get the full picture. Do you hear the national anthem playing in background? If the people closest to you were to place a medal over your head for the top three areas in your life, what would they be? Would Christ get the glory? Would He get the gold medal in your life? Or would it go to one of your idols—work, goals and plans, academics, appearance, family, finances, your social media? If He doesn’t have the first spot in your life, you are only cheating yourself from experiencing the full life for which Christ saved you. It’s time to rally the troops and do life with people who help put Christ in His rightful place.

PRAYER

Father, as we are slowly coming out quarantine, help us remember what You have taught us during this time. Whether we put you on the back burner when the world stopped or we dove in chasing after You for 11 weeks, continue to pursue our hearts. If we have learned that we put other things before You, give us freedom from things that we need to let go. Bring people into our lives who will help us, sharpen us, and remind us to turn from our old ways and point us in the new direction we are wanting to go—to You. Jesus didn’t walk this earth alone and neither should we. Remind our hearts that You are better than anything we could be holding onto. We love You.