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Section: Doctrine of Sin

Teacher: Sam Jones

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**Q34. What is the sin of idolatry?**

Idolatry is worshiping or finding hope, identity, significance, purpose, or security in anything other than God, our Creator.

* **Introduction**

**Isaiah 42:5-9**

* **What Is an Idol?**

**Idol:** (noun) An idol is anything which usurps the place of God in the hearts of his rational creatures.

**Jonah 2:8 “**Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love.”

**Exodus 20:3** “You shall have no other gods before me.”

* **The Creator-Creature Distinction**

The Creator-creature distinction helps us have a right view of our position compared to the position of God. God is the creator, and we, as created being are creatures—more specifically, we are His creatures.

**Creator:** (*noun*) 1. The being or person that creates. 2. The thing that creates, produces, or causes.

**Creature:** (*noun*) 1. That which is created; every being besides the Creator, or everything not self-existent. The sun, moon and stars; the earth, animals, plants, light, darkness, air, water, etc., are the creatures of God. 2. A dependent; a person who is subject to the will or influence of another.

**Genesis 1:1-2** In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

**Genesis 1:26-27**

* **Created to Worship**

**Exodus 20:1-6**

**Deuteronomy 4:15-24**

**Worship: (***noun*)(Luke 14:10)1. Excellence of character; dignity; worth; worthiness. 2. Chiefly and eminently, the act of paying divine honors to the Supreme Being; or the reverence and homage paid to him in religious exercises, consisting in adoration, confession, prayer, thanksgiving and the like. **(***Verb transitive*) (Exodus 34:14) To adore; to pay divine honors to; to reverence with supreme respect and veneration. (*Verb intransitive*)(John 4:20) To perform acts of adoration.

Worship is paying divine honors to the Supreme Being by adoring, honoring, revering, or venerating. This can be accomplished through confession, prayer, thanksgiving, and the like. The reason worship is due to the Supreme Being is due to His excellence of character, dignity, and worth.

God (the one true God) is deserving of our worship due to His worth—His worthiness. His excellence of character, His dignity, His attributes, but chiefly He deserves our worship because He is God. He created us and therefore is our source of what is true.

**Deuteronomy 6:4-9**

* **Hope**

**C. S. Lewis**: “…it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.”

**Hope:** (*noun*) A desire of some good, accompanied with at least a slight expectation of obtaining it, or a belief that it is obtainable. *hope* differs from wish and desire in this, that it implies some expectation of obtaining the good desired, or the possibility of possessing it. *hope* therefore always gives pleasure or joy; whereas wish and desire may produce or be accompanied with pain and anxiety.

**James 1:17** Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

**Epithumia:** an evil desire; an over-desire—an excessive desire.

The evil in the desire is not necessarily the thing itself. When it comes to idolatry, the evil is in the disproportionate value we give to the desire, desiring it too much. Desiring it in a way that we should only desire God.

Desire for a good gift from God can become sinful when we over-desire it--when we experience this “epithumia.” When we do this, we are now hoping in the gift rather than God.

**Jonah 2:8 “**Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love.”

* **Identity**

**Identity:** (*noun*) Sameness.

**Philippians 2:1-2** So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

**Isaiah 55:6-9**

* **Significance**

**Signify:** (verb) 1. To mean; to have or contain a certain sense. 2. To have importance; moment; weight; consequence.

**Matthew 11:28-30** “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

* **Purpose**

**Purpose:** (*noun*) That which a person sets before himself as an object to be reached or accomplished; the end or aim to which the view is directed in any plan, measure, or exertion.

We find much joy in celebrating our children, and rightfully so; they are a good gift from God.

**Genesis 1:28** And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

**Psalm 127:3** Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward.

It is plain from Scripture that children are a good gift from God, and in the opening chapter of the Bible God commands man to “be fruitful and multiply.” With this in view, is it possible for children to become a source of sinful idolatry?

The answer is yes!

As Christians, we must look to Christ for our purpose.

**Romans 8:28** And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

The verse said called according to **His** purpose, not called according to our purpose or desire. So, as Christians what is the purpose that we are given in Christ?

**Matthew 28:18-20** And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

* **Security**

**Security**: (*noun*) Protection; effectual defense or safety from danger of any kind.

Freedom from fear or apprehension; confidence of safety. Anything given or deposited to secure the payment of a debt, or the performance of a contract.

**Matthew 6:24** “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”

**Hebrews 13:5** Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

**James 4:13-17**

**James 5:1-6**

* **How to Battle with Idolatry**

Instead of worshiping or finding hope in anything other than God, our Creator, we worship only God. We look to God for our hope, identity, significance, purpose, and security.

We make time every day to dig into our Bibles. We must also be present in the body of Christ, His Church.