Identifying Personal 'Idols'

"Guard your heart with all diligence, for out of it flows the issues of life"
Prov. 4:23

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."
Psa. 139:23-24

Questions to Ask Yourself
as you search your own heart

- What do you want, desire, seek, aim for, pursue, hope for?
- What are your goals, expectations, intentions?
- What do you feel like doing? Do you want what <u>you want</u>, or do you want Christ's lordship over your life?
- Where do you look for security, meaning, happiness, fulfillment, joy, or comfort? Where you do put your 'basic trust'?
- What would make you happy?
- What do you fear? What do you tend to worry about?
- What do you love and hate most of all?
- How do you define success or failure in a particular situation?
- What image do you have of who you are? Ought to be or want to be?
- At your deathbed what to you would sum up your life as worthwhile?
- What do you see as your 'rights'?
- When you are pressured or tense, where do you turn? What do you think about?
- What do you pray for?

Place a ☑ next to the items / issues that you think might be current or potential 'idols' in your life

☐ **Performance** – especially **for significant others** – you try to please to get or to keep acceptance or approval. Example: for parents or spouse. When you please man rather than God, this is idolatry. If that is the case, then you are worshipping that person more than God. Fearful of what others think rather than obeying God – this is a problem.

☐ **Performance for Self** (Perfectionism) – trying to perform up to our own standards that we have set. Can become a Pharisee. When I meet the standard, I feel good; when I don't I feel bad. Making a personal list for myself to follow that is higher than what God says.

☐ **Performance of Others** – I make a list of what others should do. Example: For my spouse to be a good husband / wife he / she *must* do… (1,2,3, etc.). If he/she doesn't do these things, I become judgmental and unloving.

☐ **Good Health** – My goal shouldn't be this, but to glorify God. It's OK to pray for healing but don't let getting healed become an idol. God may want you to be sick in order to glorify Himself (see John 9).

☐ **Love of Money** – I take a promotion just to get more money

☐ **Success** – What's a good day to you? Answering this question helps to reveal idols of the heart. What made it a good day in your mind? Usually it's "I got a lot accomplished / done." Or "I pleased significant others. " Or "I got my way… Others did for me what I want them to do." Etc.

☐ **Fairness** - Life has to be fair! (Psalm 73) "I've been trying to please God; these others aren't even trying and they prosper." This can cause you to almost forsake the faith (Psa. 73:2).

☐ **Hurt-Free / Pain-Free Life** – I don't want to deal with problems. There shouldn't be any difficulties. I shouldn't have to go through anything unsettling… because I want peace.

☐ **Christian Marriage and Home** – I'll be successful if my children turn out right. That can become an idol. Or I want people to look at our marriage and think we have the best marriage in the world. I cannot serve God and have joy until my spouse changes and starts doing _____ .

☐ **Physical Appearance**

☐ **Being respected / Admired**

☐ **Being self-sufficient / Independent**

☐ **A Material Thing – car, house, jewelry, etc.**

☐ **Athletic Abilities / Achievements**

☐ **Hobbies ~ sports, reading, whatever**

☐ **An Ideal ("Pro-life movement, "Peace Movement," political party, etc.)**

☐ **Being Treated Fairly**

☐ **Success / Position / Power**

☐ **Worldly Pleasures (drugs, alcohol, food, sex, etc)**

☐ **Being in Control**

☐ **Meeting Goals / Achievements**

☐ **A Child or Children**

☐ **Getting Married**

☐ **Having Your 'Needs' Met**

☐ **Other? _____**

Now write the top 5 present or potential 'idols' from your check-list onto this heart

Ask Yourself…

**1. Am I willing to sin
to get this?**

2. A d I willi
thim

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