**Gods at War**

**Introduction:**

Gods at War is a recent book written by Kyle Idleman concerning the subject of idolatry. The question is asked, “Why study idolatry?” “No one worships idols anymore,” some may say. Idleman argues that there are gods at war for your heart which is the center of your personality, emotions, will, and motives. (Proverbs 27:19) “As in water face reflects face, so a man’s heart reveals the man.” NKJV So everything about me depends upon who wins that war. Now we will discover who these gods are that want to take control of our hearts.

**Body:**

1. **The Gods of Pleasure**
* These are the gods that whisper “wouldn’t you like to satisfy that appetite, experience that feeling, and get that high? I have what you need right here.” They want you to walk into the temple of pleasure and worship.
* Entertainment – Our country’s obsession with entertainment is a religion for countless people. Sports stadiums and arenas are the temples with the gods wearing shirts with their names on them. The sacrifices are the vast amounts of money spent on tickets and apparel. Also consider the world of movies and TV shows. Vast numbers of people worship the shows and stars. They know everything about them. Video games are another god of pleasure that many worship. About one in ten kids between eight and eighteen are clinically addicted to video games. Social media captures the time and attention of many others. It can become a shrine where we worship.
* Other gods of pleasure could be food, sex, and several similar things. Note what I Corinthians 10:31 says. “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” Also Psalm 16:5. “O Lord, You are the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You maintain my lot.”
* King Solomon wrote this in Ecclesiastes 2:1. “I said in my heart, Come now, I will test you with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure; but surely, this also was vanity.” He spared no expense in trying to entertain himself. His result was that it’s all meaningless! (Ecclesiastes 1:4-8) “One generation passes away and another generation comes; But the earth abides forever. The sun also rises, and the sun goes down, And hastens to the place where it arose. The wind goes toward the south, And turns around to the north; The wind whirls about continually, And comes again on its circuit. All the rivers run into the sea, Yet the sea is not full; To the place from which the rivers come, There they return again. All things are full of labor; Man cannot express it. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, Nor the ear filled with hearing.” NKJV
* Have these gods of pleasure influenced you to become closer to God or further from Him?
1. **The Gods of Power**
* Success – This god preys on our pride. It tells us that life is all about personal achievement such as our title, the size of our pay check, the square footage of our house. Remember Luke 18 where it tells of the rich, young ruler. He is assuming eternal life is something that he can achieve. (Luke 18:18) “Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” He didn’t understand he was spiritually bankrupt. He needed to accumulate treasures in heaven. But he went away sad because he had come to define himself by his success and accomplishments. (Matthew 16:26) Real success is hearing on Judgment Day, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”
* Money is another god of power. This has been around a long time. Many live as if this is the real goal of life. Note Luke 12:13-15. Of Jesus’ thirty-eight parables, sixteen deal with money. When we look to money as our security, it becomes our god. Remember Ecclesiastes 5:15. “As he came from his mother’s womb, naked shall he return, To go as he came; And he shall take nothing from his labor Which he may carry away in his hand.”
* We need to ask ourselves, “To what extent are your dreams and goals driven by money?”
1. **The Gods of Love**
* Me – This is a tough one. One symptom is arrogance. I’m always right. My way is the best way. When was the last time you admitted, “I was wrong. You were right.” Another symptom is defensiveness. Have you ever found yourself taking the slightest suggestion, the blandest criticism as a personal attack? After all, you’re god and you’re perfect! One more symptom is not handling authority well. Since you are god, there is no higher authority!
* Listen to Ezekiel 28:2. “Son of man, say to the prince of Type, Thus says the Lord God: Because your heart is lifted up, And you say, I am a god, I sit in the seat of gods, In the midst of the seas, Yet you are a man, and not a god, Though you set your heart as the heart of a god (Behold, you are wiser than Daniel! There is no secret that can be hidden from you!” The god of me will always leave you disappointed.

**Conclusion:**

* Read Exodus 20:2-3. The Israelites had just left Egypt, a land filled with gods. When Jehovah says, “You will have no other gods before me,” He is not saying that He is always in first place. He is saying that He is the only God, period. There are no second, third, or fourth places. God is saying this because He created the entire universe; He owns it, and keeps it running. He is the only God who can help us.
* Toward the end of Joshua’s life, he knows the children of Israel need to make a choice, a very important one. (Joshua 24:14-15) “Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord! And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” NKJV

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