

X-Ray Question Project: Knowing Your Idols

This exercise is based on “Chapter 7: X-ray Questions” from the book “Seeing with New Eyes” by David Powlison

Answer the following 10 “X-ray questions” to discern the idolatry of your own heart. An idol can be anything that is more important to us than God. As you read the questions, meditate on the Scriptures offered then answer as thoroughly as you can. Answer questions in a way that shows both how your heart seeks to worship God and how your heart turns to idolatry instead. (e.g. if the question is “where do you find security?” you might say, “I find security in God because of the salvation provided in Christ, but I’m also tempted to turn to money and personal achievement for security.”)

- 1.** What do you love? Hate? This “first great commandment” question searches you out, heart, soul, mind, and strength. There is no deeper question to ask of any person at any time. Disordered loves hijack our hearts from our rightful Lord and Father. (Matt 22:37-39; 2Tim 3:2-4; Luke 16:13-14)
- 2.** What do you want, desire, crave, lust, and wish for? What desires do you serve and obey? (Psalm 17:14-15; Prov 10:3,28; 11:6-7; Gal 5:16-25; 2Tim 2:22)
- 3.** What do you seek, aim for, and pursue? What are your goals and expectations? (Matt 6:32-33; 2Tim 2:22)
- 4.** What do you fear? What do you not want? What seems to threaten you? What do you tend to worry about? (Matt 6:25-32; 13:22)
- 5.** What or whom do you trust or set your hopes in? What do you turn to or seek? Where do you take refuge? Who is the savior, judge, controller, provider, protector in your world? Whom do you serve? What “voice” controls you? (Ezek 14:1-8; Acts 26:18; Col 3:5; Eph 5:5; 1Thess 1:9-10; 1John 5:21; Jer 17:5; James 4:11-12)
- 6.** Whom must you please? Whose opinion of you counts? From whom do you desire approval and fear rejection? Whose value system do you measure yourself against? In whose eyes are you living? Whose love and approval do you need? (Prov 1:7; 9:10; 29:25; John 12:43; 1Cor 4:3-5; 2Cor 10:18).
- 7.** Who are your role models? What kind of person do you think you ought to be or want to be? Your “hero” reveals you. (Rom 8:29; Eph 4:24; Col 3:10).

8. What would bring you the greatest pleasure, happiness, and delight? The greatest pain and misery? (Matt 5:3-11; Ps 1; 35; Jer 17:7-8)
9. What do you see as your rights? What do you feel entitled to? (1Cor 9; Rom 5:6-10; Ps 103:10)
10. Where do you find your identity? How do you define who you are? (See how Paul evaluates his identity in Ephesians 1-3)

○ **Answer the following three questions about your idols:**

- 1) After going through the questions above, what do you believe are your surface idols? What or who tends take God's place in your heart? This first question should help reveal the parts of creation that we exalt above the creator, the gifts that we separate from the giver (e.g. money, food, sports, career, hobbies, relationships, etc).
- 2) What are the deeper desires behind your idols that are meant to be fulfilled in Christ? (To help answer this you could ask, "What do you fear losing if you don't get your idol or if your idol is taken away?" — this could be peace, joy, love, freedom, rest, acceptance, comfort, relief, pleasure, etc.) This second question is meant to reveal the desires in our hearts that turn us toward idols instead of Christ.
- 3) What are the false belief systems (false worldviews) that have led you to find your deeper desires in your idols instead of Christ? This last question is intended to help you evaluate the false lenses that effect how you interpret your life, how you see and interpret God, self, others, and circumstances (e.g. I believe I'll only find peace when I get that promotion, I believe I'll have joy in my marriage when I get the respect I deserve, Once we have enough money in our savings account we'll finally have some security.)