

“1st John Part 19 - Guard Yourself” (9-1-24)

Living in the Light

Today (Main Text: 1st John 5:19-21)

1 John 5:19-21 (ESV)

[19] We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. [20] And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. [21] Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

Let's explore these verses . . .

In this Chapter so far

- **Anchored in Loving God & People** - We are to keep his commands to love
- **Anchored in our Faith** - We know who Christ is and are growing in Him
- **Anchored in Prayer** - We are praying for our brothers & sisters, lifting each other up when we struggle

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Note: We know who we belong to, and we know the surrounding culture - so beware!

KEEP (means): guard, watch, avoid, shun, etc.

How do we guard against Idols?

1 Corinthians 10:11, 14 (ESV)

[11] Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. . . [14] Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

3 Examples of what leads to Idolatry . . .

1) Comfort - In the wilderness

Exodus 32:1 (ESV)

[1] When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, “Up, make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.” . . .

(Vs. 2-5) - They make a gold calf from their wealth, this is who rescued you, and declare a party!

Exodus 32:6 (ESV)

[6] And they rose up early the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings. And the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.

Note: They wanted help in trouble, started losing faith in God, and demanded answers from their leaders. Ultimately they made God in their own image and looked to other things for comfort/distraction.

How can we guard against this? Back to Paul's warning (1 Corinthians Chapter 10) . . .

vs. 1-4 (They saw God's mighty work and experienced His Salvation and Life

vs. 5-10 (Nevertheless, they worshipped idols - so beware, we are all susceptible)

1 Corinthians 10:11-14 (ESV)

[11] Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. [12] Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. [13] No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. [14] Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

Note: Beware, and Run from Idols and Run toward God for help and rescue!

2) Complacency - In the land

2 Kings 17:7-8 (ESV)

[7] And this occurred because the people of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods [8] and walked in the customs of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel, and in the customs that the kings of Israel had practiced.

Note: In their complacency, they got caught up in the surrounding culture, and repeated old patterns.

2 Kings 17:13-14 (ESV)

[13] Yet the LORD warned Israel and Judah by every prophet and every seer, saying, "Turn from your evil ways and keep my commandments and my statutes, in accordance with all the Law that I commanded your fathers, and that I sent to you by my servants the prophets." [14] But they would not listen, but were stubborn, as their fathers had been, who did not believe in the LORD their God.

Note: Heed the warnings you receive.

2 Kings 17:19 (ESV)

[19] Judah also did not keep the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the customs that Israel had introduced.

Note: We often influence our brothers and sisters into compromising right along with us!

The Psalmist writes about this pull from the surrounding culture and the damage it causes . . .

Psalms 106:35-39 (ESV)

[35] but they mixed with the nations and learned to do as they did. [36] They served their idols, which became a snare to them. [37] They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons; [38] they poured out innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, and the land was polluted with blood. [39] Thus they became unclean by their acts, and played the whore in their deeds.

Note: When we mix with the world it permeates everything, our children are sacrificed on that altar, and ultimately God views Idolatry as Adultery in our relationship with Him. **How can we guard against this?**

Psalms 106:1-3, 47 (ESV)

[1] Praise the LORD! Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever! [2] Who can utter the mighty deeds of the LORD, or declare all his praise? [3] Blessed are they who observe justice, who do righteousness at all times! . . . [47] Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praise.

Note: Worship and remember! In a broken culture - walk in justice & righteousness. Call to God for help!

3) Compromise - in captivity

Daniel 3:4-7 (ESV)

[4] And the herald proclaimed aloud, "You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, [5] that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. [6] And whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace." [7] Therefore, as soon as all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, all the peoples, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

Note: Caving to pressure for the sake of safety or just blending in for acceptance - they compromised.

However, some didn't bow - they faced the fire, but God saw them through it . . .

Daniel 3:28 (ESV)

[28] Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God.

Note: Are we willing to set aside the pressures, to surrender ourselves to God alone?

Conclusion/Application: Some things to Consider . . .

- Are you worshipping God as he has revealed himself, or are you making him into the image you like?
- What do we idolize (or idealize) and set as our primary pursuit in life?
- What can't you live without? Take note of how you react when something is withheld or taken from you.
- When things are tough, what do you place your trust in or turn to for comfort?
- What is worshipped in our culture? Has that captured your attention too?

What we worship we will ultimately serve - and eventually, everything in our lives will bow to it!

Psalms 31:3-8 (ESV)

[3] For you are my rock and my fortress; and for your name's sake you lead me and guide me; [4] you take me out of the net they have hidden for me, for you are my refuge. [5] Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God. [6] I hate those who pay regard to worthless idols, but I trust in the LORD. [7] I will rejoice and be glad in your steadfast love, because you have seen my affliction; you have known the distress of my soul, [8] and you have not delivered me into the hand of the enemy; you have set my feet in a broad place.

Note: Trust God, not Idols!