



# CHURCH OF CHRIST

## West Palm Beach

Striving Toward the Prize of the Upward Call of God

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OCTOBER 8, 2017

## AGENDA

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Emil Kay

### GREETER

Kim Guzik

### SONG LEADER

JP Morrow

### LORD'S SUPPER

Dan Schmidt

Casey Gray

JP Morrow

### SCRIPTURE READING

Mabry McCray

### CLOSING PRAYER

Ed Fielding

### SUN 9:30AM BIBLE STUDY

Faithful Proclamation

Facing Persecution:

The Message of Jeremiah

### SUN 10:30AM MESSAGE

Living In The Light of Eternity:

The Power of Faithfulness

(1 Thessalonians 1:9-10)

### SUN 6:30PM MESSAGE

Crown of Life

(James 1)

### WED 7PM BIBLE STUDY

The Road To Redemption:

Seeing Christ in the Exodus

### 2018 HAVERHILL ROAD

#### LECTURES

August 8-12, 2018

### SHEPHERDS

Emil Kay and Dan Schmidt

## FAMILY NEWS

The **website now has the latest bulletin** posted at the bottom right of the home page. Feel free to share that digital copy with others.

Just a friendly reminder that **no food or drinks** are to be brought into the auditorium except water. Sodas, juices, and the like leave stains when accidentally spilled. We want to keep the new carpet and upholstery on the pews looking good for as long as possible.

## NEIGHBORHOOD BIBLE STUDIES

### FOUNDATIONS BIBLE STUDY

Friday, October 20 @ 7:30pm

at the Poyner home

### LADIES BIBLE STUDY

Saturday, October 21 @ 10am

at the Schmidt home

## REQUESTED PRAYERS

**Sydney Banuelos** for physical difficulties

**Byron Butterfield** for difficulty walking

**Elsie Griffith** with cancer in her blood

**Kay Heilman's grand-niece** has an aggressive form of lupus

**Kay Kay** for health difficulties

**Berry Kercheville** for prostate cancer

**Grace Kercheville** for Prader-Willi syndrome

**Donna Koon** for physical and spiritual strength

**Steven Poyner's cousin** who is recovering

from a serious head injury

**Bessie Presnell's son** for cancer

**Emily Richardson's cousin**, Pam Inman, for physical difficulties

**Evelyn Rollins** is recovering from a dislocated hip and for various health difficulties

**Evelyn Rollins' sister-in-law** who is going through chemotherapy for cancer

**Dick Saleeby** for diabetes issues

**Jennifer Schofield** for MS

**Janet Wloch** is recovering from a broken ankle

## SCRIPTURE FOR TODAY'S MESSAGE

And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything. For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come. (1 Thessalonians 1:6–10 ESV)

# HAS MARRIAGE BECOME MY IDOL?

When does marriage move from a precious gift from God to a false god of personal security? It's a question today, sent in to us from Valerie, a sharp podcast listener who lives in France. "I deeply love my husband, and I am deeply grateful to God for lending him to me as my husband during this earthly life. But I don't want to make him an idol in my life. What are some certain signs that I have made him an idol in my life and in my security? And how can I love my husband more and more without finding my satisfaction in this relationship rather than in my relationship with God?"

Valerie's own words are pretty amazing and already heading in the right direction. I haven't heard a lot of women use this language: "I'm deeply grateful to God for lending him to me as my husband during this earthly life." That's a huge step in answering her own question. She is right to say, "My husband is not mine. He belongs to the Lord. He is on loan to me for this life, and then it's over. Because in the age to come, Jesus says there is no marriage or giving in marriage in the resurrection." Valerie has her ducks in a row theologically (it seems to me).

But she is very wise, I think, to ask the question and to think in terms of idolatry. We all should ask what the symptoms of it might look like. Let me say a word about idolatry and then just give three simple ways that we all can be vigilant against idolatry in relation to our spouse or for that matter anybody we care about.

## Flee Idolatry

The very last words of 1 John are these: "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 John 5:21). The reason I mention this is because it is so striking. The reason it's so striking is that John hasn't said one word about idolatry in this letter. He's never mentioned the word idol. He's never mentioned the word idolatry.

Out of the blue, he just kind of slaps you in the face with idol language. "Why are you talking about idolatry suddenly in your very last sentence?" we ask. Well, my conclusion is that he has been talking about idolatry without using the words. We should go back and reread and find out what idolatry looks like in 1 John. When I do that, the passage that sounds most like that warning is 1 John 2:15–17. It goes like this:

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world — the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life — is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:15–17)

So, little children, keep yourselves from idols. He says not to love the world but then in the very next verse, he explains that he means not loving the world the way the world loves the world. "The desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, the pride of life is not from the Father but from the world, and the world with its desires is passing away." Don't have those. Don't have a love for the world that is like the world's love for the world or that is like the world's desire for the world.

The issue is not simply loving the world, delighting in the world, enjoying the world, or being thankful for the world. Rather, the issue is loving the world the way the world loves the world. That is idolatry.

## Three Questions

When it comes to a husband or a wife, the issue is not merely "May I love my husband? May I enjoy my husband? May I cherish my husband?" The issue is, Do we love them, enjoy them, or cherish

them the way the world does or the way a Spirit-filled Christian does? So here are my three suggestions for how Valerie can stay vigilant against idolatry in relation to her husband — how she can know she's not loving the way the world loves.

### 1. Does the thought, the real prospect of losing him, produce debilitating anxiety?

Now, no wife wants to lose her husband; therefore, the thought of losing him should be a negative thought — a painful thought. What I mean by debilitating anxiety is the kind of worry, fretfulness, or fear that undermines a wife's faith or keeps her from joyfully doing the ministry God has called her to do in the home, in the church, or in the world. If the prospect of losing a husband produces that kind of debilitating, immobilizing anxiety, then alarm bells should go off that he may be becoming an idol in the place of God, who is our peace and our security, our hope and our joy.

### 2. Does your affection for and delight in your husband detract from or diminish your delight in the word of God, the people of God, and the service of God?

Or does your affection for him, your enjoyment of him deepen and intensify your love for Christ, your enjoyment of his word, and your engagement with his people? In other words, the first suggestion asks, what are the effects of losing your husband? And the second suggestion asks, what are the effects of the ongoing presence and enjoyment of your husband? Jesus says, "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10:37). I think he would say, whoever loves husband or wife more than me is not worthy of me. We can measure the superiority of our affection for Jesus both by what would happen if we lost our best earthly beloved and what happens while we enjoy our best earthly beloved.

### 3. Is your relationship with your husband regulated by the word of God?

I'm not so much talking here primarily how well you succeed in regulating your relationship on the basis of Scripture, but is it your heart's desire that you bring the entire relationship under the word of God and measure the beauty of it and the success of it by God's standard in the Bible — not the world's standards, not your own independent standards? A good sign that we are moving toward idolatry is when we neglect the word of God and decide that we're going to define the meaning of love, the meaning of faithfulness, and the meaning of a good relationship on our own terms or from books or movies we watch, but we're not going to pore over the Scriptures pleading with God to shape our relationship by all of his revealed truth.

So, my three suggestions — in answer to the question, what are some signs that I am making him an idol? — are (1) Does the thought of losing him produce debilitating anxiety? (2) Does your affection for him diminish or intensify your affections for Jesus and your engagement with his people? (3) Is your relationship regulated by the word of God or by your own independent ideas or the ideas of the world? Happy is the husband, and happy is the wife, whose love for each other is secondary to their love for Christ. When we love him more, we love each other better. <sup>23</sup>

— John Piper



— Tim Challies





