

## Larry McClellan - Hidden Idols Revisited

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Seems like the theme for the afternoon is self examination, and so first of all, we want to thank the brethren in Salem area for giving us a privilege of service today. It's just such a joy to be with all of you and we're thankful for the talks. Very stimulating. To the new creature that we've received during this convention and the beautiful testimonies of your love.

Our title is Hidden Idols Revisited. We gave this a number of years ago, but we redid it and revisited and so it's going to be in many ways new. Hidden Idols. What a strange topic for a discourse, right? What do you think of when you hear the word idol?

How many think of some stone or metal object of worship from an eastern country, like the Buddha image of Confucius or some other stone or metal object of veneration like a Mother Mary image in a Catholic church or home? Certainly none of us would have any hidden idols, would we? However, maybe we need to do a checkup from the neck up just to make sure, right? Maybe we need to get a really good definition of the word idol to determine the answer to this. Could we idolize sports heroes or movie stars or technology or perhaps popularity?

Could we idolize fashion or sports cars or a handsome man or an attractive woman? How about money or music awards or a certain organization? Could a business we own or a top job position we seek or maybe achievement awards be some kind of idols to us? Perhaps a beloved member of the family? We'll get into this, but first we'd like to set the stage for an interesting Bible story you've all been familiar with for many years.

It's found in Genesis 31. Idols of various kinds have been around for a long, long time, right? But do we have ourselves any hidden idols lurking in our hearts? That. That's our question.

This whole scenario of events is found for us in Genesis, chapter 31, if you'd like to look at it sometime. Here we find a situation where the Old Testament, Jacob had fled from Laban with many goods and animals and Laban's two daughters, Leah and Rachel. Laban feels slighted for Jacob not telling him that he was leaving and demands to search for Laban's hidden idols. Now, Jacob doesn't know that Rachel stole her father's idols and hid them with some furniture that she was sitting on over her camel. That's what they called it.

Jacob himself gives a stiff penalty to that person who might have taken them, not knowing it was Rachel. So Laban went into Jacob's tent and into Leah's tent and into the 10 of the two female servants, but he found nothing. After he came out of Leah's tent, he entered Rachel's tent. Genesis 31:34. Now again, like I said, Rachel had taken the household gods and put them under or inside her, her camel's saddle, and she was sitting on them.

Laban searched through everything in the tent but found nothing. So those idols were well hidden. Would you say that Rachel was pretty sneaky about hiding those idols? But unlike Rachel's father, who could not find any hidden idols, our Father, our Heavenly Father knows exactly if we have any, where our hidden idols may be, even if we don't know ourselves. He looks for them in our heart.

That is what we wish to explore in this discourse. So that's the big question, dear friends. Do we have any hidden idols that we may not even realize or be fully aware of? I don't have. But somebody might say, brother Larry, I'm sure I don't have any hidden idols.

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Well, perhaps you do and perhaps you don't. Perhaps the same for me because I introspectively give these talks for myself as well as for you. A lot of times assessment is in the definition as well as the introspection of the heart. Perhaps it is in our definition and perception of what idols actually are. Some may be hidden from our view like they were from Laban, but the first step in getting rid of them is what it's recognizing that they're there.

Right? What would your definition of idols be? Or idolatry? If you go online, you might find this definition. Now take note.

Idolatry is extreme admiration, love or reverence for something or someone. The word that pops out to me is extreme. Well, let me also give you Brother Russell's definition and see what you think. Listen carefully, dear friends. I think this is a good one.

By the way, the word inordinate here means excessive beyond reasonable limits. Reprint 2299 on idolatry the inordinate or undue respect, homage, reverence, or devotion paid to any person, system or thing.

Again, the inordinate or undue respect, homage, reverence or devotion paid to any person, system or thing. Now, Merriam Webster's dictionary says that idolatry is the worship of a physical object as a God or notice an immoderate attachment or devotion to something. Do you or I have any immoderate attachments to something in our lives? Hidden, perhaps keying on the word immoderate, especially excessive. In other words, exceeding just or reasonable limits.

Extreme going beyond what is suitable or Acceptable in this case, acceptable in the Lord's eyes. Right. Now, let's take a seriously introspective look today and see if we can find more than what Laban did. Okay, let's look briefly at the life of Abraham. To my understanding, Abraham, the father of the faithful, grew up with a father and family that worshiped and served other gods.

Abraham had really made a leap of faith to depart from his family's persuasion of image worship quite radically. I understand if you know the story of tradition and concluded for himself that there was only one true God and that his God was invisible. We offer this scriptural support for his family's idolatry in Joshua, chapter 24, verse 2. Now, later in the Bible's history, we read that Moses brought the nation of Israel out of the idolatrous nation of Egypt through a series of 10 miraculous plagues against Egypt. The culminating experience, as you recall, was when Israel was delivered from Pharaoh's revenge by God's divine power on their behalf, departing the Red Sea for the crossing.

What incredible visual miracles appeared right before their eyes. But even after they had seen the the power of divine providence many times when Israel had come to Mount Sinai, they failed the test of patience and waiting on God. Do you ever fail the test of patience and waiting on God? I know I have. With Moses still up in the mount for weeks, you recall the Israelites for forced the hand of Aaron to succumb to building a golden calf to worship one which would represent God.

Now they knew better and so did Aaron. But they all did something that we might find ourselves doing sometime in our Christian walk. Can you guess? It's called rationalizing. Rationalizing.

A wrong rationalizing can be a very sneaky enemy to us. Let's first take a look and see what the scripture actually said in reference to God's command against idol worship. Exodus 22:5. I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

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Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them. For I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children under the third and fourth generation of them that hate me. Recall the Apostle John also directed the church in first John 5. 21 Dear children, keep yourselves from idols And Paul said to the Corinthians, flee From idolatry in First Corinthians 10:14.

Might you say that this would still apply today? Jehovah? God was jealous for their best interest. That's a good jealousy, right? For our best good.

He wants our total confidence and trust for our highest welfare. Brethren. Paul had this jealousy also for the best interests. The best good of the Corinthians in Second Corinthians 11:2. You know, dear friends, the adversary is a great trap setter, so beware of rationalization.

When we wish to acquire, want, or do something badly enough, our flesh tries to find reasons that would justify such a course or decision. Soon your want becomes a need. Probably many Israelites told Aaron that they needed to make an idol to represent God. They convinced themselves it really wouldn't be disobeying his command. Because after all, God just said he didn't want them to make any graven image and they just wanted a mold made of a calf.

Do we ever try to get technical with God to justify a fleshly desired course of action?

Now what? What's a graven image? Right? A graven image is an image that is carved with some tool. The main directive or point from Jehovah was that he didn't want them to make an image, any image, period.

I suggest because God didn't want Israel, or an atypical Israel in the next age to worship any idols, stone, metal, or otherwise. Same with us. Let's read a passage from reprint 40:22. The commandment had said that they should make no likeness nor graven image to represent God, and what they did was only indirectly a breach of this.

For the golden calf which Aaron made for them was not graven, not carved, but cast in a mold. Rationalization. I've been guilty of this in the past myself. How about you? And technically the image they made did not represent God, but probably like the images they had seen in Egypt, was a nondescript thing which merely represented divine characteristics.

A calf's body with a human head and with wings symbolical of strength, of intelligence, omniscience. I recommend reading this Great article in reprint 4022. Dear friends, like Israel's rationalizing, if we don't follow God's directions very carefully and we find ourselves skirting around the real issues to justify a wrong course, we too will find there are consequences to our poor choices. Nominal Christians today have been disposed to take too great of liberties and introduce their own conceptions in divine worship without sufficient care to hold to the exact instructions of the divine message, statues of Mary and crucifixes with Christ dying on the cross are just some of those examples. But even organizations like the Faith and Freedom Coalition can become an idol to some people can inadvertently find themselves all wrapped up in organizations where they give an immoderate amount of their time, their money, devotion and adoration on the altar of personal sacrifices.

For such organizations or systems, it could be organizations like the Red Cross, the Girl Scouts, World Vision International, WEC, or the local school board. It appears to me, for example, many

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Jehovah's Witnesses seem devoted to their organization as if it's a man made idol of inordinate homage and an idol of excessive allegiance and devotion and money and time. An organization some seem to almost bow down to and devote their entire lives to. Even Jesus gets less attention from what I understand from those who are inside this man made organization run by a theocracy with great power amongst its 9 million members. So much is said about Jehovah and so very little is said about Jesus Christ from what I understand.

So now we read passages like this one in 1st Corinthians 10:5 where it ties in Israel wanting to give their affections and devotions to self gratifications and the worship of expensive idols that they could see immediate gratification for play and for pleasure. Listen to 1 Corinthians 10:5. But with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were for our examples to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them.

As it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play. So be careful what we desire, and be careful that those things do not lead us to some kind of idolatry, including entertainment like going to the movies quite often, or spending an immoderate or excessive amount of time watching the television with your favorite movie channels. You think wasting hours and hours of consecrated time watching your favorite sports team could fit into the definition of idolatry? Everybody has their own reasons for doing what they do. I understand.

We're just trying to do a little introspection here. We don't judge anyone. Only God does that. How much though of our time our talent, influence, money means actually goes unto our consecrations? Do we have a vibrant consecration, brethren, filled with zeal, study, service?

Or are we trying to rationalize and fit into our consecrations, our earthly desires of immediate gratifications? Jeremiah 17:9 1st Corinthians 11:31. I'm constantly monitoring this myself. We should perhaps learn more to mortify self gratification seeking instead God's will and direction in our lives and not our own self will and self seeking interests. Always looking for our Father's eye of approval in all that we say and do.

This is what our Father wants to see reflected in us, for his loving kindness is greater than life to us, is it not dear friends? But we need to prove it. We need to prove it. This comes through prayerful meditation and study as well as looking for the subtle impulses of the Holy Spirit in your life and application of the divine principles. Otherwise negative spiritual consequences will surely result like an earthborn cloud.

Hebrews 12, 9 and 13 and Psalms 51. Still later in Israel's history, after David put down idolatry in his kingdom, his wise son Solomon had risen to the throne of authority. Solomon had demonstrated his wisdom many times on various occasions, like the situation between the two harlots that both claimed to have the same child. Remember? However, Solomon's great wisdom wasn't always always so great.

He made some pretty poor choices also, which had devastating consequences for himself, his progeny and for his kingdom, and even though quite famous, we do not see him listed in as an ancient worthy, do we? But you could say, well, they're not all listed. Brother Larry, let me continue. Now, Solomon did have trouble with surrounding nations and Solomon wanted peace for the nation of Israel and for himself.

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Did he ask for Jehovah's guidance? It seems reasonable that he might have thought to himself, if I take wives of royalty from these various nations around Israel, there would be peace between us. But if so, did Solomon think this out carefully enough? Was he possibly, like some of us, perhaps trying to rationalize something here? Did he take it to the Lord in prayer frequently and consider the divine mind in the matter?

What direction God would be pleased with him taking? Apparently not. The Lord had given him direction, but Solomon wasn't listening. 1 Kings 12 or 11 verses 2 to 4 as Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been. Were there consequences to those choices?

The consequences were devastating and offended God deeply. Solomon followed Ashtoreth, Molech, Chemash, which was evil in the sight of God to appease his wives. Some I understand were demonic gods like Molech. Solomon's heart was not fully devoted to Jehovah and therefore more prone to possibly rationalizing his actions do we sometimes have selective listening to Jehovah's voice? In some matters, dear friends, hear what we want to hear and don't listen when it conflicts with our fleshly wants or desires.

Let us all be guided not by the bidden bridle, but rather by our Father's eye, our scriptural direction that should educate us to the right choices. Cleanse thou me from Secret faults, Psalms 32, 9 and Psalms 19:12 to 14. A lot is a matter of educating our choices right and maintaining purity of heart. Do we prayerfully reason things out looking for God's will, or do we just reason things out? Do we often make compromises of our sacrifice?

Our time and devotion to fleshly wants to perhaps appease our relatives, our wives, husbands, sons, daughters or grandchildren? Finding ourselves again, often rationalizing our actions may be similar to Solomon. This is what God really wants to find out about us. Do we truly seek out his will and not our own? And how often?

Colossians 3, verses 2 and 3 listen carefully these words from the apostle Paul. Colossians 3 we're going to go 2 to 5 set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify, therefore your members which are upon the earth.

Fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil, concupiscence and covetousness. Which is what?

Which is idolatry right now. What is the word concupiscence in this scripture? It's a word not many of us know. It actually means a strong desire, especially sexual desire. That can be an idol for some as well.

Idolatry and these other sinful propensities must be mortified, must be mortified if we are to live and grow in the favor of Jehovah God. For some it will be a knock down, drag out, fight to the very finish. Are we truly looking to him and fervently praying for God to help us fight this battlefield of the mind? Are we loyal to him, desiring his approval, walking in the Spirit, Psalm 63, 3, 4, Philippians 4:13 and Proverbs 3, 5 and 6. Excuse me.

The system of nominal Christianity rose up during the Gospel age to make similar mistakes as Israel did. Now there are many wonderful Catholic people, good people in the churches. But the great Catholic church system, as we said, made literal idols of Mother Mary, Saint Christopher and

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patron saints, as well as thousands of crucifixes with our Lord Jesus Agony portrayed in statue form. The leaders in the laity probably rationalized that the congregations needed to see some representation of these holy individuals for worship purposes. Sound familiar?

Does anybody here think that there are some Catholics that could make the new Pope an idol? Let's bring it closer to home. Do you think it's possible that some of us could make Brother Russell an idol? Giving too much homage or extreme respect beyond reasonable limits? As much as I appreciate and respect the dear pastor as the seventh messenger, let us never make him anything close to an idol.

I believe he would have much to say about that. You better believe it. He never wanted anything akin to worship. Revelation 22, 8 and 9. He always wanted to point to the Lord and never to himself.

But in my opinion there have also been some Bible students over the past years who seemed to kind of made idols. A very talented, very intelligent, gifted men where some brethren seem to worship the very ground these men walk on and gave them a little too much adoration, affection and excessive homage, sometimes to their spiritual detriment, taking them in misdirected paths of confusion and error.

There were some, perhaps that might have even idolized themselves. Can you believe it? Yes. A person can make themselves an idol of sorts. Also you probably know some political leaders that appear to do just that, don't you?

I see you shaking your head. I remember an elderly sister telling me that after the pastor died, the sisters were all told to wave their hankies when Judge Rutherford walked in. People put these men up on a pedestal for all to admire and kind of worship the ground they walked on with displaced and disproportionate adoration when God should have had the praise or Jesus should have had the praise, and just because you acknowledge the the accomplishments of humble servants of our faith does not necessarily mean that you were giving them inordinate homage. Don't mistake me.

But Brother Russell did warn the elders and deacons, didn't he back in 1909 about mentioning his name so much. Remember? And creeds. The nominal churches worship their man made creeds like the Nicene Creed and give their devotion to it just like true Christians should. The Holy Bible.

Some mainstream Christians have organized clubs like the 700 Club and have given their money and heart allegiance to it or its leadership. Some give their allegiance to the World Council of Churches or other church man made organizations. You and I all belong to Christ, not any man made organization. That is who we worship and honor and belong to. Correct?

Jesus is the one who purchased us with his own precious blood. First Corinthians 6, 2. But organizations and creeds can also become people's idols. Wouldn't you agree? Remember the definition of idolatry.

Undue or inordinate. Respect, homage or devotion to any person, system or thing. It's the immoderate or excessive attachment to someone or something, especially when you place it before or in place of Jehovah, God, almost anything or anybody that you give your heart, reverence, devotion or listen discretionary time to more than you do. God and his service can be come. An idol and our flesh and the adversary are crouched at the door of our consecrated minds attempting to rationalize anything the flesh really wants in any shape, manner or form, so that he entraps or

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derails or stumbles us in our path to the plane of glory.

But Brother Larry, how can I tell what my hidden idols are? Good question. Brother Russell had a good suggestion in reprint 4023. Listen carefully. As we have already pointed out, he says some hearts have many idols, others a few.

And it is not difficult to determine which idols a man worships. Are you listening? The worship will be indicated by the sacrifice. Tell us the things to which a man or woman sacrifices his or her best thoughts, best time, best and chief influence, and we can tell you readily the idol which he reverences most and before which he has the largest altar and sacrifices most. There is the key to answering the question for all of us.

So let's take a look at some more of the world's idols and see if we cannot identify some hidden idols of our own. Because that which is prevalent in the world and sometimes even amongst the brethren can be a special threat to the true church. You cannot even compare your decisions with what other brethren do. But rather by the standard in the scriptures, brethren, you could actually be comparing yourself to someone in the great company, couldn't you? Especially as we get closer to the completion of the church.

Although we don't wish to look at it that way. But I believe that is the reality. Again, the scriptures. The scriptures are the standard for our choices, not what other people do. I try to look at everyone, though as a candidate for the little flock myself, I try not to judge anyone.

If I did, I'd be sitting in God's seat, wouldn't I? So now let's take a look at the idol of fame or notoriety. Some people really idolize popularity or fame. Even 15 minutes of fame for some could mean sacrificing their time, their morals, their influence, their families, or even their life. How empty, how hollow is the embrace of the world's.

Capricious arms. Today you're on the top, like American Idol or Forbes magazine, and tomorrow you could just as easily be the target of the world's laughter, disdain, or be called a has been by some. The world is as fickle as a pickle and the superficial attainment of disillusioning expectations can quickly fade. Many people seem to want recognition only to flee to paths of disenchanting retreat after a good taste of what popularity can bring recognition, even with elders sometimes speaking only to itching ears and what they feel the brethren would like to hear could even be a hidden idol for some very talented elders in the truth, who may enjoy the recognition of many brethren and may look more for the praise of men than for the praise of Jehovah. Yes, popularity for the chief seats amongst those they esteem could be a hidden idol for even our most talented, if not careful stiff Warning from our master in Luke 11:43 let all who are elders take heed and those who give misplaced adoration.

We should never let respect morph into adoration or idolization of elders and stumble the elder and ourselves from the prize we all seek. Consider the case of diatrophes in 3rd John 1:9 3 John 1:9 not many people know about diatrophes, another idol. Would you agree that certainly money can be bowed down to and almost worshiped? It was mentioned earlier today, worshiped with immoderate or excessive adoration in the eyes of many, right? The allurements of money and its pursuits appears to be a chief tool in many satanic schemes, whether on a small scale or a large, sometimes global scale.

Did you know that money loving or money getting is another form of covetousness? And covetousness is another form of idolatry, a sin. It can be an addiction hard to pull away from.

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People appear to worship the golden calf or bronze bull of mammon like the one on Wall Street. You know, given a daily homage and devotion, we could get caught up in it all of their hearts, affections and sacrifice of time, their talents and energy of pursuit and we quote to you volume two, page 139 Money is power.

Money brings many attractive choices. People like power. More money, more power and more choices. Money can easily become the fleshly fuel for self gratification for those who selfishly live for this present world's illusions of empty hollow happiness. But it's the love of money that is the root of all evil, right?

Having money is not necessarily wrong and brings great responsibility. But if you love it and give the best part of your mind, body and energy. An excessive time to attaining it for selfish pursuits, excessive mortgages on your time that is wrong for a true Christian that is consecrated to sacrifice their all on the altar of sacrifice to the Lord. Earning money that is needful and necessary to provide for your home or for those depending on you is not a sin. But it could be a sin if you go overboard and want to provide for your family.

All the best that this world has to offer more than what you told the Lord you would do when you first consecrated. Covetousness is a sin. It can definitely be an idol also. Many mainstream church leaders tell Christians that they can have it all. They're but wolves in sheep's clothing.

That God wants them all to have money and all the wonderful things it can buy and they can undoubtedly serve God as a Christian. At the same time, many mainstream churches have over the past centuries taught the nations of the world the worst form of idolatry, the idolatry of self and wealth and power. But what did Jesus say about money? Matthew 6:24 no man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

What does the Greek word mammon mean? It's like wealth personified. That's what it is. Money with the brethren brings great responsibility. It seems the Lord can only trust but a few to use it wisely as stewards for the various causes of need for the brethren.

In promulgating the truth, what does the Bible tell us about true riches? Revelation 3:7 says to us, buy of me gold tried in the fire. There's the true riches buy at the cost of self sacrifice. Attain true riches by paying the cost you consecrated to by faithful and constant submission to the fiery trials that consume the dross of our sinful flesh, the dross of the affections and hidden idols that need to be consumed voluntarily to become refined gold. If the Lord has to do it finish what you and I promised we would sacrifice, then your and my place will not be in the little flock, but rather the great company.

If that Hebrews 2:14. This will be an act of mercy. Some may be in more jeopardy than they realize. Sober warning if you look at it on tabernacle shadows, page 119, some may already know what I mean when it comes to wasting hours and hours of time watching the tv. Perhaps we need to be more disciplined.

Even your TV can become an idol. Do you agree? If the Lord's Maybe the Lord is clocking our hours, we don't know. Might we just miss the boat of our heavenly reward because of excessive amounts of wasted time? They could have been applied more to listening to talks or filling our new minds with a study in prayer and meditation of God's word, but we didn't have the self control to press the off button more frequently.

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Could the TV be an idol? Yes, I think it's possible. Let us all properly manage and prioritize our time dear friends. Someone once said that the difference between the great Company and the little flock is that the little flock fit their whole life into their consecrations while the great Company tries to squeeze their consecrations somewhere into their life. Which are we?

Yes, dear dear brethren, it's an everyday tug of war struggle where you cannot let go or take a break from the adversary or the thoughts and foes pulling on you in the opposite direction, attacking you with earthly distractions almost constantly. It's a daily mental battlefield in your mind of spiritual courage, needed and resolute determination with a faith and strength from above because he that is for you is greater than he that is against you. Jesus, our advocate said, he that loses his life for my sake shall what shall find it life on the other side lose this life of immediate gratifications and hidden idols. Yes, those hidden idols that Laban was looking for may have been hidden from him, but the Lord knew exactly where they were. But unlike Rachel, let's make sure we don't have some hidden idols tucked away blind spots that will stumble us from our chief aim in life, namely to please and glorify our wonderful Heavenly Father, complete our consecrations faithfully to do his will and not our own, and to follow holiness without which no man will see God, whether it's the love of art or love of music or sports or technology, or climbing up the job ladder of job success.

Have no idols? Could even our children, our grandchildren, husband or wife being idle in some way? Excuse me, if it meets the definition, I think it's a possibility, and Brother Russell thought that a possibility as well. Reprint 3863 he states, Some of the Lord's people keeping themselves from such idols are in danger of putting too large a proportion of their love upon a wife or husband, parent or child, brother or sister, and thus idolizing them and bringing an earthborn cloud between their hearts and the Heavenly Father.

May we strive with even greater determination than ever, dear friends, to cleanse our minds with a sanctification of the truth and bring all our hearts, affections, all our devotion and burning zeal of sacrifice prioritizing for God our chief interest of devotion, hot fervent zeal is what the Lord is truly looking for in the 144,000 while we strive to sweep out all the leaven in the cracks of our hearts throughout the year, searching and cleaning the hidden crevices of sinful crumbs of leavenlike covetousness, etc. Let us search even more carefully perhaps for the secret faults, the hidden idols. Let's all be careful of rationalizing poor choices for our new creature. The bottom line is this. We must love God with all our hearts and with all our soul and with all our strength and with all our mind.

Hidden idols will always take up what I call heart space that displaces or pushes out the fervent zeal and devotion of a healthy, vibrant consecration in a Christian.

Idols of any kind, metal flesh, or immoderate fleshly pursuits are dangerous, counterproductive, and seriously offensive to Jehovah and must be removed at any and all costs. But first they must be objectively and honestly as well as prayerfully identified. Let us all look deeply, dear friends, into our true affections and devotion of our time to carefully and prayerfully consider if we have anywhere in our lives any excessive or undue respect, homage, reverence or devotion of our mental or physical energies that we pay to any person, any system, or anything that our God would be offended at or would diminish our relationship with him that we so greatly desire to have with not only him, but with His Son, our precious Lord Jesus Christ. Watch out for and pray to perceive honestly any hidden idols that, like Rachel, lurk under the saddlebags of your heart and destroy them. You may also wish to read the article reprint 5297 as a further reflection.

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And finally, the last seven words come from our dear apostle Paul in 1st Corinthians 10:14  
Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry, and may the Lord add His blessing.