

**DO IT YOURSELF IDOLATRY**  
**Colossians 3:1-4**

**Living God's Word...A Walk Through The Bible**  
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An American phenomenon these past 13 years has been the reality TV program, “American Idol.” The premise of course is that vocal singers who have been chosen through auditions around the country compete on national TV with other vocal performers.

After each person sings they get instant comments from a panel of celebrity judges—like Steven Tyler, Jennifer Lopez and Keith Urban. They are also voted on interactively by the TV viewers themselves.

Through these performances and votes the numbers of contestants are narrowed down night by night. Finally one of these contestants is voted in as the American Idol; this means they get a number of prizes including a recording deal. The interesting thing is the numbers of careers that have been launched through this: like Kelly Clarkson, Carrie Underwood and Clay Aiken.

It is true that as fun and as entertaining as it is to proclaim someone an American Idol, you could also say that this is a major problem in America today. The problem we have is what we can term “American Idolatry.” The truth is that the Bible warns us time and again to always worship and put God first; to never worship or rely on the things of this earth.

As we continue reading the Apostle Paul’s letters in our Walk Through the Bible Colossians 3:2 tells us to “*set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.*” In verse 9 he tells us to put to death those things that belong to our earthly nature “*which is idolatry*”; the center of which is what we can term our “do it yourself idolatry.”

When my children were young; when they were just learning to do certain things they would often push us away as parents and would say, “*self,*” or “*me do it,*” or whatever. This meant that they wanted to try to tie their own shoes; to put on their own coat; to feed themselves. This of course is an important way for a child to learn.

Yet as we grow older we often continue that attitude of complete self-reliance. We think we can handle whatever life throws at us; that all we really need is me, myself, and I. We structure our lives around our own personal gain; we easily forget about others along the way.

I’m sure most of you know the story or legend of the Greek god, Narcissus. He was that god who one day came upon a pool of water which was calm like a mirror. As he looked into this pool the reflection he saw was of himself. The result was that he was so enamored with this image that he fell in love with himself and with his own reflection.

It is from this legend that comes the psychological description known as narcissism and the term narcissistic personality. The reference is to someone who worships themselves; who thinks the

world revolves around them; who actually believes that they are God's gift to women; to men; to the church; to his/her friends; to humanity itself.

It is what we could call the Kim Kardashian syndrome. A rich and attractive young woman who lives in the fast lane; does whatever she wants; buys anything and everything; uses men and women for her own gain; then arrogantly flaunts it all whenever and wherever she can.

Our response may be to say that we are nothing like Kim Kardashian; yet I believe that she is a composite of what is happening in our society; there are many who are being influenced by this attitude. The temptation in our wealthy culture is to worship one's beauty; worship clothes and things; care only about my personal fun and pleasure.

However from the time Moses went up on the mountain and received from God the Ten Commandments, God has proclaimed that we are to have no other gods before him. From that time God has warned his people to *"seek first his kingdom, and his righteousness, and all these things will be yours as well."*

Yet the age old problem continues to be that we want to do it ourselves. We want to put ourselves before God and his Word; want to continue to think that our schedule and busy life are more important than worship, Bible reading and prayer; want to continue to think that we don't need Christian friends; a Christian small group; a Christian friend/mentor/accountability partner.

His name was Bill (not his real name). He was a very successful dentist in a previous church where I was pastor; he and his family were active members. His wife served as president of the church women's group; Bill sang pretty faithfully in the church choir.

As time went on, however, Bill began to have a change in his personality. He began to change his hair style and wear clothes that people much younger would wear.; began to exercise more and was really concerned about his appearance. Some thought it was simply a mid-life crisis.

Bill's behavior started changing as he attempted to act real cool and hip. His worship attendance and involvement in the choir started falling off, even though his family was still there. Also when I went to see him as a dentist he seemed more and more nervous around me.

One day the rumor started going around that Bill was having an affair. It of course is difficult to keep that hidden in a smaller town. As I heard this rumor more and more I began to realize that it was probably true; it would certainly fit with the other behavior I had seen.

I distinctly remember the day I was driving on a city street and saw Bill jogging. I stopped my car, rolled down the window and asked him to get in. When I asked him what he was doing in his life Bill broke down and began to cry; he openly wept and told me how sorry he was for his terrible sin of adultery.

I asked him in the car that day if I could pray to Jesus with him in confession and ask for forgiveness. I asked him if he wanted to surrender his life to the Lordship of Jesus; if he wanted

to dedicate his life anew to God. When he said, “yes,” I prayed with him for a complete conversion and change in his life.

After his conversion/transformation prayer Bill tried to return to his marriage yet the damage was beyond repair; he ended up getting a divorce. Also, as news spread and people took sides in a smaller town his dental practice was hurt. He really hit rock bottom in his life.

Yet as time went on Bill began dating another woman who is a very devout Christian. They were eventually married and they moved to a new community many miles away where he set up a new dental practice. You might say he started a whole new life.

However the most profound change in Bill is how he now sees his whole life as no longer serving himself but in serving others. He and his new wife set up their own mission organization where they go several times a year to the poorest of poor in Haiti; they provide free dental care for these very needy people.

Bill and his wife give a tithe of their income to their church along with more than a tithe of donations on top of that go to this mission work. Also through their mission organization they receive donations and support from interested people like us (we donated for a number of years), as well as dental supplies from other dentists and suppliers they work with.

It is amazing how Bill’s life, his joy and purpose in living changed when he stopped trying to do life himself. It changed when he stopped worshipping his own ego, his own affluence, his own fun and enjoyment. With God now at the center his life is filled with a joy and purpose beyond imagination.

My friends, there are countless numbers of Bill and Mary’s out there today including perhaps some in our church and in our town/community. People who are drawn to that American Idolatry of focusing completely on our own selves and egos; on our own success; on our out of control lifestyles and schedules--rather than on God.

It is true that the more we worry about ourselves; about whether the right people like us; about whether I am pretty or handsome enough; whether I have the right body and figure I am in danger of narcissism. The more I focus on me, myself and I the more I easily forget God and his priorities; the more I forget about the poor and needy in this world.

My friends, the Apostle Paul reminds us in Colossians to set our hearts on the things above not on earthly things. He warns us about the sin of idolatry that can easily shift our priorities and get us focused and worried about all the wrong things. Only God is worthy of a life of worship, service, devotion.

How about you today? Is God number one in you? Are his values, priorities and worship your top goal? May we all rededicate ourselves this day to living for God and his promises. Only his love and salvation last forever.