

# IDOLATRY

## Part 6

### The Problems of Idolatry

#### “The Idolater”

1st Co. 5:1-10

## INTRODUCTION

If you were to ask men what they consider to be the worst behaviors among mankind what do you think the list would look like?

Men have a disdain for liars. They also would have a problem with some sexual behaviors. But do you think they would include idolatry on their list?

God does.

No matter what we think of idolatry, God sees it as a problem. The idolator, one who is characterized by idolatry, is included in the class of characters that God does not care for. The listing of an idolater with other seedy characters occurs five times in the New Testament. The idolater is listed with such notables as fornicators, thieves, drunkards, whoremongers and murders.

Surprising?

The listing with such characters certainly gives an indication as to what God thinks about idolatry. Today, we will consider the inclusion of idolatry with those characters and why it's a problem.

### **I. AN IDOLATER IS ONE WHO IS CHARACTERIZED AS PLACING PERSONS, PLACES OR THINGS ABOVE THE TRUE AND LIVING GOD.**

A. The word “*idolater*” is used in Scripture to identify those who are characterized by persistently participating in idolatry.

1. The word “*idolater*” is used just 5 times in the entire bible. 1st Co. 5:10; 6:9; 10:7; Rev. 21:8; 22:15
2. The term is used to define those characterized by the worship of idols.
  - a) “*A worshipper of false gods; a covetous man as a worshipper of mammon (money).*” -- Joseph Thayer
  - b) “*One who worships idols; opposite (of) one who is God-fearing or devout.*” -- Friberg lexicon

B. The term idolater is not used in the Old Testament.

1. New Testament commentary notes that there were some who were idolaters. Cf. 1st Co. 10:7 (Israel); Acts 7:39-42
2. Israel expressed dependence upon “idols” over the true and living God. Acts 7:39-41

C. The Gentiles are seen in Scripture as idolaters.

1. Paul expressed to the Galatians that they served idol gods before salvation. Gal. 4:8
2. The gods of the Gentiles are gods “*made with hands*”. Acts 19:26 (men buy); 1st Co. 10:20 (men sacrifice to); 1st Co. 12:2 (they are led away from God by); 1st Thess. 1:9 (they turn away from at belief in the gospel)

## II. THE IDOLATER IS CONSISTENTLY LISTED WITH OTHERS TYPES OF PEOPLE WHO WILL NOT ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

A. Each use of the word “*idolater*” is paired with other types of people who are characterized by behaviors that won’t enter the Kingdom from God.

1. It is used with those characterized as fornicators five times in the New Testament. 1st. 1st Co. 5:10; 6:9; 10:7
  - a) The word “*fornicator*” is pornos which is used in Scripture ***of all sexual behavior outside of marriage.***
  - b) “Fornicator is translated “*whoremonger*” half of the time in the New Testament. Eph. 5:5; 1st Tim. 1:10; Heb. 13:4; Rev. 21:8; 22:15
2. It is used with those who are covetous twice. 1st Co. 5:10; 6:9
  - a) “*Covetous*” is pleonektes which is used of a ***one who has a continual desire for more.*** 1st Co. 6:10; Eph. 5:5
  - b) *Covetousness* is seen in Scripture as equal to idolatry. Col. 3:5
3. It is used with those who are extortioners twice. 1st Co. 5:10; 6:9-10
  - a) An “*extortioner*” is harpax -- “***those who are absolutely selfish, who covet and sometimes see more than their just share of things.***” -- Reinecker/Rogers Matt. 7:15 (of false teachers)
  - b) The noun is from the word used for rapture -- ***to snatch away; one who takes things from one by force.*** Cf. Matt. 7:15 (of a beast)
4. It is used with those who are murderers (phoneus) -- which ***describes one who kills for selfish purposes.*** Rev. 21:8; 22:15
5. It is used with those who are liars twice. Rev. 21:8; 22:15
  - a) “*Liar*” is from pseudes one is characterized by ***deliberately speaking that which is false in order to intentionally deceive.*** Cf. Acts 5:3 (lying for the purpose of recognition); 6:13 (translated false witness); Rev. 2:2 (of those who claimed to be apostles)
  - b) John adds two adjectival participles to give insight into the liars seen as being outside of the New Jerusalem. Rev. 22:15
    - (1) “Whosoever *loveth*” (the one being fond of)

- (2) The “*maketh*” (*poieo* -- making or doing)
6. It is used with those who are “*sorcerers*”. Rev. 21:8; 22:15
    - a) A sorcerer is from the word *pharmakos* -- ***one who engages in religious superstitious rituals through the use of drugs or other stimulants.*** Cf. Gal. 5:20 (it's a work of the flesh); Rev. 18:23 (it's a central component of the World System)
    - b) Sorcerers work in opposition to God's righteousness. Acts 13:6, 8
  
  7. It is used once with several terms.
    - a) Adulterers -- *moichos* -- married ones who engage in a relationship outside of marriage. 1st Co. 6:9
    - b) Effeminate -- *malakos* -- ***“a male who submits his body to unnatural lewdness.”*** -- Joseph Thayer 1st Co. 6:9
    - c) “Abusers of themselves with mankind” -- *arsenokoites* -- ***“one who lives with a male”*** -- Thayer 1st Co. 6:9
    - d) Thieves -- *kleptes* -- ***one who steals by stealth.*** -- K.D.J. 1st Co. 6:9
    - e) Revilers -- *loidoros* -- ***one who speaks disparagingly against another, often as a result of what one believes.*** -- K.D. J. 1st Co. 6:9; 1st Pet. 3:9; 1st Tim. 5:14
    - f) Murmurers -- *gogguzo* -- ***to grumble over one's circumstances.*** 1st Co. 10:10
    - g) Drunkards -- *methusos* -- ***to drink to the point of the loss mental alertness.*** of 1st Co. 6:10
    - h) Fearful -- *deilos* -- ***those who are cowards.*** Rev. 21:8 cf. Matt. 8:26 (of the disciples in the storm); 2 Tim. 1:8 (of Timothy)
    - i) Unbelieving -- *apistos* -- ***used of the unsaved.*** Rev. 21:8 cf. 1st Co. 14:23
    - j) Abominable -- ***detestable behavior;*** Rev. 21:8; cf. Tit. 1:16
    - k) “Dogs” -- ***when used of humans, it defines a person living below the standards of human dignity; one who has sunk so low as to manifest all qualities of the sin nature.*** -- K.D.J. Rev. 22:15; Ps. 22:16 (of those who killed the Lord); Matt. 7:6 (of the unbeliever)

### III. GOD'S COMMENTARY UPON THE GROUPS LISTED WITH THE IDOLATER GIVES INSIGHT INTO THE PROBLEM OF IDOLATER.

- A. Believers in Corinth are told not to associate with other believers characterized as such. 1st Co. 5:10
  
- B. Paul assured the Corinthians that those characterized as idolaters were among those who would not inherit the Kingdom of God. 1st Co. 6:9

- C. Paul warned the Corinthians to not follow the examples of those among Israel who were idolaters. 1st Co. 10:7
- D. John declared that those characterized as idolaters would be among those who will experience the second death. Rev. 21:8
- E. John expressed that those characterized as idolaters will not enter into the gates of the New Jerusalem. Rev. 22:15

## CONCLUSION