



LIFENEWS

Dementia *and* Idol Time

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It is happening way too often! I used to fairly easily remember people's names. Now, there are days I fumble to remember the names of my own family, let alone the hundreds of people who attend Parkside! I understand that memory loss often accompanies the aging process. I witnessed it with my mother as she entered her 80s and until her passing into glory at age 96. I commiserate with others who are experiencing this with their aging parents, as well as those of us in our adventurous senior years. When the loss of cognitive thinking and remembering gets advanced, the medical term is "Dementia." While many can learn to adjust and work through this loss to some degree, true sadness occurs when the person you love (parent, spouse, etc.) forgets who you are, which is both sad and painful.

An even greater issue in our lives is when we as Christians practice spiritual dementia ... "forgetting who God is!" As believers, we know that there is no greater privilege than knowing God. The more we know Him, the more we love and trust Him. The more we love and trust Him, the more He transforms our lives. The greatest deterrent and distraction to our devotion to God is idolatry. We see that throughout the Old Testament, God's chosen people continually turn from His blessings to worship worthless idols. Idolatry continued to be an issue in the New Testament (Galatians 5:20, I Peter 4:3). The Apostle John pleaded, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (I John 5:21). We today can be easily distracted from remembering the greatness of God, forgetting who He is, because of idols in our lives. It is the "idol time" in our lives that causes spiritual dementia!

Ready for the prescription?

Step One: Identify the idols in your life. What things have become, or are becoming, more important to you than God? Where do you make sacrifices for things that distract you from God and His priorities? For example, television over time with God? Things in place of people? Whatever we treasure more than God tells us about our heart focus. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:21)

Step Two: Repent of idolatry and put God back where He belongs. As we increase our knowledge of God, our love for Him increases and helps expel idols from our hearts. We replace our love for things and other distractions with an increasing love for God. The gospel fills our hearts with love for God as it reminds us of God's incredible love for us. As we become increasingly aware of "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 1:3), our love for God is renewed and rightly replaces the unworthy idols in our hearts and lives.

Getting older is not for sissies, but I love how the Apostle Paul explains the aging process for believers: "So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self (*body and mind*) is wasting away, our inner self (*spirit and relationship with God*) is being renewed day by day." (2 Corinthians 4:16)

In the midst of physical health issues and forgetfulness, let us not forget who God is! May we deal with the "idol time" in our lives, avoid "spiritual dementia," and cram for our finals as we prepare to meet Jesus!

Rub a dub!