

# gods at war (part 1)

jan-george blignaut

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## 1: what's the issue?

a: idolatry

<sup>2</sup> "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

<sup>3</sup> "You shall have no other gods before me.

Exodus 20:2-3

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## 1: what's the issue?

a: idolatry

<sup>11</sup> "Has a nation ever changed its gods?  
(Yet they are not gods at all.)  
But my people have exchanged their glorious God for worthless idols."

Jeremiah 2

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## 1: what's the issue?

b: idol makeover

<sup>4</sup> "You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. <sup>5</sup> You shall not bow down to them or worship them;".

Exodus 20:4-5a

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**1: what's the issue?****b: idol makeover**

To identify some gods in your life, look at what you **pursue** and what you **create**.

The problem comes in when something takes the place of God – the moment it becomes an end in itself rather than a means to serve, glorify and worship God then it becomes an idol.

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**1: what's the issue?****c: what lies beneath**

symptoms vs cause

cough vs cancer

fruit vs roots

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**1: what's the issue?****c: what lies beneath**

Idolatry isn't just one of many sins; rather it's the one great sin that all others come from. So if you start scratching at whatever struggle you're dealing with, eventually you'll find that underneath it is a false god. Until that god is dethroned, and the Lord God takes his rightful place, you will not have victory.

Idolatry isn't an issue; it is the issue.

kyle idleman – gods at war

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**2: battleground****a: the source**

Above all else, guard your heart,  
for everything you do flows from it.

Proverbs 4:23

As water reflects the face,  
so one's life reflects the heart.

Proverbs 27:19

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**2: battleground****b: walking upstream**

*"I love the Lord. I don't have any issues with idolatry. My problem is that I just tend to worry too much. I become very anxious."*

*"That's my problem, plain and simple," you say. "I'm a workaholic. How can I stop being one?"*

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**2: battleground****b: walking upstream – idol ID**

- What disappoints you?
- What do you complain about the most?
- Where do you make financial sacrifices?
- What worries you?

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**2: battleground****b: walking upstream – idol ID**

- Where is your sanctuary? (safe place)
- What infuriates you?
- What are your dreams?
- What do you sacrifice time for?

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**3: a jealous God**

<sup>4</sup> “You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything...

<sup>5</sup> You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God

Exodus 20:4-5a

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**3: a jealous God**

<sup>14</sup> Do not worship any other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.

Exodus 34:14

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### 3: a jealous God

Revelation 2:2-5 (NKJV)

<sup>2</sup> I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil... <sup>3</sup> and have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. <sup>4</sup> Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

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### 3: a jealous God

Revelation 2:2-5 (NKJV)

<sup>5</sup> Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place – unless your repent.

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### 4: the temple of pleasure

"There have always been games, stories, jokes, and songs, but today pleasure is something close to the whole theme of daily living. We even expect our daily work to be pleasurable, much more than our ancestors did. In a society based on agriculture, nobody said, "Know what? Plowing and tending cattle aren't enough fun for me."

But these days if it isn't fun, if it isn't pleasurable, we don't want to do it."

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## 4: the temple of pleasure

"When we experience pleasure, there's a part of us that thinks, Yes! This is what I was made for. Even if you haven't experienced much pleasure in your life, you've experienced enough to know that you want more. Thus begins the quest for the elusive narcotic of pleasure.

And so the gods of pleasure whisper, "Wouldn't you like to scratch that itch? Wouldn't you like to satisfy that appetite? Wouldn't you like to experience that feeling? Wouldn't you like to get that high? I have what you are looking for right here. And so we walk into the temple of pleasure"

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## 4: the temple of pleasure

"Elijah went before the people and said, 'How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.' But the people said nothing."

1 Kings 18:21

*"When forced to choose between the Lord God and the god of pleasure, we say nothing. Why? Because we want both."*

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## 4: the temple of pleasure

### a: the god of food

Over the Hedge

"We eat to live," RJ says, "These guys live to eat. ..."

RJ says, "Humans bring the food, take the food, ship the food, and drive the food." He points to passing trucks with pictures of food on them. It seems that everything people do involves food. "That is the altar where they worship food," says RJ as the family prays around the dinner table. He points to the treadmill: "That gets rid of the guilt so they can eat more food. Food! Food! Food!"

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## 4: the temple of pleasure

### a: the god of food

- Eating is good and to be enjoyed. God created it that way
- The problem: when we start looking to food to do for us what the Lord God alone should do.
- “Comfort food”
- John 6:35 I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

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## 4: the temple of pleasure

### a: the god of food

- What to do:
  - > repent and return to your first love
  - > Would you be willing to fast?
- 1 Cor 10:31 “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”

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## 4: the temple of pleasure

### b: the god of entertainment

- Sport
- Gaming
- Facebook, Instagram, Twitter  
*“One of the great uses of Twitter and Facebook will be to prove at the Last Day that prayerlessness was not from lack of time.”*  
 John Piper (via Twitter)
- TV / movies / series

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## 4: the temple of pleasure

### b: the god of entertainment

What's the problem with entertainment then?

Ecclesiastes 2:1, 10-11

"I thought in my heart, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good." But that also proved to be meaningless...<sup>10</sup> I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my work, and this was the reward for all my labor.<sup>11</sup> Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.

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## 4: the temple of pleasure

### b: the god of entertainment

"Our word *boredom* didn't appear in English until the Industrial Age. Yep, that's about the time modern entertainment began to evolve.

And yet the word *amusement* actually comes from the world of worship. *Amusement* has its root in the word *muse*. The Muses were female Greek gods who were said to inspire great writing, science, and artistic achievement. They were gods of reflection. When we add the 'a' as prefix, it brings in the idea of "lacking." So *amusement* is the lack of inspiration, the lack of reflection.

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## 4: the temple of pleasure

### b: the god of entertainment

*We seek amusements because we don't want to think. Haven't you ever wandered into the living room after a hard day and just wanted to vegetate, to watch something mindless? That's fine, up to a point. But don't miss this truth: instead of inspiring our bored and apathetic existence, the god of entertainment makes us even more that way...*

*...Instead of being entertained, we increasingly become the opposite – bored.*

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## 4: the temple of pleasure

### b: the god of entertainment

That's the whole story. Here now is my final conclusion:  
Fear God and obey his commands, for this is everyone's duty.

Ecclesiastes 12:13

We were made for God, and until he is our greatest pleasure, all the other pleasures of this life will lead to emptiness.

Augustine 15 centuries ago: "Our hearts are restless until they find rest in thee."

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## 4: the temple of pleasure

### b: the god of entertainment

Idol ID:

- What are your favorite forms of entertainment?
- What forms of entertainment have most affected your worldview?
- Where and when have you exhibited the most passion and excitement?
- What kinds of entertainment media have you found to be the most addictive?

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## 4: the temple of pleasure

### b: the god of entertainment

- What to do:
  - > Switch off the screen
  - > Repent and return to your first love
  - > Consider fasting of any or all of your means of entertainment for a given time?

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