

# 'I've got the power'

gods at war 3

*defeating the idols that battle for our hearts.*

jan-george blignaut

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## previous episodes:

- 1. what's the issue
  - a. idolatry

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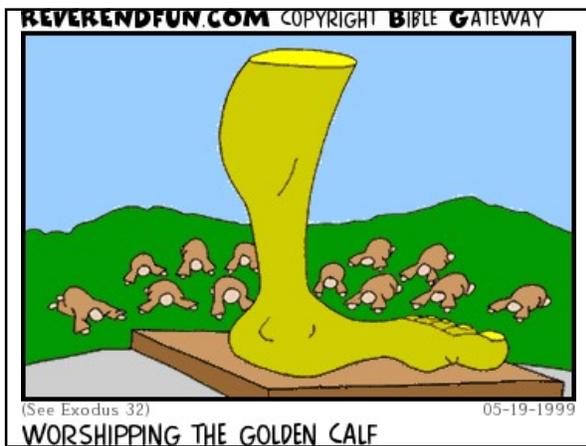
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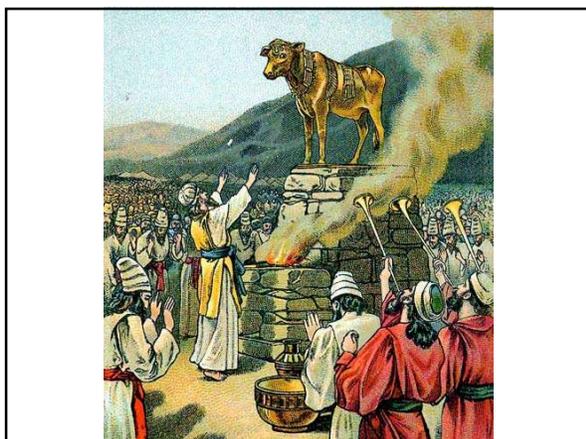
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**previous episodes:**

1. what's the issue
  - a. idolatry
  - b. idol makeover
  - c. what lies beneath
2. battleground
  - a. the source
  - b. walking upstream
3. a jealous God

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**previous episodes:**

**3: a jealous God**

<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.

<sup>4</sup>“You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything 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; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God

Exodus 20:2-5

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**previous episodes:**

**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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**previous episodes:**

**3: a jealous God**

<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. <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.

Revelation 2:2-5

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*“Whatever you idolize, you will eventually destroy it and it will destroy you”*

Tim Keller

*“Idols are defeated not by being removed but by being replaced.”*

Kyle Idleman

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**previous episodes:**

- 4. temple of pleasure
  - a. the god of food
  - b. the god of entertainment
  - c. the god of sex
- 5. temple of love
  - a. the god of romance
  - b. the god of family

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**6: the temple of power**

*The gods of power work from one shared premise: we can take care of ourselves. We can handle all our needs. The Lord is nice, but he really isn't necessary. We don't need to pray for our daily bread because we've got a pantry full of it. The gods of power appeal to our self-sufficiency.*

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**6: the temple of power**  
**a: the god of success**

*The god of success has no problem finding followers. He is attractive, compelling, charismatic. He walks into your everyday, rat-race world and shows you what life could be at the top of the heap. And what he's selling is hard to ignore. He offers us the applause and envy that makes life sweet.*

*This god gives us a line as old as the garden of Eden: "You can run the whole thing. It's your life, so why shouldn't you be at the wheel? Why not put the pedal down and see how fast you can get to the finish line?"*

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**6: the temple of power**  
**a: the god of success**

*The god of success are all about personal achievement, rewards we chase and get for ourselves. Is life going to be good? Are we going to be satisfied? The gods of success give us very convenient ways to keep score: the title after our name, the sum on our paycheck, the square footage of the new house. We put our hope and find our identity in what the god of success offers. And so we climb and claw our way to the top.*

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**6: the temple of power**  
**a: the god of success**

<sup>17</sup> As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Mark 10:17

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**6: the temple of power**  
**a: the god of success**

*Worshipping the gods of success isn't just about secular accomplishments and commendations. It's not just getting caught up with job titles and social status. In fact one of the most common gods of success is the worship of religious rules. We put our trust in our mastery of rule-keeping.*  
*The god of success invites you to save yourself instead of depending upon Jesus to do it.*

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## 6: the temple of power a: the god of success

<sup>17</sup> As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

<sup>18</sup> "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. <sup>19</sup> You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.'"

Mark 10:17-23

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## 6: the temple of power a: the god of success

<sup>20</sup> "Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy."

<sup>21</sup> Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

<sup>22</sup> At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

<sup>23</sup> Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!"

Mark 10:17-23

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## 6: the temple of power a: the god of success

*So in God's economy, success only comes when we declare spiritual bankruptcy.*

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### a: the god of success keeping score

*Success wants us to bow down to a position in society – a pecking order, if you will. Money is certainly a component of that, because that's what we most often use to keep score. For most of us, it's a key ingredient to success, but it's not just about the money. It's about prestige and clout. It's about respect and recognition. It's about having the right seat at the table, the right space in the parking lot, the right title on the business card, and the right clothes in the closet. It's about getting the watch, the trophy, the promotion, or the award.*

*Success is finding out how the score is kept, and then scoring.*

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### a: the god of success changing scorecards

"Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 5:3

*Jesus redefines a successful life as one that humbly says to God, "I can't do this on my own. I need your help."*

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### a: the god of success changing scorecards

*When our lives are defined by the world's definition of success, that's idolatry.*

What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?

Matthew 16:26a

<sup>21</sup> "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things...'

Matthew 25:21

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## 6: the temple of power

### b: the god of money

*Money has grown so dominant in our culture that it's difficult for us to stand far enough back to get a perspective. No matter what we may say, many of us live as if the pursuit of wealth is the real goal in life. Sometimes we hear rich people say things like "money doesn't make you happy," but most of us think they all flew first class to some exotic destination where they got together and agreed to say that to make the rest of us feel better.*

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## 6: the temple of power

### b: the god of money

*We pay lip service to the idea that money isn't that important, but how we spend our time and what we pursue seem to reveal our true belief. Money by the ton is the ultimate dream for so many people. When they talk about an ultimate fantasy it's winning the lottery or inheriting a fortune from some rich relative.*

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## b: the god of money

### eternal focus

<sup>13</sup> Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

Luke 12:13-21

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## b: the god of money

eternal focus

<sup>13</sup> Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

<sup>14</sup> Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or arbiter between you?"

<sup>15</sup> Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

<sup>16</sup> And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. <sup>17</sup> He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'

Luke 12:13-21

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## b: the god of money

eternal focus

<sup>18</sup> Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. <sup>19</sup> And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry!"

<sup>20</sup> "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'

<sup>21</sup> "This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."

Luke 12:13-21

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## b: the god of money

'divine' attributes of money

- source of security

"Give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the LORD?'"

Proverbs 30:8-9

- source of satisfaction

"If you love money, you never be satisfied; if you long to be rich, you will never get at you want"

Ecclesiastes 5:10 (GN)

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**b: the god of money**  
**'divine' attributes of money**

- source of significance

*"we often judge our worth by our net worth."*

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**b: the god of money**  
**contentment**

<sup>6</sup> But godliness with contentment is great gain. <sup>7</sup> For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. <sup>8</sup> But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. <sup>9</sup> People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. <sup>10</sup> For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19

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**b: the god of money**  
**contentment**

<sup>17</sup> Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. <sup>18</sup> Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. <sup>19</sup> In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19

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**b: the god of money**

**evaluate**

How often do you compare what you have and how much you make to others?

How much anxiety do finances add to your life?

To what extent are your dreams and goals driven by money?

What is your attitude toward giving?

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**6: the temple of power**

**c: the god of achievement**

<sup>38</sup> As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. <sup>39</sup> She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. <sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

Luke 10:38-42

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**6: the temple of power**

**c: the god of achievement**

<sup>41</sup> "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, <sup>42</sup> but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Luke 10:38-42

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**c: the god of achievement  
merit badges and award ceremonies**

- Martha was distracted
- Mary had chosen

*The god of achievement distracts us from following Jesus by distracting us with all the things we need to get done. How often do we live with good intentions of spending time with Jesus and turning our heart toward him only to find at the end of the day that's the one thing on our checklist that we never got around to?*

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**c: the god of achievement  
symptoms**

1. A constant frustration with people in your life who, from your perspective, aren't getting it done.
2. A constant sense of discontentment with yourself for not getting done what you hoped you would.

*When we worship the god of achievement, getting things done and getting things done right becomes more important than almost anything or anyone else.*

*Idolizing & Idle-lizing*

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**c: the god of achievement  
choose that which is better first**

This is the ADD / ADHD generation\*

*We're always on the move, always trying to get something done. Our phones are constantly dinging to let us know there is a text we need to return or an appointment we're going to be late for.*

*\*squirrel*

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**c: the god of achievement**  
**choose that which is better first**

*How many times have we been so distracted that we've missed a divine moment? How many things does God long to say to us, but he keeps getting our voicemail because we're too busy to pick up?*

*Working hard and achieving goals are an important part of a God-glorifying life. But they are **not** life. They are not even a measuring stick for the worth of life.*

*Remember the golden calf?*

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**c: the god of achievement**  
**choose that which is better first**

*God doesn't want our rèsùmès; he wants us.*

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

2 Corinthians 4:18

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**conclusion**

- What to do:
  - > Repent
  - > Sacrifice / lay down that which withholds you from Him
  - > Return to your first love

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