

Fr. Perozich comments —

Joseph Mattera pricked my conscience regarding the sin of idolatry.

How much time do I spend in prayer beyond Holy Mass?

How much time do I spend regarding sports or other programs?

How much time do I dedicate to bible study?

How much time do I spend on politics and social issues?

How much time do I spend in charity and evangelization?

How much time do I spend scrutinizing my moral choices?

How much time do I spend with God vs my own interests?

When I was a new priest in San Diego, we had decent speakers at convocation, at bible studies for clergy, and days of recollection.

That deteriorated each year into business and administrivia, so much so, that my staffs would bet with each other how long it would be before I returned to the parish, leaving the meetings early.

The synods in Rome and locally did not focus on Jesus, evangelization, the bible, worthy sacramental celebrations. Rather they were on tangential mental gyrations on how we are to walk together constantly talking and listening to each other rather than to God who will direct our lives and the church — if we allow Him to do so.

Banning the Mass in Latin and kicking home schooling families off their own parish's property show an idol of control of God's people, rather than leading them to Christ. We still want your money, but you cannot use church property to catechize, rather you have to fit into our one size fits all program that is top down from the diocesan offices by people who may have their own idols in what they believe.

Women deacons, sexual license, odd blessings, women's rights in the church, and on have become a form of idolatry which do not attract me or others to salvation in Jesus Christ.

I thank Joseph Mattera for his wakeup call to Christians to refocus on Jesus and His salvation instead making idols of worldly events, people, movements, and pleasures.

Ten Reasons Why Idolatry Is the Worst Sin



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By **JOSEPH MATTERA** Published on November 9, 2024

When we study the lives of the kings of Israel, one name stands out as a man blessed by God: King David. Despite his grievous sins, including adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband, Uriah the Hittite (2 Samuel 11), David is repeatedly called “a man after God’s own heart” (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22). His heart for God allowed him to find grace, even in the face of moral failure.

In contrast, many kings who followed David — both in Israel and Judah — were judged more severely by God, even when they did not commit similar acts of murder or adultery. Why? The primary reason is that they led the people into idolatry. This grievous sin of leading the nation away from the worship of Yahweh to serve other gods warranted divine judgment. The severity with which idolatry is treated throughout Scripture reveals its deep offense to God.

In today's world, idolatry is not as obvious as bowing to statues of Baal or Asherah poles. Yet it is still rampant in the church. **The modern definition of idolatry encompasses any attitude or behavior where a person places their affection, devotion, or adoration toward someone or something above their devotion to Yahweh.** As Exodus 20:3 commands, "You shall have no other gods before me." Idolatry is not merely a relic of ancient history; it is a present-day issue that continues to lead believers astray.

Many Christians fail to recognize that calling oneself a Christian or attending weekly services does not preclude them from committing idolatry. God is a jealous God, and He has not changed (Malachi 3:6). **Merely professing faith is not sufficient to safeguard us from the sin of idolatry.** In fact, it is my observation that the lack of biblical discipleship in today's church has resulted in a vast number of Christians in name only—those who are, in reality, idolaters.

In this article, I will outline 10 reasons why idolatry is the worst sin, supported by markers that indicate whether a person is committing idolatry against Yahweh.

[Their Hearts Are More Passionate About Something or Someone Than God](#)

Jesus taught us to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30). **When a person is more**

passionate about anything or anyone other than God, they have violated the greatest commandment.

They Do Not Invest Any Time or Money in Promoting Gospel-Centered Causes

Jesus's final command was to "make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). **If someone claims to love God but neglects giving generously to support Gospel work, they may have misplaced priorities.**

They Are Too Busy to Seek the Lord Consistently

One of the most evident markers of idolatry is the excuse of busyness. **When life becomes too busy for prayer, abiding in Christ, worship, or study of the Word, something else has taken priority over God.** The psalmist declared, "I have set the Lord always before me" (Psalm 16:8). Consistently seeking God reflects a life centered on Him. Conversely, neglecting time with God signals that other pursuits have taken precedence — an unmistakable sign of idolatry.

They Are Consumed with Political Discourse While Neglecting the Word of God

Politics can quickly become an idol when it consumes more attention than the Word of God. While believers should engage with society, political activism should not replace devotion to Scripture. A politically obsessed believer may have misplaced their hope in human institutions rather than God's Kingdom.

They Allow Nonessential Doctrines to Separate Them from Other Christians

The Body of Christ is called to unity in essentials, (such as illustrated in the Nicene Creed) but many believers allow nonessential doctrines — such as eschatology, cessationism, Calvinism, or Arminianism — to divide them from other

Christians. This division often arises because a theological position has become an idol and thus becomes more important than the unity of the faith (Ephesians 4:3). When theological preferences take priority over love and unity, they can become idolatrous.

They Justify Their Own Immoral Choices

Another symptom of idolatry is moral compromise. When a person lives in habitual sin and justifies their actions, they have placed their desires above the will of God. This form of idolatry stems from a heart that refuses to submit fully to God's authority. As James 4:4 says, "Friendship with the world is enmity with God." Choosing self-gratification over obedience reveals that one's god is not Yahweh but self.

They Center Their Lives on Sports and Hobbies

While sports and hobbies are not inherently sinful, they can become idols when they dominate one's time, focus, and affection. **When a person organizes their life around entertainment and pleasure rather than service to God, they have fallen into idolatry.** Paul cautions us not to be "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God" (2 Timothy 3:4). Our ultimate satisfaction should come from God, not fleeting amusements.

They Value Their Own Autonomy and Reject Accountability

An idolatrous heart resists accountability. When a person refuses to be part of a church community or avoids relationships that foster accountability, **they elevate their own autonomy above the kingdom of God. Rejecting accountability is often a form of pride and idolatry.**

(Of course, some may need therapy due to past spiritual or emotional abuse which makes it difficult to fully trust others with their heart).

They Love Pleasure More Than God

The love of pleasure is a common idol in our hedonistic culture. Whether it is entertainment, comfort, or sensual pleasure, anything that becomes more desirable than God is an idol. Scripture warns against those who “are lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God” (2 Timothy 3:4). A heart that chases pleasure over holiness is far from God.

They Put Their Own Interests Before God’s

Perhaps the most telling marker of idolatry is when a person places their self-interest above God’s will. Jesus rebuked Peter with the words, “You are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man” (Mark 8:33). **Self-interest is the foundation of idolatry because it prioritizes personal desires over divine purposes.** Those who live for themselves rather than for God’s glory have made an idol of self.

In conclusion, Idolatry is the worst sin because it breaks the first and greatest commandment. When we place anything or anyone above God, we rob Him of the glory and devotion He alone deserves.

Dr. Joseph Mattera is an internationally known author, consultant, and theologian whose mission is to influence leaders who influence culture. He is the founding pastor of Resurrection Church, and leads several organizations, including The U.S. Coalition of Apostolic Leaders and Christ Covenant Coalition. He also is the author of 13 bestselling books, including his latest The Global Apostolic Movement and the Progress of the Gospel, and is renowned for applying Scripture to contemporary culture.