



Here are your Idols

Appearances

Series Summary: Idolatry is a sin that the nation of Israel dealt with time and time again as they worshiped false gods such as Baal. It is easy for us today to assume that because we do not worship false gods in temples that idolatry is a thing of the past. Nothing could be further from the truth. Instead, idolatry is alive today because just like Israel we worship things other than God. The question is what are they?

Big Idea/Question: Focusing on outer appearances can distance us from God because we value what God did not. Whether it's our own appearance or others, we judge what God has created.

GET THEM TALKING

Could our appearances be an idol in our lives? If yes, how so?

Answer: The reality is that we can turn almost anything into an idol if we put that thing or person before God. We can become so consumed with our appearance that our thoughts are consumed by them. This takes the place of God in our worship and keeps our thoughts away from Him.

How does our culture make it easier to make appearances an idol?

Does social media make it easier to focus on our appearances? Why?

Leader Note: While it is true that culture and social media make it easier for us to obsess over our looks we can not allow ourselves to simply be a victim. We must at all times be following Paul's words in Romans 12:2 "Do not conform to the pattern of this

world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind..."

Transition - One of the reasons why it is so problematic to be obsessed over appearances is that God

GROUP DISCUSSION

(Heart > Appearance)

Background / Context: God had sent the prophet Samuel to find the new king of Israel after Saul, the current king, had disobeyed God. Samuel was told by God to go to the household of Jesse. When Samuel saw Jesse's many sons he thought he had found the man fit to be a king. But God rejected Jesse's older sons and told Samuel that outward appearances do not matter to the Lord who looks at the heart.

1 Samuel 16:7-13 "But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." **8** Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, "The Lord has not chosen this one either." **9** Jesse then had Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, "Nor has the Lord chosen this one." **10** Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, "The Lord has not chosen these." **11** So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse answered. "He is tending the sheep." Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives." **12** So he sent for him and had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the Lord said, "Rise and anoint him; this is the one." **13** So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David. Samuel then went to Ramah.

Vs 7 - Do you ever find yourself doing what Samuel did, Judging the outer appearance, before God corrected him?

Vs 12 - Why did God choose David rather than the other sons of Jesse?

Leader note (vs 12): Although David was healthy looking and had a good appearance, he was still overlooked because he was the youngest and didn't look the part of a king. However, he had a heart that loved the Lord which is why God chose him as the new king of Israel instead of his brother who looked the part.

Why is it so important as Christians to not focus on appearances, those of others and our own?

Leaders note: Emphasize when we judge others we are judging God's beautiful creation. The same goes for self-judgment. We were all made in God's image so who are we really criticizing when we judge others and ourselves? This will be elaborated in the video teaching.

VIDEO TEACHING

Two reasons why we should not obsess over our appearances so much that we make them into an idol

Reason #1 God created us with care

Psalms 139:13-16 For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.

14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.

15 My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.

16 Your eyes saw my unformed body;
all the days ordained for me were written in your book
before one of them came to be.

God is our maker. **He designed us exactly how he wanted us to be.**

Reason #2 if our identity is in our appearances it is not in Christ

Transition - The question is how do we know what we are placing our identity in?

- What does it look like to place your identity in your looks?
- What does it look like to place your identity in Christ?

GROUP DISCUSSION

(Identity in Christ)

Leader Note (why identity is the solution): When we focus so much on one thing, especially our image, it becomes our identity. Whatever your identity is, your actions will follow. If our identity is wrapped up in our weight or our good looks that identity will dictate our thoughts and our actions. Likewise, If our identity is in Christ and who he says we are our thoughts and actions will be driven by that identity.

How do you know if appearances have become an idol in your life?

Answer: If we are obsessed it is an idol. We can be aware and even care about how we look. But when we begin to obsess about our looks, when it consumes our thoughts, it has then become an idol. It has become our master because the constant worry about how we look consumes and controls us.

How often do you find yourself thinking about your appearance? Do these thoughts ever consume your mind?

If our looks and appearances are not what we should get our identity from, what is the source of our identity?

How does the passage we are about to read give us an identity that is better than our appearance?

Galatians 3:26-27 "So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, **27** for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ."

Leader Note (answer): Here are a couple of ways that the identity Christ gives us is better than the identity based on our appearances (positive or negative).

- Who Christ says we are will never change. As believers we will always be His children. We will always be forgiven. Our looks and how we feel about our looks will always be changing.
- An identity rooted in Christ leads us close to Christ. An identity rooted in our appearances leads us to arrogance, self obsession or even self hatred (if we do not like the way we look).

What are some habits and actions that you need to change so that you do not obsess over your appearance?

What are some habits and actions that you need to change so that you do not over value the appearance of others?

