

#### 4. Addiction as Idolatry (What or Who Occupies the Throne?)

It might sound strange to you if I ask you who you worship. A majority of people in our great country consider themselves Christians and yet, looking at their lives we see little indication of their faith in Christ or belief in the Bible. Some attend church on Christmas and Easter and others more frequently, but few are living as the Bible calls us to live. The reason for this, more often or not, is that there are just other things that are simply more pressing or important. After all, we need to work for a living and we need to care for our children. And then there is work to do around the house and friends to entertain. On Sunday there are sports events for the kids and professional sports for dad. The list is endless and leaves very little for the pursuit of religion or God.

In reality we were created with a need for a relationship with God. Some of us have even tried that, when in a moment of desperation we cried out or actually “prayed the prayer.” But nothing really happened and sooner or later we found ourselves back in the same rut. So having “tried God,” we are convinced that we are beyond help. It is in this frame of mind that the addict continues on with his sinful behavior assuming that this is the closest he will ever get to being happy. Like the woman at the well in Samaria who was on her sixth relationship with a man because the first five didn’t satisfy her, we repeatedly return to the same behavior expecting different results. Jesus informed her in so many words that her real need was spiritual and offered her living water. With this living water, He said she would never thirst again.

For over one hundred years, we at America’s Keswick’s Colony of Mercy, have taught successfully that the answer to addiction is a life- sustaining relationship with Jesus Christ. The way to begin to have this is to put God absolutely first, before all other people and things, good and bad. We must as Jesus Himself said “**LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.**” Mark 12:30

Only by doing this will we, like the woman at the well, leave our water pot and personally know the Messiah, Jesus Christ, as our true source of satisfaction.

## 4. Addiction as Idolatry

Meditation passage for the week – John 4

**Idols** of the **Heart** can be:

1. **People**
  - A. **Intimate** Acquaintances (Luke 14:26)
  - B. **Children** (Genesis 22:11-12)
  - C. **Unresolved relationships** from the past (Matthew 6:14-15)
2. **Substances**
  - A. **Drugs/Alcohol** (Proverbs 20:1)
  - B. **Smoking** (1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Job 33:4)
  - C. **Food** (1 Corinthians 10:30-31)
3. **Behaviors;**
  - A. **Sexual activity** (1 Thessalonians 4:3-4)
  - B. **Compulsive Behaviors** (1 Peter 2:11,12)
  - C. **Possessions** (Mark 10:25)

Three Steps to **Overcome** Idolatry:

1. **Identification**
  1. What do you want **more** than anything else?
  2. Left to your own **devices** what will you do?
2. **Intention**
  1. What **keeps** you from **giving** it up?
  2. What will it **cost** you to walk away?
2. **Independence**
  1. How can the Lord **satisfy** your needs?
  2. How will this **affect** your loved ones?

Questions for Discussion

1. Can good relationships become idols in our lives? If so how?
2. How can food become an issue in our life in recovery?
3. Can sexual activity with our legal wife be a sin against God?
4. What needs can idols meet that should be met by God?
5. Where and how can we find ultimate satisfaction?