

Habakkuk 2

Day 1

Read Habakkuk 2:1-4

Habakkuk's resolve

1. In spite of his distress, what does each phrase in 2:1 indicate about Habakkuk's attitude and expectations?
 - *I will stand on my guard post And station myself on the rampart;*
 - *And I will keep watch to see what He will speak to me (See Psalm 130:6)*
 - *And how I may reply when I am reproved.*

FYI: "Even though Habakkuk was familiar with God's covenant promises to preserve a people for Himself, and even though he knew all Judah would not be snuffed out (vs. 12), the prophet was shocked by God's plan. How could God, whose eyes were 'too pure to approve evil' (v. 13), choose such a wicked, merciless, and idolatrous nation to punish His own people? Like Job of old, Habakkuk was stumped by God's apparent perversion of justice. So he waited, as a sentinel standing watch, for the Lord to answer and untangle this knotty dilemma (2:1)." - Charles Swindoll (75)

God's response

2. What commands was Habakkuk given in 2:2? (Compare Deuteronomy 27:8; Isaiah 30:8)
 - What reason was given for these commands?

FYI: Write the vision: "Writing on tablets was done to preserve a message...and the tablets were the official record. Such tablets bore public announcements to be exhibited in the marketplace. They were conspicuously displayed and easily read to all passing by (cp. Isaiah 8:1; 30:8). Writing on tablets also indicated the certainty of the vision even though its realization is far off, God will be faithful to make it happen." - The Bible Study for Women (1202)

"Some theologians believe it was probably engraved on large clay tablets which would be displayed in a public place such as the temple - or maybe even in the marketplace or city square. There it could be read by all. In this case, the reading of it placed a responsibility upon the readers: They were to run and proclaim it. Eventually, even you and I would read it!" - Kay Arthur (111-112)

3. Record the phrases that describe the vision that God was giving Habakkuk. 2:3a

FYI: "For the vision is yet for an appointed time: Habakkuk spoke to an age beyond his own. The Babylonian conquest would not be evident in his own day, but in the future." - David Guzik

It will not delay: "The fulfillment of the vision would not take any longer than God had planned." - The Nelson Study Bible (1521) [See Luke 18:7]

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4. What other command was Habakkuk given in 2:3b?

- How confident could Habakkuk be about the message? (See Joshua 21:45)

5. What did the writer of Hebrews say to Christians facing persecution, about God's purposes? Hebrews 10:35-37

- What did Peter say about God's purposes in delaying? 2 Peter 3:9

6. Underline what the following verses say about God's word, promises, and prophecies.

- Numbers 23:19 "God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill? NIV
- Psalm 119:89,90 Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven. Your faithfulness continues throughout all generations; NASU
- Isaiah 14:24-27 The LORD of hosts has sworn saying, "Surely, just as I have intended so it has happened, and just as I have planned so it will stand...For the LORD of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?" NASU
- Isaiah 45:22-23 "Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other. By myself I have sworn, my mouth has uttered in all integrity a word that will not be revoked: NIV
- Isaiah 55:11 so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. NIV
- Matthew 5:18 "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. NASU

7. How would a delayed fulfillment of the message make things even more difficult for Habakkuk? *e.g. What abuse might this expose Habakkuk to?* (Compare the hardships Ezekiel faced. Eze. 2:5-7)

Digging Deeper

How did the disciples respond to opposition? Acts 4:5-13; 5:40-42

Applying the Word: *When have you felt called to do something for the Lord that required a lot of waiting and patience? What did you find most challenging?*

Have you ever had to wait for somebody to face the consequences of their behavior before they were willing to listen? How did that feel? What are some constructive things to do for someone who is rebelling and doing self-destructive behavior?

Day 2**Read Habakkuk 2:4-8****Woes to the proud**

8. What two people/perspectives are contrasted in 2:4.

Digging Deeper

As you read through the woes in chapter 2, fill in the chart at the back of your notebook: *Habakkuk 2 - God's Answer*.

FYI: "Proud man: This statement probably was fulfilled by Nebuchadnezzar in particular (note Daniel 4:30), as well as by the Chaldeans in general."
- Henry Morris

"His soul is not upright in him: The Babylonians had no regard for God, His commandments, or His people.... A proud person relies on self, power, position, and accomplishment; a righteous person relies on the Lord."
- The Nelson Study Bible (1521,1522)

9. What do you learn about faith from the following verses?

- Hebrews 11:1-3,6
- Romans 10:17
- Ephesians 2:8-9

Faith Strong's #530 *'emuwnah*; literally firmness; figuratively security; morally fidelity:

"Faith is needed because the judgment on the Babylonians will take place in the unforeseeable future, and the delay in judgment will not make sense from a human perspective."
- The Study Bible for Women (1202)

"When the Word of God talks about faith, it means more than intellectual assent. The English transliteration of the Greek word for *faith* is *pistis*, and it means 'a firm persuasion, a conviction based on hearing.' The word for *believe* is *pisteuo*, and it means 'to be persuaded of, to place confidence in.' Biblical belief, then, signifies not mere credence of, but reliance upon all that God says."
- Kay Arthur (132)

10. How is the phrase "the righteous/just will live by his faith" applied in Romans 1:16-17?

Digging Deeper

For Paul's use of Abraham's example to teach that salvation was by faith even in Old Testament times, see: Romans 4:1-13; Galatians 3:1-7; 10-11

FYI: *the just/righteous shall live by his faith* "If you were to ask the average churchgoer which biblical writers were most important to Christianity, it's doubtful that Habakkuk's name would ever come up. Yes this obscure prophet's words were used to form the foundation of our faith..."

The proud put their faith in themselves and are judged. The righteous put their faith in God and are blessed. That's true for nations and individuals. In salvation, we come to God by faith, relinquishing all our human attempts to gain His favor and putting our trust in His Son instead. We grow in Christ and walk with Him the same way - by faith."
- Charles Swindoll (70,76)

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11. From 2:4,5, list the phrases that describe the “proud” man.

FYI: “Though protected by what was believed to be impregnable - walls 85 feet thick and 11 miles long, Babylon would fall to the Medes and Persians in 539 B.C. The Babylonian king would be too arrogant to recognize when his time of power was over.”
- The Study Bible for Women (1202)

Woe to the greedy

FYI: “A woe oracle is an oracle of judgment consisting of two parts: a declaration of the wrong and a notice of impending judgment.”
- The Nelson Study Bible (1522)

“In 2:5-20, the Lord replies to the prophet’s second question: Why use a wicked people as his agent? The answer takes the form of five woes that make it clear that the Babylonians will also be punished...God was using the Babylonians as a judgment on the wickedness of his people, but the Babylonians were pursuing their own ends. The motives with which the Babylonians were acting would be the ones for which God would call them to account.” - Africa Commentary Bible (1065)

12. How do the nations react to the “proud” one? 2:6a

- What was the first woe taken up against the Babylonians? 2:6b
How were they making themselves rich? (Circle the word “woe” in 2:6-19.)

Digging Deeper

What laws did God give the Israelites about lending money?
Deuteronomy 23:19-20

Deut. 24:10-15

Leviticus 25:35-38

FYI: “(Pusey) Truly wealth ill-gotten by fraud or oppression, is not his who wins it...but is a woe.”

“(Laetsch) The first **woe** refers to the rapacity of the Chaldean, his eagerness to enrich himself at the expense of others by conquest of their home countries, making vassals of the nations, extorting from them huge contributions of materials, money, and men...”

“(Jamieson)The Babylonians are compared to a ruthless *loan shark*, and their ill-gotten treasures to piles of contracts in the hands of a *usurer*.”
- preceptaustin.org

13. What judgment was going to come on them by the people? 2:7

- What reasons are given for these consequences? 2:8 (Mark the word “because”) (See the metaphors Jeremiah used to describe the Babylonians in Jeremiah 50:17; 51:34.)

FYI: “The Babylonians were perfect examples of the proud who set themselves against those who are declared just by faith - and Habakkuk could take comfort in the fact that God would deal with them. ‘...Habakkuk learned that God’s employment of the Chaldeans did not mean the permanent power of this evil people.’ (Morgan)” - David Guzik

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14. Underline what the following verses teach about greed.

- Ecclesiastes 5:10 Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. This too is meaningless. NIV
- 1 Tim 6:9-10 But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. NASU
- Colossians 3:5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. NIV

15. What did Jesus teach about greed? Luke 12:15-21

Applying the Word: Have you ever been the victim of someone's greed? How did that make you feel? Have you ever been the recipient of someone's generosity? How did that make you feel? Why do you think these emotions go so deep?

Day 3

Read Habakkuk 2:9-17

Woe to the extortionists

16. What was the second woe taken up against the Babylonians? 2:9a What were they seeking? 2:9b (Mark the phrases in 2:6,8, 9 that describe how the proud were making themselves wealthy.)

- What did God say about that? Jeremiah 49:16

17. At what price had the proud gained his wealth and position?

- 2:10a
- 2:10b
- 2:10c

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18. What does the imagery in 2:11 say about this kind of accumulation of wealth? (Compare Galatians 6:7)

FYI: "For the stone will cry out from the wall: Habakkuk pictures a beautiful house built by a greedy man, and the very stones of the house **cry out** from the wall against the man's greed." - David Guzik

"The whole structure of Israel's society called out for justice; every part reverberated with the need for righting wrongs." - The Nelson Study Bible (1522)

19. Underline the reasons we should be content with what we have.

- Hebrews 13:5-6 Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." 6 So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" NIV
- Philippians 4:12-13 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength. NIV
- 1 Timothy 6:6-8 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. NIV
- Matthew 6:25-30 "For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26 "Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? 27 "And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life? 28 "And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, 29 yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. 30 "But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith! NASU
- Matthew 16:24-27 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. 26 What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done. NIV

Woe to the violent

20. At what cost had the Babylonians established their great cities? 2:12

21. What did God say would happen with all they had achieved? 2:13 (Compare Jeremiah 51:29,37,55-58)

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22. What will God ultimately accomplish with mankind? 2:14 (Cf. Isaiah 2:11; 11:9) What does this perspective give to all earthly powers and achievements?

FYI: "2:14 *earth shall be filled*. Despite the Nebuchadnezzars of the world (and the Napoleons and Hitlers and other would-be world rulers), God will establish His own kingdom on earth at His appointed time." - Henry Morris

"God's...intent is that his 'glory' should fill the whole earth as it has filled his house...and that man should know it fully--a 'knowledge' that will be as the 'sea' in its length, breadth, and depth. This entails the removal of all that rejects such 'knowledge,' of which the Babylonian character and aspirations are the very epitome." - The Expositor's Bible Commentary

Woe to the shameful exploiters

23. How is the Babylonians' treatment of other people and nations described? 2:15 (Cf. 2:5)

- What does this vivid language tell you about how the character of the leaders of Babylon and how they subdued and shamed nations? (*Causing someone to drink so much that they can be taken advantage of is pandemic on our college campuses, etc. What does this passage indicate about God's view of this?*)

Digging Deeper

What warnings are given against drunkenness?

Proverbs 20:1

Proverbs 31:4-5

Isaiah 5:11-12, 22-23

Ephesians 5:18

FYI: "The Babylonians were known for their drinking. One historian said of them: 'The Babylonians give themselves wholly to wine, and the things which follow drunkenness.'(Feinberg)" - Kay Arthur (178)

24. List the words that describe what the Babylonians would receive in return. 2:16

FYI: "The cup of the LORD'S right hand represents the wrath of God (see Isaiah 51:17, 22; Revelation 14:10; 16:19)." - The Nelson Study Bible (1523)

"The proud, evil lifestyle of the wicked begins with greed, which in turn leads to a self-exaltation, which cuts off others. Then, because self is exalted above others, what else would you expect? Violence and blood-shed...Drunk on self and power, you then seduce your neighbors for your own sensual satisfaction...It's almost as if when a person (or a nation) gets caught up in a state of covetousness or greed, he is trapped in a downward spiral of evil. And the root of it all is the lust of unrestrained flesh-unleashed passion...and is like death, never satisfied' (Habakkuk 2:5)." - Kay Arthur (168)

25. List the crimes for which God was going to hold the Babylonians accountable. 2:17

26. From this chapter, how would you summarize God's answer to Habakkuk's questions in 1:2,13?
27. What eventually happened to the Babylonian empire? Jeremiah 25:12-13 (See Jeremiah 50 and 51 for a detailed description.)

Applying the Word: What people or organization do you see today building its empire through stealing, extortion, cruelty and bloodshed?

God calls us to seek justice, but to also wait and watch (2:2-4) for His deliverance. What does it look like to live in this tension? Do you waver between hope and despair about the state of the world today? In what ways, if any, does God's answer in chapter two help you?

Day 4

Read Habakkuk 2:18-20

Woe to the idolater

28. List the descriptive phrases and words that Habakkuk used of idols in 2:18,19.
- "a man has carved it"

FYI: Teacher of lies: "Idolatry begins with deception, encourages deception, and calls for a commitment to deception (See Isaiah 44:20)." - The Nelson Study Bible (1523)

"**Breath** (2:19) OT:7307 "*ruach* frequently represents the element of life in a man, his natural "spirit" - Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

2:19 no breath at all. A woe is pronounced...against those who seek knowledge and life from wood and stone. These are mere created materials, embellished a bit by men, but possess neither life nor knowledge, and so cannot impart such information to others." - Henry Morris

29. What is a person trusting in when they turn idols? 2:18b (Compare Isaiah 44:20)

- What is the consequence of trusting in something you have created? Ps. 135:15-18.

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30. In the following verses, underline the words that describe idols..

- 1 Samuel 12:21 Do not turn away after useless idols. They can do you no good, nor can they rescue you, because they are useless. NIV
- Jeremiah 10:5,8,14,15 their idols cannot speak; they must be carried because they cannot walk. Do not fear them; they can do no harm nor can they do any good...A wooden idol is a worthless doctrine...14 Everyone is dull-hearted, without knowledge; Every metalsmith is put to shame by an image; For his molded image is falsehood, And there is no breath in them. 15 They are futile, a work of errors; NKJV
- Jeremiah 16:19-20 O LORD, my strength and my fortress, my refuge in time of distress, to you the nations will come from the ends of the earth and say, "Our fathers possessed nothing but false gods, worthless idols that did them no good. 20 Do men make their own gods? Yes, but they are not gods!" NIV
- Jeremiah 51:17,18 "Every man is senseless and without knowledge; every goldsmith is shamed by his idols. His images are a fraud; they have no breath in them. 18 They are worthless, the objects of mockery... NAS
- Isaiah 44:9 All who make idols are nothing, and the things they treasure are worthless...NIV

Digging Deeper
Read all of Isaiah 44:9-20. What else do you learn about the folly of idolatry?

31. Why did God condemn the use of idols? Exodus 20:4-6; 23:32-33

- From Exodus 23:24, list the things that the people were to do and *not* to do with idols.
- Sadly, what did the nation of Israel do? 2 Kings 17:15-17

32. Underline other kinds of idolatry that God warned against:

- Deuteronomy 18:9-12 "When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations. 10 "There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, 11 or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. 12 "For whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD; and because of these detestable things the LORD your God will drive them out before you. NASU
- Isaiah 8:19 When they say to you, "Consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and mutter," should not a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living? NASU
- Isaiah 47:13 "You are wearied with your many counsels; Let now the astrologers, Those who prophesy by the stars, Those who predict by the new moons, Stand up and save you from what will come upon you. NASU

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33. Besides adopting the idols of the land of Canaan, what other kinds of objects did Israel make into idols?

- Judges 8:24-27
- Numbers 21:9; 2 Kings 18:4
- 1 Kings 12:27-30
- What does this say about mixing idolatry with worship of God?

34. What did God say He will do with idolatry? Micah 5:13 (See also Isaiah 17:7-8)

35. Besides an assurance of God's coming judgment of the wicked, what other perspective was Habakkuk given? 2:20

- What response should man have to this? 2:20b

Digging Deeper

How does God's habitation compare to an idol's? 2 Chronicles 6:18; Isaiah 6:1-5; 66:1

FYI: "keep silence. Men should stand in mute humility at the very thought of the omnipotent, omniscient God. Instead they, like the pagan Babylonians and the apostate Jews, presume to disobey Him, to find substitutes for Him, to rail against Him, or more often simply to ignore Him in their own clamorous pursuit of wealth and pleasure." - Henry Morris

36. Summarize the perspectives that a righteous person should have during times of calamity.

- 2:4b
- 2:14
- 2:20

Applying the Word: Read through the quotes on idolatry on the next two pages. Mark what you find interesting.

What good things have you turned into "ultimate" things? (Clue: When do you feel thwarted, unappreciated, every angry? It could be because your ultimate thing(s) has been threatened or lost.)

Food for Thought: Idolatry

"In the New Testament period the term idolatry began to be used as an intellectual concept. Idolatry became not the actual bowing down before a statue but the replacement of God in the mind of the worshiper. Col 3:5 points in this direction: 'Put to death...covetousness, which is idolatry.' (See also Eph 5:5.) At this point the modern believer must understand the vicious nature of idolatry. While we may not make or bow down to a statue, we must be constantly on guard that we let nothing come between us and God. As soon as anything does, that thing is an idol."
- Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary

"An idol is anything in our lives that occupies the place that should be occupied by God alone. Anything that... is central in my life, anything that seems to me...essential... An idol is anything by which I live and on which I depend, anything that... holds such a controlling position in my life that... it moves and rouses and attracts so much of my time and attention, my energy and money."
- D.M.Lloyd-Jones, "Idolatry" in *Life in God: Studies in 1 John*

"Idols are not just on pagan altars, but in well-educated human hearts and minds (Ezekiel 14). The apostle associates the dynamics of human greed, lust, craving, and coveting with idolatry (Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 3:5). The Bible does not allow us to marginalize idolatry to the fringes of life... it is found on center stage."
- R. Keyes, "The Idol Factory" in *No God but God*

"This means then, that *idolatry is always the reason we ever do anything wrong*. Why do we ever lie, or fail to love or keep promises or live unselfishly? Of course, the general answer is "because we are weak and sinful," but the specific answer is always that there is something besides Jesus Christ that you feel you must have to be happy, something that is more important to your heart than God, something that is spinning out a delusional field and enslaving the heart through inordinate desires. So the secret to change is always to identify the idols of the heart. The Bible does not consider idolatry to be one sin among many (and thus now a very rare sin only among primitive people).
Rather, *the only alternative to true, full faith in the living God is idolatry*. All our failures to trust God wholly or to live rightly are due at root to idolatry — something we make more important than God. There is always a *reason* for a sin. Under our sins are idolatrous desires."
- Timothy Keller (PL 59)

"It [idolatry] means turning a good thing into an **ultimate thing**." - Timothy Keller, *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Plan for the World*

"What is an idol? It is anything **more important** to you than God, anything that **absorbs** your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to **give you** what only God can give."

"A counterfeit god [idol] is anything so **central** and **essential** to your life that, should you lose it, your life would feel hardly worth living."

"An idol has such a **controlling** position in your heart that you can **spend** most of your passion and energy, your emotional and financial resources, on it without a second thought."

"The true god of your heart is what your **thoughts effortlessly** go to when there is nothing else demanding your attention. What do you enjoy daydreaming about? What occupies your mind when you have nothing else to think about?"

"Idolatry is not just a failure to obey God, it is a **setting** of the **whole** heart on something besides God."

"When an idol gets a grip on your heart, it spins out a whole set of **false** definitions of success and failure and happiness and sadness. It **redefines** reality in terms of itself."

"Idols cannot simply be removed. They must be **replaced**. If you only try to uproot them, they grow back; but they can be **supplanted**. By what? By God himself, of course. But by God we do not mean a general belief in his existence. Most people have that, yet their souls are riddled with idols. What we need is a living encounter with God."
- Timothy Keller, *Counterfeit Gods*

"Circle the thoughts that are lodged in your heart:"

Power idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if — I have power and influence over others."

Approval idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if — I am loved and respected by _____"

Comfort idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if — I have this kind of pleasure experience, a particular quality of life."

Image idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if — I have a particular kind of look or body image."

Control idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if — I am able to get mastery over my life in the area of _____."

Helping idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if — people are dependent on me and need me."

Dependence idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if — someone is there to protect me and keep me safe."

Independence idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if — I am completely free from obligations or responsibilities to take care of someone."

Work idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if — I am highly productive getting a lot done."

Achievement idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if — I am being recognized for my accomplishments, if I am excelling in my career."

Materialism idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if — I have a certain level of wealth, financial freedom, and very nice possessions."

Religion idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if — I am adhering to my religion's moral codes and accomplished in it's activities."

Individual person idolatry: "Life only has meaning/ I only have worth if — this one person is in my life and happy there and/or happy with me."

Irreligion idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if — I feel I am totally independent of organized religion and with a self-made morality."

Racial/cultural idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if — my race and culture is ascendant and recognized as superior."

Inner ring idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if — a particular social grouping or professional grouping or other group lets me in."

Family idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if — my children and/or my parents are happy and happy with me."

Relationship idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if — Mr. or Ms. 'Right' is in love with me."

Suffering idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if — I am hurting, in a problem — only then do I feel noble or worthy of love or am able to deal with guilt."

Ideology idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if — my political or social cause or party is making progress and ascending in influence or power."

- Timothy Keller (PL 60,61)