

THE STEWARDSHIP PAPERS

"Idle" Worship

Sometimes, we can worship "another god" without even realizing it...for if "something" becomes so important to us that we break one of God's laws because of it, we have essentially placed that "something" above God...and it becomes, for us, a golden calf.

A long time ago, there was an old Chinaman who lived with his only daughter and grandson. The old man had grown quite palsied with age and, as a consequence, his shaky hands had great difficulty in holding anything with confidence. Now, it happened that his daughter had a lovely collection of dishes of which she was quite proud. And rather than chancing her dishes to such an unsteady hand as her father's, she kept a bowl (that already had a crack in it) especially for him...and, at dinner time, he was made to sit in a corner by himself (so that he might not bump anyone) and to eat everything out of this one cracked bowl.

Now, it came to pass, after many years, that the old man finally died. And, as the daughter was cleaning out his meager possessions, she came across the bowl; and with a great deal of relief at finally being able to get rid of such an ugly piece of china, she made to throw it away. That is, until her young son stopped her.

"Wait!" he exclaimed as he quickly retrieved it. "Don't throw this bowl away. We must save it." And he carefully wrapped it in an old rag. "I will have need of this someday..." he added as he looked up into her questioning eyes, "...for you."

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The thing that she worshipped?...her dishes. A law that she broke?...

“Honor thy father and thy mother,” [Ex. 20:12]

for one...and

“You shall have no other gods before me,” [Ex. 20:3]

as another. Therefore, according to the law,

“You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generations...”

[Ex. 20:4-5]

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