

**Idols of the Heart**  
**A Discussion at Campus Lutheran Church**  
**Facilitated by John Butcher**

**I. What Is an Idol?**

- a. What is an “idol”? (Romans 1:25)
- b. What do you want or really expect out of life? What would really make you happy? A nice home? Beautiful family? A great job out of college? A rising stock market? A lower golf handicap?
- c. What rules your behavior? The Lord or an idol or two? Why?

**II. Effects of Idols**

- a. Distorted thinking
- b. Emotional bondage
- c. The Sin under every sin

**III. Identifying Our Idols**

- a. Every self exists in relation to values perceived as making life worth living. A “value” is anything good in the created order—any idea, relation, object or person in which one has an interest, from which one derives significance.
- b. These values compete. How? Do you end up centering on one value by which other values are judged?
- c. What happens when we elevate a finite value to the center of our lives and give it a source of meaning? What have we chosen? An \_ \_ \_ \_.
- d. Do we worship “gods” out of proportion to the one true God? How so? Isn’t he good to adore a child? Or love a spouse? Or friend?
- e. Anxiety: We all worry to some degree about our future. We worry about our future health, our status, our ability to earn money and retire comfortably. Why do we have so much anxiety? (Recall “finite values”)
- f. What about guilt over finite values, such as the ability to be a good teacher or a good lawyer or physician. What if I fail to achieve my goals? Am I then worthless? What values have become ABSOLUTE for you?
- g. Boredom or the feeling of emptiness in the present: Boredom is feeling empty. Why do we feel this way? Why can it lead to pathological and compulsive boredom, and even despair over the whole cosmos? Even if our boredom doesn’t become despair, it can manifest itself in the forms of disappointment, disillusionment, apathy, even cynicism.

**IV. Food for Thought—See the Handout on Idols**