

LIVING INDEPENDENTLY OF GOD

“My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.”

Jer. 2:13

The first of the Ten Commandments given to the people of God was, “You shall have no other gods before me.” (Ex. 20:3) That commandment is followed by the second one, “You shall not make for yourself an idol... You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God...” (Ex. 20:4,5)

In your modern world, idols can still be made of wood, silver and bronze, but they are rarely the types of idols found among Christians. With molten images in mind, today’s believer may quickly dismiss the subject of idols. But the fact remains that idols do exist in your life, often in forms that you would not consider. This lesson is designed to acquaint you with the topic of idols and then to help you identify the “other gods” that you may be substituting for a meaningful relationship with the one true God. (Matt. 22:37,38)

After you have completed this lesson, begin to develop your “wheel”, which is a tool designed to personalize your idols and false identities so you can relate more meaningfully to the information in this and succeeding studies. Directions are in the next study entitled *The Wheel*.

This study correlates with the *Living Independently of God* diagram at the end of this study. As each new concept from the diagram is introduced, it will appear in bold type so that you can follow the progression of ideas. It is recommended that you highlight all concepts that relate to you as you read this and use it to develop your wheel.

- I. **God created you with the capacity to worship, to think, to choose and to feel.** (See the left side of the diagram.)
 - A. These four areas may be *characterized* as under the control of self.
 - B. These four areas may be *characterized* as under the control of God and His Word.
- II. God created you with the ability to worship.
 - A. Before you became a believer, you worshiped and idolized self.
 1. You existed for your own purposes rather than God’s. (2 Cor. 5:15)
 2. Your unbelief in God, His character, commands and promises, led you to build a way to try to control your world for your purposes. (Eph. 2:1-3)
 3. Self was enthroned in God’s place, and you were a slave to sin. (Rom. 6:16; John 8:34)

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- B. Through the Holy Spirit's regeneration of your soul, God has given you the desire, ability and capacity to turn from self-worship, to worship Him.
- III. Your life may still be characterized by **self-worship** and **self-idolatry** though you are now a Christian.
- A. Your worship of self is prideful. **Pride** is manifested in two ways: **unbelief in God** and **trust in self and Satan**. (Rom. 1:25)
 - B. Your thought processes may still be rooted in *unbelief* in God's character, commands and promises when making the choices of how to live your daily life.
- IV. Your lack of trust in God (unbelief) produced a system of **wrong beliefs** about God and about yourself. These wrong beliefs may include:
- A. "God's characteristics, commands and promises cannot be trusted to work in *my* life."
 - B. "My old nature is still alive and fighting for control in me, and I don't understand the biblical truth that my old nature died at the time of my spiritual rebirth."
 - C. "I know better than God what I need to feel secure, satisfied and fulfilled."
 - D. "I will continue to trust in my own reasoning and resources, rather than trusting in God's wisdom and appropriating His resources."
 - E. "I feel much more secure in trying to keep my life under my control, my way. I don't want to take the uncomfortable risks to obey God."
 - F. "I may be miserable, but at least my system is familiar and therefore, easier than taking the risks involved to change."
 - G. "I have spent years building a system to cope with life, using my strategies. Why should I give them up to follow Jesus when His way may not work?"
- V. You established **unbiblical goals** based on your system of wrong beliefs about God and yourself.
- A. These unbiblical goals may include:
 - 1. To have life under *my* control and on *my* terms
 - 2. To live a pain-free life, free from suffering
 - 3. To live a happy life, filled with pleasure; to be comfortable

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4. To be loved
 5. To be affirmed: seeking the affirmation of others and/or the affirmation of self through accomplishments, prestige, pleasure, etc.
 6. To be respected, appreciated
 7. To be accepted
 8. To gain attention; to feel important
 9. To be the “center of attention,” either with positive or negative feedback
 10. To feel secure in my circumstances and in my relationships with others
 11. To build my ego and self-esteem
 12. To alleviate boredom; to be entertained and stimulated
 13. To receive sympathy or agreement with my point of view
 14. To be rewarded or to reward myself
 15. To have God, people and circumstances cooperate to meet my goals
- B. These goals may still be paramount in your life, just as they were when you were an unbeliever.
- C. Unbiblical goals often become demands, which result in sinful responses when they are not met. See *The Self-Life* diagram, *The Controllers*, CTO.
- VI. Your self-life goals led to your *choice* of **other idols**, which were established and are maintained to feed your self-idolatry.
- A. An idol is whatever or whomever stands between you and a strong, dependent relationship on God.
 - B. An idol becomes a *substitute* for God and His resources.
 - C. An idol is a focus with which you are often preoccupied and sometimes, consumed.
 - D. An idol may become an addiction, which is actually *sin that enslaves you*.

“...for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved.”
2 Pet. 2:19b

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- E. An idol may be “negative” or “positive.” For example:
1. Negative: You may be embittered toward a certain person with whom you are preoccupied, and that bitterness feeds your negative emotions.
 2. Positive: You may be preoccupied with a career or a ministry as an escape, while ignoring your spouse or children, because your positive emotions are fed outside the home.

***“Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs.”
Jonah 2:8***

- F. Your idols may include:
1. certain person, persons or group
 2. ideal, dream or fantasy on which you focus
 3. imaginations, which produce great fears
 4. ability, a talent, spiritual gift or accomplishment
 5. personality or character trait of which you are proud
 6. situation or circumstance
 7. appearance, such as your body, hair, certain features, clothing
 8. reputation
 9. tangible or intangible thing; possessions
 10. a pursuit; an activity hobby, sport
 11. logic (Your logic dictates what is truth, right or wrong.)
 12. feelings/emotions (Your feelings become the judge of what is truth, right or wrong.)
 13. place
 14. form of entertainment
 15. “pet” or secret sin
 16. the benefits or rewards you are seeking for yourself

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17. specific motives or goals: happiness, affirmation of self and/or others, attention, approval, stimulation, security, pleasure, peace, comfort, prestige, status, etc., etc.

18. common idols, which begin with the letter “A”:

- a. Affirmation: self-affirmation and/or affirmation from others
- b. Acceptance
- c. Appearance
- d. Attention
- e. Approval
- f. Appreciation
- g. Accomplishment; achievement
- h. Adulation
- i. Abilities
- j. Activity itself or specific activities
- k. Agenda(s)
- l. Analysis (Those who continually analyze how God and/or others are responding to them, how their performance is succeeding, morbidly introspective, etc.)
- m. Arguments (Those who love to argue, debate)
- n. Agreement (Those who have logic or feelings as an idol may *demand* agreement from those they try to convince.)
- o. Acknowledgement in the form of recognition
- p. Aspirations; ambitions
- q. Affections of the heart (This is the term Puritans used to describe demands, desires, lusts, etc.)

G. An evaluation of what or who is an idol in your life is important. The following questions may help you decipher what idols you have in your life:

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1. “Am I primarily focused on/or preoccupied with a person, ideal, pursuit, activity, thing or situation rather than focused on God?” (The object of your primary focus in an idol.)
2. “Do I demand that family members, friends or associates validate, contribute to or be supportive of my pursuit of certain idols? Am I angry when they don’t comply?”
3. “Do I believe I will no longer belong, be a part of a group or lose my friends if I give up the idols which connect me to them?”
4. “Am I angry, depressed or do I indulge in self-pity because my idols of love, approval, attention, affirmation, status, respect, stimulation, success, etc. are not being met?”
5. “Do I refuse to let God and His resources fill my voids and satisfy my desires, but instead turn to substitutes?” (What are they?)
6. “Am I relying upon self-trust and my own forms of coping, which include my idols, to emotionally sustain me?” (Prov. 28:26)
7. “Do I believe my life is or will be apathetic and uneventful? Therefore, I am relieved from boredom by seeking excitement and fulfillment in pursuing idols?”
8. “Do I expect others to admire and respect the traits/accomplishments I think are worthy of attention in myself?” (These traits are idols.)
9. “Do I try to control, manipulate and/or impress others with my idols of knowledge, logic, charm, sexuality, abilities, accomplishments, humor, etc.?”
10. “Would I be devastated if name idol(s) were taken from me?”
11. “Do I use my idols as an escape from obedience to God’s commands and from His priorities?”

***“You have done all this evil; yet do not turn away from the LORD,
but serve the LORD with all your heart.
Do not turn away after useless idols. They can do you no good,
nor can they rescue you, because they are useless.
For the sake of his great name the LORD will not reject his people,
because the LORD was pleased to make you his own.”***

1 Sam. 12:20b-22

- H. You must realize that even though you may be relying on your idols and self-oriented motives/goals, God commands you to forsake them. (Lev. 19:4; 1 Cor. 10:7a)

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“Dear children, keep yourselves from idols.”
1 John 5:21

“Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.”
1 Cor. 10:14 NASB

I. It is important to be able to identify your idols, wrong beliefs and goals and how you still try to use them to try to maintain your emotional stability.

VII. A person creates **false identities**, which are validated, fed and maintained by idols.

A. You allow a false identity to define

1. *who you are.*
2. *who you are trying to become.*
3. *who someone else wants you to be.*
4. *who you are through a fantasy you create about yourself.*
5. *how you want God to view you.*
6. *how you want or expect others view you.*
7. *how you interact with and relate to others.*

Note: You may be viewed by others as having an identity with which you do not agree. Others' perceptions may be true or they may not be true.

- a. If you are experiencing that your identity is in something other than Christ, you will use it to accomplish your own ends or to serve your own purposes by
 - 1) trying to please someone else.
 - 2) trying to reach your self-life goals. See section V for an extensive list.
 - 3) evaluating how you perceive and *feel* about yourself.
 - 4) evaluating how you *want* others to perceive you.
 - 5) establishing sinful patterns of relating to others.
 - 6) evaluating your performance before God. For example:

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- a) You present Him with your *self-righteous* identity to earn His favor and approval, to salve your conscience, to excuse/rationalize your sin and/or to bargain with Him.
 - b) You present Him with your *failure* or *reject* identity and expect Him to excuse your sins because, “I can’t help it”.
- b. When one of your idols/identities fails to attain your goals, you may turn to others to produce the desired results.
- B. You may have several or many false identities so that when one fails you can turn to another.
- C. Your reliance upon your false identity will prevent you from *experiencing* your true identity in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- D. You may create a “positive” false identity, resulting in feelings of power, superiority, influence, pleasure, prestige, security, comfort, and/or well-being.
- E. You may create a “negative” false identity, resulting in feelings of inadequacy, inferiority, bitterness, fearfulness, self-pity, and/or depression.
- F. You may have a “negative” identity, which you try to overcome by creating a “positive” identity. For example:
- 1. You may be a *perfectionist* in an attempt to overcome your negative identity of being a *failure*.
 - 2. You may become performance-oriented, driven, consumed and/or obsessed in trying to overcome a negative identity of being a *reject* or by being a *success*.
 - 3. You may not view yourself as having a negative identity, but be entirely focused on trying to perform so you will *not* have a negative identity. For example: You can become highly engaged by working in the flesh to not become a *failure*.
- G. You can examine yourself with the list on the next pages to discover the false identities that you have created. Although the list is extensive, it is not complete.

Because the list includes so many false identities, some have been grouped together. Highlight or circle only the identity or identities pertaining to you within a grouping. Please check any identities you already possess, as well as those you are trying to develop or to create.

Some identities on this list may be your actual role or position. However, if you are using that role or position as a means to try to gain the idols of self-esteem, recognition, importance, acceptance, love, etc. then it becomes your false identity. ***Examine your motives!***

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LIST OF FALSE IDENTITIES

1. a role: teacher, leader, pastor, friend, discipler, counselor, homemaker
2. a role in a family: husband, wife, sister, brother, grandmother, grandfather, mother, father ~ The latter two (mother and father) may include the role the person assumes in relationship to a spouse, an extended family or even friendships.
3. a child even though the person is an adult
 - a. He may expect others to take care of his responsibilities while he pursues what is pleasurable to him. He may be easily overwhelmed by life's demands.
 - b. He may respond to people and circumstances in childlike ways: temper tantrums, pouting, whining, demanding, withdrawing, repaying evil for evil, giving up, defying authority, expecting to not "get caught", etc.
 - c. He may have biblical priorities out of order because he spends his time in escapes, pursuing pleasurable idols.
4. a role or position in a career, job, ministry
5. an intellectual; a biblically knowledgeable person
6. a nobody, failure, loser
7. a person who defines who he or she is by his/her appearance, physique
 - a. In a positive way: beautiful, cute, sexy, handsome, having a great body
 - b. In a negative way: ugly, fat, unattractive person
8. a spiritual person, a godly person, a spiritual leader
9. a "macho" person, a rebel, a bad guy or gal, a whore, a glutton, a bully
10. a member of a certain group, organization
11. an athlete; participant in a certain sport; an adventurer
12. a normal person; a nice guy; a sweet gal
13. a sexual magnet, which is a person who defines his/her identity through sexuality
14. a feminist; a chauvinist

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15. a homosexual; a “gay” or lesbian
16. a busy person; a driven person; an organizer; indispensable
17. a perfectionist
18. a judge, a critic
19. an entertainer, a clown
20. a conqueror, a winner, challenger, competitor, debater
21. a convincer; an influencer; a powerful person
22. a rescuer, savior, enabler; fixer, caregiver, a person who needs to be needed
23. a nationality, heritage, race, religion
24. an eccentric; a maverick; unique
25. a superior person; an inferior person
26. a “together” person
27. a victim; a martyr
28. a survivor
29. an expert; a know-it-all; an impresser
30. a lazy person; a procrastinator
31. a liar/deceiver
32. a reject
33. a “crisis-causer”
34. a success; a “workaholic”
35. an extremist
36. a driven person; indispensable person
37. a legalist

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38. an alcoholic; a drug addict; a child of an alcoholic; a recovering alcoholic
39. a co-dependent person; a sexual abuse victim; other “labels” and disorders from secular psychology
40. a sick person; a person with a certain disease
41. a stupid person; a dummy; uneducated
42. a “shopaholic”
43. a gambler
44. a busy-body; a gossip; a meddler
45. an insecure person; a shy person
46. a stoic (one who shows little to no emotion)
47. a Drama Queen or King, the center of attention
48. a braggart; a smart aleck
49. a “humble” person ~ This person tries to project an image of being humble by putting himself down frequently (a false humility) and perhaps, overly praising others.
50. an “island,” or a “fortress”, which is a person who believes he needs no one emotionally or relationally. He views himself as completely self-sufficient. See the study, *The Fortress Mentality* for further clarification.
51. a “chameleon”, which is a person who tries to *be* what others want him to be ~ Often this person has no sense of who he is because he has spent a lifetime trying to conform to the expectations of others.
52. a person created through fantasy ~ This person retreats into fantasy to create an identity that he views as positive, perhaps to overcome a negative identity. The fantasies may include being:
 - a. a hero or heroine; a “spiritual giant”; a great achiever; rescuer, savior
 - b. a fantasy Casanova or fantasy sexual magnet or a fantasy romantic person. (Often these identities are fed by the idols of pornography, romance novels, movies or soap operas.)

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- c. a conqueror, powerful person.
- d. the center of attention.

VIII. You will exhibit one or more of these *warning signals* when you define who you are by placing your identity in something other than Christ.

A. You may engage in one or more of the following:

1. attempt to control your world through sinful strategies, in order to build and to maintain your idols/identities.
2. be *primarily* focused on seeking security, satisfaction and fulfillment through your idols/false identities rather than being dependent on your relationship with God.
3. be driven, preoccupied or consumed by pursuing idols or identities.
4. expect or demand that others validate, are supportive or assist you in obtaining your idols/false identities.
5. have a superior, judgmental, critical, self-righteous attitude toward others.
6. be a people-pleaser in order to try to become the person that someone else wants you to be in order to make him or her happy, keep the peace, not rock the boat.
7. use a “negative identity,” such as a loser, a failure, a fat person, a nobody, victim or child, to excuse yourself from obedience to God and responsibility to others.
8. blame others for your difficulties, while excusing your sinful initiatives and responses.
9. exhibit authority issues, both with God and human authorities.
10. be very fearful of your future, failure, and the exposure of your sin or of your image; very insecure.
11. have difficulty in establishing and/or maintaining meaningful relationships.
12. not develop biblical priorities; shirking God-given responsibilities.
13. become angry, defensive, embittered, depressed, self-pitying, and/or blame others when you are threatened with the loss of idols/identities.
14. bring revenge to people who have deeply hurt you.

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15. discredit or dismiss admonishments from others.
 16. be resistant toward or withdrawn from anyone who would threaten the exposure, failure, or loss of your idols/identities.
 17. harden your heart and numb your spirit toward God and/or others.
- B. The establishment of your idols and false identities, whether conscious or unconscious, is rooted in one or more of the following:
1. the refusal to avail yourself of Christ's power to fix your identity *experientially* in Him.
 2. your ignorance in how to go about living out your identity in Christ.
 3. your ignorance of or resistance toward God orchestrating circumstances to break your independent spirit.
 4. the attempt to reach your unbiblical goals.
 5. the rejection of the life or forms of suffering Christ designed for you, so you
 - a. attempt to recreate a difficult life into a self-made heaven.
 - b. attempt to escape suffering and/painful realities.
 6. the attempt to ignore and deny your personal sin and failure.
- IX. You may be ignorant of or resistant toward God's desire to bring you to a state of brokenness through dealing with your idols and false identities. (Jas. 4:6)
- A. Realize that God controls all events and He is orchestrating yours. *Who's in Charge?* contains many scriptures on this subject.
- B. Understand that your pursuit of your identity in externals/fantasies
1. excludes your *experiential* identification with Christ. (Rom. 6:11; Gal. 2:20)
 2. creates a self-centered, self-focused lifestyle.
- C. Choose to believe God is *pursuing you with His love* to bring pressure into your life to break your self-reliant spirit.
- D. Realize that the shattering of your pride and self-will produces a dependency on Christ, His wisdom and His direction, which yields a fruitful life.

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- E. Realize that when you are resisting the breaking of your will,
 - 1. you are creating more problems for yourself and perhaps others.
 - 2. you cannot be a Spirit-filled, useful Christian. (John 15:5)
- F. Understand that “the way out” requires you to
 - 1. repent and to obey the Lord.
 - 2. deal with your pride, sinful motives, goals, idols and identities in a biblical way.
 - 3. take risks in obedience to God and then watch Him work in and through you!
(Phil. 1:6; 2:12,13)
- X. The threatened loss or failure of that role, activity, person or thing in which you have placed your identity often reveals the recognition of where your false identity lies.
 - A. If you are not experiencing your identity in Christ, you usually will believe one or more of the following statements, when you are faced with *relinquishing* your false identity:
 - 1. “I will be ‘a nobody’ if I give up that in which I’ve placed my identity.”
 - 2. “If I give up my _____, I won’t know who I am.”
 - 3. “I will not be important to _____ or anybody.”
 - 4. “I will not be loved, accepted or affirmed.”
 - 5. “I will not be able to affirm myself.”
 - 6. “I will not receive the attention I believe I need from others.”
 - 7. “I will lose my sense of security.”
 - 8. “I will be bored. My life will not have thrills or excitement.”
 - 9. “If I forsake trying *to be* who _____ wants me to be, I may lose him/her or he/she will make life more difficult for me.”
 - 10. “I won’t fit in or belong.”
 - 11. “I will have to take responsibility for my attitudes and actions and obey God, which is too difficult.” This is particularly true of the person who fosters a negative identity.

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12. "I will not emotionally survive the loss of that in which I have placed my identity."

- B. These are *common responses* when facing the loss of a false identity. However, ultimately, these may prove to be positive because
 - 1. you are able to acknowledge how truly dependent you are upon the identity you have constructed and confess this situation to the Lord. (1 John 1:9)
 - 2. you are in a position to release who you will become to the Lord, as you allow Him to live His life through you. Be patient as He molds you into who *He* wants you to be.
- C. You may experience a time of mild to intense grieving and/or fear when faced with giving up your idols and identities upon which you have been emotionally dependent.

XI. Controlling strategies are the *means* by which you build and maintain idols/false identities.

- A. These are the behaviors and attitudes in the outer circle of your wheel.
- B. You may develop a performance-orientation to try to win God and others' approval.
- C. Sinful strategies are many, including
 - 1. people-pleasing.
 - 2. manipulating, bribing, "guilt trips," martyrdom.
 - 3. using fear tactics, intimidating; convincing.
 - 4. shifting blame, judging, condemning.
 - 5. withdrawing
 - 6. ignoring or minimizing problems, procrastinating, suppressing.
 - 7. etc., etc., etc.! See *The Controllers* studies, which describe many controlling strategies.

XII. Your identity may be so deeply entrenched in (whatever), that you view it as your "*life source*," which you wrongly believe you must be using successfully in order to be emotionally and perhaps, physically sustained.

- A. You may experience some form of physical pain when you make the wrenching choices to obey God, rather than to follow your normal course of sin.

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- B. You may experience physical pain when facing the fear of losing that in which you have placed your identity.
 - 1. You may experience difficulties catching your breath, have panic attacks, experience tremendous internal pressure or heart palpitations.
 - 2. Satan uses these to convince you that you will literally die if you turn away from sin and obey Jesus.
- C. You must renew your mind with these truths:
 - 1. God is your creator and the sustainer of your life and soul! (Col. 1:17)
 - 2. God will take you through the pain to freedom in His time and in His way. (John 8:31,32) See *Facing Emotional Pain, CTO*.

***“Surely God is my help;
the Lord is the one who sustains me.”
Ps. 54:4***

XIII. The interconnectedness of this entire *sinful survival system* then produces **ungodly attitudes**.

- A. If the system is working, it will usually result in attitudes of superiority, judgmentalness, arrogance, self-righteousness, self-sufficiency.
- B. If the system isn't working, it will usually result in attitudes of inferiority, self-pity, anger, bitterness, hopelessness and/or depression.

Note: If you have nurtured a negative identity, such as a loser, failure, child, martyr or victim, you will probably have ungodly attitudes of self-pity, anger, bitterness, etc. However, your system *is working* because you excuse yourself from responsibility and obedience to God while often blaming others for your problems and/or you “can't help it.”

XIV. The entire system produces **behaviors**, which may be outwardly “good” or sinful.

- A. You may be doing the right things with sinful motives.
 - 1. The Pharisees are examples of being outwardly righteous, while driven by sinful motives. (Matt. 23)
 - 2. The apostle Paul addresses this situation in Philippians 1:17.
- B. You may be exhibiting sinful behaviors because of your selfish goals and sinful motives.

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XV. Your self-idolatry, unbelief in God, wrong beliefs, other idols, false identities, controlling attitudes and behaviors, combine to form your *sinful survival plan*. Your reliance upon this survival system will produce responsive **emotions**.

- A. Generally, **positive emotions** like “feeling good” result when sinful strategies seem to be working.
- B. Generally, **negative emotions** result when sinful strategies fail to attain your unbiblical goals.
 - 1. Your emotions *cannot* be the determining factor of evaluating whether your choices are godly or ungodly. For example:
 - a. You may experience *positive* emotions while sinning, such as
 - 1) feeling loved and appreciated when committing adultery.
 - 2) feeling peaceful when filing for an unbiblical divorce.
 - 3) feeling secure because your sinful controlling strategies are working.
 - b. You may experience *negative* emotions, such as being hurt by another’s rejection while taking a stand for Christ.
 - 2. Your standard must be the Scriptures.
- C. Generally, the person who has a “negative identity,” such as a failure, loser, nobody, fat person, victim or martyr will experience negative emotions when his *sinful survival system* **is** working.
 - 1. He persists in this lifestyle because he convinces himself that he is helpless to change. He does not draw on God and His resources to change him.
 - 2. He *wants* to blame others for his problems. Then he is not responsible for his sinful responses, attitudes and behaviors.
 - 3. He wants to pursue activities, which bring pleasure or reward rather than accepting his God-given responsibilities.
 - 4. He may convince himself and perhaps others that they should take care of his responsibilities because he views himself as incapable of doing so and/or others “owe” it to him.
 - 5. His negative identity accomplishes what he *really* is demanding, which is deluding himself into believing that he is excused from growth in godliness and responsibility.

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XVI. The belief that the loss of your false identity or life source will lead to an emotional shattering or physical collapse, is a lie of Satan. (John 8:44-46) See *Satan, the Adversary, CTO*.

***“For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth,
visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities;
all things were created by him and for him.
He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”
Col. 1:16,17***

- A. When threatened with the loss of a false identity or a false life source, there will usually be a *crisis of belief*, at which time, Satan will do all in his power
1. to keep you in bondage to your sin.
 2. to convince you that you will never make it without _____ and perhaps, that you will physically die.
 3. to convince you that you *are* relying on Christ and His Word, when in fact, you are appearing “spiritual” while trusting in your idols and false identities. Although things may *appear* well on the surface, and you may “feel good” about yourself,
 - a. you are *not* dependent on the Lord and His resources.
 - b. you are *not* walking by faith, dependent upon His supernatural power to sustain you. (2 Cor. 5:9)
 4. to convince you that the “old life” system is superior to the new life experienced in Christ.
 5. to convince you that Christ cannot be your *primary* source of satisfaction, security and fulfillment.
 - a. Satan wants you to believe that life in Christ will be boring and not stimulating compared to a life spent in the pursuit of your idols.
 - b. You choose to disregard God’s promise that you are to place your hope in Him, “*who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment*” through His means. (1 Tim. 6:17b)
 6. to convince you that God’s power cannot transform you.
 7. to convince you that you are not able to take the leaps of faith necessary to be free.

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8. to convince you that it is too hard to change, and the easiest course to continue is the sinful path of familiarity.
 9. to convince you that God doesn't know what He is doing!
- B. If you ignore God's Word and the realization or conviction of sin, and choose to *cling* to your sinful emotional survival plan,
1. you continue to shut out Christ and His ability to sustain you.
 2. you will continue to deal with painful realities through your own sinful strategies.
 3. you may resort to more intense forms of control.
 4. you may continue in the same "escapes" or turn to new ones, which may include
 - a. excessive behaviors and addictions.
 - b. divorce, sexual sin, killing oneself.
 - c. fantasies.
 - d. unfruitfulness, apathy, a lazy Christian lifestyle.
 - e. despair, depression, giving up.
 5. you may switch your focus to other idols/identities, which you have already established.
 6. you may create new idols/identities on which to rely.
 7. you may lash out in anger; blaming others and causing problems in an attempt to get the focus off your need for repentance.
 8. you may grow more and more miserable, as a *consequence* or form of God's discipline for your rebellion. However, you may continue to blame others rather than seeing your misery as a consequence of your sinful decisions and responses to God's sovereign plan. (Ps. 32:1-5)
 9. you may, ultimately, harden your heart; numbing and deadening your spirit toward God and others. (Heb. 3:7,8; Prov. 28:14)
- C. If you refuse to obey God, He can make things a whole lot rougher until He brings you into submission! (Jas. 4:6; Heb. 12:3-11; Gal. 6:7,8)

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***“Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature:
sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed,
which is idolatry...since you have taken off your old self
with its practices and have put on the new self,
which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.”
Col. 3:5, 9b,10***

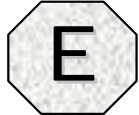
You need to be broken of self-will and humble yourself before a Holy God. The good news is that God desires to free you from these sinful strategies of control. He wants you to *experience* the supernatural life He designed for you when He redeemed you. He has *already* given you the ability, power and resources to do so. See *God's Resources in The Controllers* to encourage you to believe that He has abundantly provided everything you need to be freed from the self-life. See *Understanding the Call to Obedience, CTO*. When you are entrenched in these sinful belief and behavior patterns, it is crucial that you build an awareness that *you must participate with God* in your change by choosing to make commitments that will bring a new direction into your life. You must begin to view life from God's perspective instead of viewing everything from your own perspective. You must never forget that God is in the business of changing people, and He wants to bring you to freedom from yourself! (Phil 2:12,13) Jesus said, ***“If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.”*** (John 8:31,31)

***“Grace and peace be yours in abundance
through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.
His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness
through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness.
Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises,
so that through them you may participate in the divine nature
and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.”
2 Pet. 1:2-4***

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Sinful Survival System

Emotional



Capacity
to Feel

Volitional



Capacity
to Choose

Rational



Capacity
to Think

Spiritual



Capacity
to Worship

