

IDOLATRY



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by [Kim Butts](#)

“Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god” (Psalm 24:3-4).

When my husband and I were preparing for a three month sabbatical in 2015, it was our sense that our most effective years of ministry lay ahead, and we felt compelled by the Holy Spirit to spend some time in rest and play...but also much time in silence and solitude...drawing apart to hear clearly from God without being encumbered by all of our day to day ministry activity.

I never realized how difficult it would be to prepare to disengage and unplug from ministry for a season of rest and seeking the heart of God. As the time drew near for our departure (our first two weeks was spent in Israel), there was a sense of near desperation to “get it all done” and to “get ahead” on all of my deadlines, etc. As this process was taking place, I discovered some serious iDolatry in my life. The iDols are iPhone, iPad, and iNternet. I had no idea how addicted I had become to the technology that is so pervasively important to the work I do – writing, posting, communicating, compiling newsletters, blogging, etc. Although I spend much time in prayer and the Word, I believe the usage of “devices” far exceeds the time I spend in heartfelt devotion. And, since I was committed to the disciplines of silence and solitude during much of our sabbatical time, I was able to see how the enemy can easily distract me and trip me up here!

I was prompted to do a study on idols and idolatry as it would relate to my own lack of proper balance, and what I now know has tempted me to cross the line into sinfulness. I have often trusted in the iDol of technology, which Psalm 24 warns about. It has quite literally become a false god in my life. 1 Samuel 12:21 says, “Do not turn away after useless idols. They can do you no good, nor can they rescue you, because they are useless.”

And I want to scream out – “But they aren’t useless – they are very useful to me!” And so, as I read “I am the Lord; that is my name! I will not yield my glory to another or my praise to idols” (Isaiah 42:8), I must wrestle with this! Technology is surely an iDol the enemy of my soul has used...surreptitiously invading my day to day living, and covertly inserting a cancerous addiction to challenge my journey towards Christlikeness.

Certainly I use my phone, iPad and computer for God’s purposes, but I also waste a lot of time uselessly becoming distracted by all of the amazing things the internet has to

offer me. Where is the balance that will help me to step back over the line I have crossed and put technology back into proper perspective? How am I to “...flee from idolatry” as Paul admonishes and to keep myself from idols, as John warns? I certainly don’t want to “cling to worthless idols,” forfeiting the grace that could be mine (Jonah 2:8).

As I prayed about this issue in my life, the prophet Jeremiah brought perspective: “Do any of the worthless idols of the nations bring rain? Do the skies themselves send down showers? No, it is you, Lord our God. Therefore our hope is in you, for you are the one who does all this” (Jeremiah 14:22).

This verse makes me evaluate: Am I putting my hope in technology – giving it too much of my discretionary time...looking at my email during meals with my family, asking Siri endless questions about this or that, pinning and Facebooking things that are not ministry related, etc.? There must be a balance. As I unplug from it all during the sabbatical (I’ve already reduced my daily emails substantially by simply unsubscribing from MANY things I never have time to read and just spend time deleting everyday), it feels good – freeing! I actually am beginning to feel the weight lifting as I intentionally leave my phone turned off more, and am not checking Facebook “one more time” before going to sleep, etc. This allows my first and last thoughts of the day (as well as most of the time in between) to be tuned in to the voice of my Lord rather than to be turned aside by lesser things.

My prayer is that by unplugging from technology from time to time, my heart will be pure and my hands clean so that I may give myself to standing in the Father’s holy place, fully committed to Him alone!

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Biography

Kim serves as the Executive Director of Harvest Prayer Ministries which she co-founded in 1993 with her late husband, Dave (1953-2022). Her ministry involves teaching/training and consulting as well as writing and developing resources. She is content coordinator for HPM's teaching platform, PrayerU.com

and also compiles and edits HPM's free daily devotional, [Connection!](#) as well as [Prayer Tip Tuesday](#).

Kim has written multiple books and has published articles in a variety of magazines and publications. She is a member of America's National Prayer Committee and serves as President of Gospel Revivals, Inc. (Herald of His Coming).

Kim has a BA in Psychology and a Masters degree in Spiritual Formation and Leadership.

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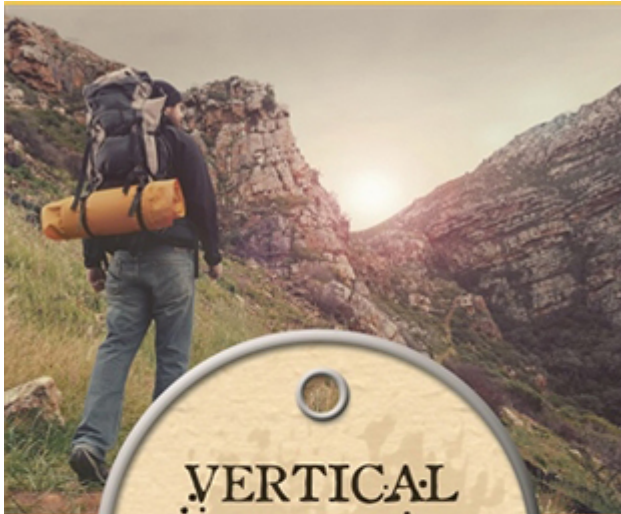
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