

Life Group Discussion Questions
iDols #2 – Counterfeit Gods
“All You’ve Ever Wanted”

BIG IDEA: Walk your idols UP THE MOUNTAIN to replace them with JESUS!

Gathering Together (Icebreaker)

What were your dreams growing up? What are they now?

Have you ever had to make a major move or drastic change that seemed bizarre at the time, but you truly felt God was calling you to do it? How did that decision play itself out?

Growing Together (Truth/Equipping)

Read **Romans 1:24-25**. Why would the greatest punishment imaginable be to allow someone to achieve their fondest dream? What biblical stories can you think of that support this idea? Do you know someone in your life (or popular culture) that exemplifies this danger?

Read **Genesis 22:1-14**. Why was God’s command to sacrifice Isaac even more extraordinary than it may at first appear in light of the culture of that day? What would be the equivalent to Abraham sacrificing his firstborn son in today’s society?

Why is Abraham’s statement in **Genesis 22:5** particularly significant?

Abraham believed God was both holy and gracious. How do you think Abraham would have reacted to God’s command if he had strayed from this belief?

The call to sacrifice Isaac may be perceived as unloving and inconsiderate. How is God’s command actually merciful to Abraham?

Idols enslave. How may have Abraham’s idolatrous love for Isaac enslaved him if it had gone unchecked? What would have been the consequences for both Abraham and Isaac? What are the two responses we can have when our ‘Isaacs’ are under threat?

In what ways is the story of Abraham and Isaac a foreshadowing of the story of Jesus Christ?

Read **Romans 8:31-39**. How do Abraham and Isaac remind us of the Father's love for us?

Getting Real Together (Accessibility)

In your own life, how have you been tempted to use God as a means to an end? How have you seen the prosperity "gospel" rear its ugly head in your life and/or our society?

Tim Keller says, "God was putting Abraham through the furnace, so his love for God could finally 'come forth as pure gold'" (p. 13). How do you react to that statement? How have you seen it true in your own life? Why is this not initially a comforting thought? Why should it be?

As long as Abraham never had to choose between his son and obedience to God he could not see that his love for Isaac was becoming idolatrous. How can we keep our eyes open to our own idols? Since there are idols everywhere and unavoidable, how do we strengthen and protect ourselves from worshipping them?

Can you recall a time when you had to make a choice between God and another good thing? What was the outcome?

Has an idol been exposed that you would like to share with your Life Group (if you haven't already)?

Keller says, "The most painful times in our lives are times in which our Isaacs, our idols, are being threatened or removed" (p19). Have you seen this in your own life? Are you willing to go through pain in order to have an undivided focus on the Lord? Really?

Praying Together (Supplication)

We must not make the mistake of thinking that this story means all we have to do is be *willing* to part with our idols rather than *actually leave* them behind. Like Abraham, Jesus struggled with God's command on His life (**Matthew 26:36-46**). In the end, He obeyed and walked up the mountain. We are to do likewise.

- Spend some time praying together and for each other. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you and the men and women in your Life Group strength to walk your idols the mountain to replace them with Jesus.
- Share any personal requests, challenges, hopes and fears. Pray for the people in your life who are enslaved to their idols that they would come to see that Jesus is more satisfying.