

TAKE A LOOK

2 Corinthians 5:14-15

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“The seventeenth-century English minister David Clarkson preached one of the most comprehensive and searching sermons on counterfeit gods ever written.¹¹³ About idolatry he said, ‘Though few will own it, nothing is more common.’ If we think of our soul as a house, he said, ‘idols are set up in every room, in every faculty.’ We prefer our own wisdom to God’s wisdom, our own desires to God’s will, and our own reputation to God’s honor. Clarkson looked at human relationships and showed how we have a tendency to make them more influential and important to us than God. In fact, he showed that ‘many make even their enemies their god ... when they are more troubled, disquieted, and perplexed at apprehensions of danger to their liberty, estates, and lives from men’ than they are concerned about God’s displeasure.¹¹⁴ The human heart is indeed a factory that mass-produces idols.

Is there any hope? Yes, if we begin to realize that idols cannot simply be removed. They must be replaced. If you only try to uproot them, they grow back; but they can be supplanted. By what? By God himself, of course. But by *God* we do not mean a general belief in his existence. Most people have that, yet their souls are riddled with idols. What we need is a living encounter with God.” *Counterfeit Gods*, Timothy Keller, pp. 154-155

With that said, let’s take a look at 2 Corinthians 5 and inspect our own lives...

THE SETTING

- Your earthly body is not **permanent**.
- You will have to give an **account** for how you **lived**.

TAKE A LOOK

- The **Inward** Look
 - Paul tells the Corinthians that God's love was **enclosing**, constraining and **compelling** him ... **he could no longer live for himself**.
 - You are living for yourself when:
 - ✓ You lose your **eternal perspective** in daily life (v. 10).
 - ✓ You only do the "**sensible**" thing (v. 13).
 - ✓ You are **bothered** by God's people (v. 13).
 - ✓ You feel compelled to do things to affect the **opinion** of others (v. 12).
 - ✓ Your **sin** is more important than the **Savior** (vv. 11, 14).

- The **Upward** Look

- God's love was enclosing, constraining and compelling Paul. His life was a picture of what it means to be...

- ✓ Impelled from **within**.

- ✓ Living in the **grip** of another!

- The **Outward** Look

- Paul's message, his role as an **ambassador**, included his being a living example of life change.

- **His life and message were in agreement.**

APPLICATION

113. David Clarkson, "Soul Idolatry Excludes Men from Heaven," in *The Practical Works of David Clarkson*, Volume II (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1865), pp. 299ff.

114. Clarkson, p. 311