



## Gospel Community Notes & Questions

**Title:** Gods We Make

**Text:** Exodus 32

**Theme:** The human heart is an idol factory, but God, in His mercy, has sent the one Mediator who can truly redeem us from our idols.

**Teaching Notes:** Exodus 32 records one of the most devastating moments in Israel's history: the covenant is broken almost as soon as it is established. While Moses is on the mountain receiving the blueprints for God's dwelling place, Israel grows impatient, turns away from the Lord, and fashions a golden calf for worship. What follows is rebellion, false worship, judgment, and the shattering of the covenant. Moses intercedes before God as a mediator for the people, pleading for mercy on their behalf.

Exodus 32 ultimately points to Jesus Christ, the greater Moses and true Mediator, who gave His life as the sinless substitute for sinners. He now stands as the eternal intercessor who alone can save idolaters and restore us to God.

### Outline:

Idolatry exposes the sinfulness of the human heart, the holiness of God's judgment, and our need for a true savior.

#### 1. Broken Covenant (Ex. 32:1-6)

- Israel grew impatient and demanded a god they could see, touch, and control.
- Turning from the Lord, they broke the covenant and replaced Him with a man-made substitute, worshipping what could not save them.

#### 2. Bold Intercession (Ex. 32:7-14)

- God's holy wrath burned against Israel's covenant rebellion and false worship.
- Moses stood in the gap for Israel, interceding for mercy based on God's past redemption, his reputation among the nations, and his covenant promises.

#### 3. Bitter Consequences (Ex. 32:15-29)

- Moses came down the mountain, broke the tablets of the covenant, and destroyed the golden calf.
- Aaron minimized his guilt and shifted blame instead of confessing and owning his sin.
- God's judgment fell on Israel, bringing death and a plague (v. 35).

#### 4. Better Mediator Needed (Ex. 32:30-35)

- Moses offered himself for the people, but he could not atone for their guilt. Only a sinless substitute could truly save sinners.
- Jesus is the greater Moses, the true Mediator who bore God's judgment in our place and secured a better covenant through His blood.



### Questions to Explore Individually and With Your Group

1. What is one thing you learned or observed from Exodus 32?
2. Israel became like what they worshipped. Do you remember how they were described in Exodus 32? Have you ever noticed yourself becoming more like what you worship?
3. We may not bow down to golden statues or carved idols, but our hearts are “idol factories.” What modern “gods” or idols do you see most present in our culture, city, generation, or stages of life that people look to for identity, security, or worth instead of God? **(Note: Idols are often good things turned into ultimate things, God-substitutes, and false saviors. See the list on the last page to help identify them.)**
4. Israel didn’t abandon Yahweh for a completely different god, they wanted a “guaranteed” god they could control. What’s the difference between trusting God and trying to control Him? Where are you most tempted to trade trust in God for something that feels more certain or secure?
5. When you find yourself waiting on God and He feels distant or silent, where are you most tempted to turn for comfort, control, or security? What does that reveal about where your trust is actually anchored?
6. We are shaped by what we worship (Psalm 115:4–7). Can you identify a specific way a past or present idol has quietly made you less free, more distracted, or less fully human than you were created to be?
7. Aaron said, “I threw the gold into the fire, and out came this calf.” Why do we so often blame-shift when we sin? When are you most tempted to minimize sin or avoid responsibility?
8. Read 1 Corinthians 10:6–14. Paul says Israel’s story was written as a warning for us. What specific warning do you most need to hear from Exodus 32 right now? What does “fleeing idolatry” practically look like in your life this week?
9. Exodus 32 shows the power of intercession. Take time to go around your group and share prayer requests, then spend time praying and interceding for one another.
10. What is one specific idol you need to let go of, “smash”, surrender, or release this week? Who in your GC can hold you accountable to do it?

### Prayer Prompts

- Ask God to place someone on your heart to intercede for this week, and pray with boldness and faith, trusting that God works through the prayers of His people.
- Confess the idols you turn to instead of God in seasons of waiting, silence, fear, or disappointment. Bring them honestly before the Lord and turn to Jesus, who forgives, saves, and satisfies.



## Identifying Personal Idols

1. Briefly review the list below. Which one resonates most with you, and what might that reveal about what you tend to look to for identity or worth?

**Tim Keller** challenges us to complete this statement honestly:

*“Life only has meaning / I only have worth if...”*

- I have power and influence over others.” (Power Idolatry)
- I am loved and respected by \_\_\_\_.” (Approval Idolatry)
- I have this kind of pleasure experience, a particular quality of life.” (Comfort idolatry)
- I am able to get mastery over my life in the area of \_\_\_\_.” (Control idolatry)
- people are dependent on me and need me.” (Helping Idolatry)
- someone is there to protect me and keep me safe.” (Dependence idolatry)
- I am completely free from obligations or responsibilities to take care of someone.” (Independence idolatry)
- I am highly productive and getting a lot done.” (Work idolatry)
- I am being recognized for my accomplishments, and I am excelling in my work.” (Achievement idolatry)
- I have a certain level of wealth, financial freedom, and very nice possessions.” (Materialism idolatry)
- I am adhering to my religion’s moral codes and accomplished in its activities.” (Religion idolatry)
- This one person is in my life and happy to be there, and/or happy with me.” (Individual person idolatry)
- I feel I am totally independent of organized religion and am living by a self-made morality.” (Irreligion idolatry)
- My race and culture is ascendant and recognized as superior.” (Racial/cultural idolatry)
- A particular social grouping or professional grouping or other group lets me in.” (Inner ring idolatry)
- My children and/or my parents are happy and happy with me.” (Family idolatry)
- Mr. or Ms. “Right” is in love with me.” (Relationship Idolatry)
- I am hurting, in a problem; only then do I feel worthy of love or able to deal with guilt.” (Suffering idolatry)
- my political or social cause is making progress and ascending in influence or power.” (Ideology idolatry)
- I have a particular kind of look or body image.” (Image idolatry)

### Helpful Articles on Idolatry

- [Tim Keller - Identifying Idols](#)
- [David Powlison - X-Ray Questions - Discerning Functional gods](#)
- [Brad Bigney - Identifying and Repenting of Idols of the Heart](#)
- [Brad Bigney - Identifying-Personal-Idols](#)