



# WEEK 1

## SERMON GUIDE



### THE BIG IDEA

We defeat the god of me  
by giving up our seat.

### THE BIBLE

Exodus 20:1-3; Mark 10:35-45  
Matthew 16:24-25

## WHAT?

## WE'RE STARTING A NEW SERIES

### PROP | The Four Idols

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Throughout this series, create a simple set that will stay up (with minor adjustments) all four weeks of this series. You'll need four pillars with one golden "idol" on each pillar. For full details, check the instructional Props PDF provided in your downloads for this week.

### PROP | The Boss's Desk

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this week only, create a second set element. You'll need an office desk, an office chair, and some accessories (like a name plate or "World's Best Boss" mug). For full details, check the instructional Props PDF provided in your downloads for this week.

### QUESTION | Have you ever been bossed around?

- We're kicking off a new series today called Boss. So here's what I want to know: have you ever been bossed around? Maybe by an adult, or by a bossy sibling, or maybe by a friend who might have a few control issues? Someone share a quick story about a time someone bossed you around.
- Let a few students respond with their stories or comments.

### QUESTION | How does it feel to get bossed around?

- Let a few students respond.

**QUESTION | Have you ever wanted to scream, "You're not the boss of me!"?**

- *Wait for students to raise their hands, agree out loud, or nod.*
- Sure you have. I know I have! We all have at least one person in our lives who always seems to be telling us what to do, right? Some days it's our parents, or our teachers, or our siblings, or that one friend that drives us totally crazy.
- How about this: all together, let's just get this out of our systems, shall we? On the count of three, I want you to picture that person who's always trying to boss you around, and we're going to yell, "You're not the boss of me!" 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . *You're not the boss of me!* Wow, I feel better already.

SO WHAT?

**STORY | Talk about a time you felt bossed around by an authority figure as a teenager.**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a story (or have another adult tell a story) about a time when, as a teenager, you pushed back against an authority figure who was "bossing you around," but (in hindsight) it's clear that you were in the wrong. Choose a disagreement over something trivial, like homework or dishes, and try to tell the story in a way that makes it seem like you are still convinced you are right all these years later, even though you were very clearly wrong.*
- At the time, I was so angry and so sure that I was right for feeling that way. But when I look back on that moment now . . . wow, was I wrong.
- I don't know if anyone has told you this before, but when you're a teenager it's really normal to disagree with adults, to question authority figures, and to feel like you're constantly being bossed around by people who are older than you.
- Sometimes when you go toe-to-toe with an adult, you might actually be right (because adults are, surprisingly, not always right about everything). But sometimes, like teenage me, you'll look back and realize you weren't always as right as you thought you were either.

**PROP | The Boss's Desk**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *While you teach, interact with the desk and sit down in the seat when appropriate.*
- When you're a teenager, pushing back on authority figures is a normal (and healthy) part of growing up. Wanting to be your own boss is kind of how God designed you to be during this stage.
- When you were a kid, you were dependent on adults for survival. Adults were your bosses, and for good reason. Without them, you would've literally died. But now that you're getting older and becoming more independent, your brain is wired to crave more and more independence. It's like your brain is constantly shouting at everyone, "You're not the boss of me! I'm the boss of me!" *[Sit down at the desk, pick up the mug, point to the name plate, etc.]*
- It's normal to want to be in charge, make your own decisions, be your own person, and chart your own course. Those are good things! It's how God made you. And it doesn't end when you stop being a teenager, by the way. We all have a tendency to want to be in charge of our own lives.
- But . . . let's be honest. We may want to be our own bosses, but we're not always the most qualified people for the job. Take me, for example.

**STORY | Tell 3 quick anecdotes about moments when you tried to be your own boss.**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *In just a few sentences each, tell three quick stories, each followed by a summary sentence . . .*
  - *Talk about a time you acted selfishly and, as a result, hurt a family member or a peer. **SAY:** "When we're our own boss, we might think we're all that matters."*
  - *Talk about a time you bucked the authority of an adult or parent and, as a result, got into trouble or hurt yourself. **SAY:** "When we're our own boss, we can cause a lot of damage."*
  - *Talk about a time you disobeyed God when following Him was inconvenient. **SAY:** "When we're our own boss, we can miss out on God's best for us."*
- So the idea of being your own boss might sound great . . . but it's not always the best idea.
- When it comes to this topic of who your boss is, here's what I want to talk about today: especially when you're a teenager, there is a fine line between independence and idolatry. Independence can be a good thing, but idolatry never is. Let me explain what I mean by idolatry.

**THE FIRST COMMANDMENT**

**SCRIPTURE | Exodus 20:1-3**

- In the book of Exodus, we get to read the story of God saving the people of Israel from slavery, bondage, and misery. He saves them in an incredible, miraculous way, then literally splits a sea in half to help them escape from their would-be captors. It's amazing. God shows up for the Israelites in a big way. And then He tells them, "Follow me—we're going on a journey through the desert. At the end of the journey, I'll lead you to an incredible new land, where you can settle down and be free."
- If you know anything about the story of the Israelites, you may know that their little journey gets sidetracked. The people keep rebelling against God, turning away from Him, and disobeying Him, so God keeps extending their journey through the desert so He can correct and teach them along the way.
- In Exodus 20, we read that God calls Moses, the leader of the Israelites, to the top of a mountain, where God gives Moses a few basic guidelines for the people of Israel to follow. We know them today as The Ten Commandments. We're not going to go through all ten of them today, but I want you to hear the first one.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Exodus 20:1-3.*
- When this part of Israel's story was taking place, people believed in a lot of different gods. Even many of the Israelites who followed the God of the Bible thought there were other gods out there too—gods that competed with their God for The #1 God Award.
- The word "before" in this verse, when translated, doesn't have to do with order or rank. God is not saying it's okay to worship a bunch of gods, as long as He is first. God is saying we are to have no other gods, period. He is telling His people to worship only Him, the one true God.
- So why are we talking about this? What does this ancient story about idols have to do with us?
- You and I probably aren't praying to rival gods or making idols in their image, but that doesn't mean we're not actively worshipping other gods. It just means that our gods look a little different than they did back then. Today, you may not be tempted to worship the god of Baal, but you will absolutely be tempted to worship the god of *you*.

## PROP | The Four Idols

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Uncover the first of the four idols and hold it while you teach.*
- You worship the god of you when you put yourself first, push to the front of a line, share some gossip that will make someone else look bad, put someone down, or deliberately disobey God because you're sure you know better than He does. And you're not the only one.

## SCRIPTURE | Mark 10:35-45

- When Jesus was here on earth, even His disciples (the people Jesus personally led and mentored for years) were susceptible to worshiping the god of me.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Mark 10:35-37.*
- James and John were called the Sons of Thunder. They were brave, bold, and often a little bone-headed sometimes. But in this passage, they were super focused on one thing: their seat. *Sit down at the desk. Maybe prop your feet up.*
- Now that's bold. James and John were so susceptible to worshiping the god of me that they were even willing to boss around the Son of God Himself! But watch what Jesus says.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Mark 10:38-45.*
- According to Jesus, there is a way to defeat the god of me. **We defeat the god of me when we give up our seat.** *Stand up and push in the chair.* We defeat our tendency to idolize ourselves when we choose to go last instead of first, give instead of take, and serve instead of being served.

## NOW WHAT?

## WE CAN DEFEAT THE GOD OF ME

- So how do you know when you're worshiping the god of me? Here are some signs . . .
  - **WHEN YOU ACT SELFISHLY** (Mark 10:35).
  - **WHEN YOU SPEAK ARROGANTLY** (Mark 10:37).
  - **WHEN YOU RESPOND DEFENSIVELY** (Mark 10:39).
- And what do you do if you fear you've been worshiping the god of me? Here are some ideas . . .
  - **ACT SELFLESSLY.** Go last. Put someone else first. Serve people.
  - **SPEAK GENEROUSLY.** Speak well of someone else before you speak well of yourself. Practice encouraging others for who they are and how they impact you. Say thank you. Your words have power, even over your own attitude.
  - **RESPOND HUMBLY.** Be quicker to listen than you are to speak. Assume you still have so much to learn (because you do—and so do I). Apologize when you're wrong.
- The god of me isn't a god you want to serve. When you serve the god of me, you hurt yourself, you hurt others, and you miss out on the kind of full and abundant life God has designed for you: a life that only comes by serving Him, and Him alone.
- This week, it's my prayer for you that you would be able to see the ways you've made the mistake of worshiping the god of me, and that you would choose to give up your seat.