



WEEK 2

SERMON GUIDE



THE BIG IDEA

We defeat the god of stuff by letting go of our things.

THE BIBLE

Exodus 20:1-3, 32:1-4; Luke 12:13-34
Matthew 16:24-26

WHAT?

WE'RE BACK FOR WEEK 2 OF THIS SERIES

PROP | The Four Idols

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** As you begin teaching, your four pillars and four idols should be in the same location as last week. The first idol (the god of me) should be uncovered and visible. The other three should be covered with black tablecloths or cardboard boxes with question marks painted on their sides. For full details, check the instructional Prop PDF provided in your downloads for this week.

STORY | Talk about a physical possession you really wish you owned right now.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Tell a story about whatever the one possession is that you really wish you had right now. It might be a new pair of shoes, concert tickets to see your favorite artist, a fancy new car, or a phone upgrade. All that matters is that you want it and can talk about it in an engaging way.
- I know that I absolutely do not "need" this thing. I get that. But I still really, really want it.

QUESTION | What's one thing you really wish you owned right now?

- Let a few students respond.

WHAT WE WANT IS NOT THE SAME AS WHAT WE NEED

- Every time you get online, watch a show, or drive down the street, you see ads. Nearly 100% of the time, those ads are for things you definitely don't need . . . but you still totally want.
- For some people (especially today), wanting more, newer, and better stuff is an epidemic.

IMAGE | Show the three images included in your downloads.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Display Image #1.*
- Does anyone know what this is? It's a storage container. If you ever run out room in your house to store all of your stuff, you could rent one of these to house all of the things that don't fit inside the walls of your home. If you've ever seen a show like *Storage Wars*, you know people can pack a ton of junk inside those containers.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Display Image #2.*
- Across the continent of Europe, if you add up all the storage containers people own to store all their extra stuff, you'd get this number. 2,400 storage units that are being used to house people's extra stuff. That's a lot. It would take me 40 minutes to even count that high. Now, any guesses on how many storage containers people in the United States have?
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Display Image #3.*
- 58,000 storage units! That's 24 times more storage units than the entire continent of Europe! That's more than the number of McDonald's, Starbucks, Walmarts, and CVS stores on the entire planet, combined. Why in the world would we need so much storage space? Well, I think it's safe to say that we might have a problem with stuff, don't do you think?
- I think many of us have bought into the lie that the things we want are the things we need, but we don't *need* the latest phones, shoes, game systems—we just *want* them. And once we have them, we don't want to give them up.

SO WHAT?

STORY | Talk about a time you let your stuff boss you around.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a story (or have another adult tell a story) about a time when your love of stuff caused you to act in a way that was harmful to you or to others. It could be a time you wanted more of something, when you were unhappy with something you already had, or when you didn't want to share or let go of something that was yours.*
- At the time, I thought I was trying to be the boss of my stuff, but I was actually letting my stuff be the boss of me.

PROP | The Four Idols

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Unveil the next idol on the second podium. Hold and interact with it while you teach.*
- In this series, we're asking the question, "Who (or what) is the boss of me?" Last week, we talked about our tendency to want to be the "boss of me," and how that tendency often leads us into trouble when we begin to worship the "god of me." This week, we're going to talk about a second idol that we end up worshipping when we let it be the boss of us: our stuff. Our money. Our things.

SCRIPTURE | Exodus 20:1-3, 32:1-4

- Last week, we learned about a word you don't really hear that often outside of church these days: idolatry. Idolatry is what we call worshipping any god other than the one true God.

- In the days the Bible was written, most people believed there were many gods, rather than just one. There was a lot of fighting about whose god was best. Often, when things weren't going well for a person or group of people, they would abandon their old god and begin worshiping a new god, hoping their new god would treat them better than the last one.
- Even the people of Israel, the true God's chosen people, were guilty of this.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Exodus 32:1-4.*
- While Moses was on the mountain getting a message from God, the people of Israel had already decided, "Eh, God was taking too long, so we'll just worship a new god now." When Moses came down from the mountain to present the Israelites with The Ten Commandments (the message God had given him), do you remember the very first thing on the list? We talked about it last week.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read 20:1-3.*
- It's pretty ironic, isn't it, now that we know what the Israelites were doing while this was happening?
- 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 . . . and definitely not an imaginary golden baby cow god.
- I'm guessing you've never literally created your own idol out of your mom's jewelry and worshiped it, but if you're like most people (and I think you are), I think you have more in common with the people of Israel than you might think. I know I do, and I know I'm not the only one.

SCRIPTURE | Luke 12:13-34

- Many years after this golden calf incident, there was a man who was listening to Jesus teach. Then he called out to him.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Luke 12:13.*
- Let's stop right there. Already, we can see that this man has given his stuff (or his desire for more stuff) a lot of authority in his life. He has let it come between him and his own brother!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Luke 12:24-21.*
- According to Jesus, the riches, the possessions, and the stuff we store up for ourselves is . . . well, it's worthless. We can spend our lives trying to collect more, more, more, but when we come to the end of our lives, what will have been the point? You can spend our limited time on earth trying to acquire more stuff, but if today were your last day, is that really what you want your life to have been about—the pursuit of more stuff?
- Jesus makes it clear that, although the world may teach us to acquire more, more, more, the quality of your life has nothing to do with the stuff you own. No amount of stuff can satisfy you.
- Just like the Israelites, who built their own god when they were tired of waiting for the real God to come through, we often turn to our stuff as a way to find fulfillment, peace, meaning, and significance. But it never works. Not really. We could gain everything there is to gain in the world, but if our deepest desire is simply to gain more, we'll continue to be empty and unsatisfied. No amount of stuff can satisfy.
- So what can we do? How can we break away from worshiping the god of stuff? The answer may be simpler than you think.
- Last week, we said we defeat the god of me when we give up our seat. Today's big idea is similar. **We defeat the god of stuff by letting go of our things.** It's that simple, and that difficult.

NOW WHAT?

WE CAN DEFEAT THE GOD OF STUFF

- You may not own barns full of grain or have recently inherited your father's entire estate, but you do have some "stuff" you can call your own. Just because you're not a millionaire doesn't mean this conversation doesn't affect you. It does. You don't need to be rich to worship the god of stuff.
- You may not have a house, or a car, or a steady income right now, but you have something, and someday you'll have even more. That's why it's so important to talk about this now, when the stakes are low, so you can develop the kind of habits and attitudes toward your stuff that will help you stay in a right relationship with your stuff—the kind of relationship where you can own stuff, but your stuff won't own you.
- *Pick up and hold the "god of stuff" idol as you close.*
- So how do you know when you're worshipping the god of stuff? Here are some signs . . .
 - **WHEN YOU PRIORITIZE STUFF OVER PEOPLE** (Luke 12:13).
 - **WHEN YOU ALWAYS WANT MORE STUFF.**
 - **WHEN YOU'RE HESITANT TO SHARE YOUR STUFF.**
 - **WHEN YOU FIND YOUR IDENTITY IN YOUR STUFF.**
- And what do you do if you fear you've been worshipping the god of stuff? Let it go.
 - **GIVE YOUR STUFF AWAY.**
 - **BUY MORE STUFF FOR OTHER PEOPLE.**
 - **BUY LESS STUFF FOR YOURSELF.**

VIDEO | The Uniform Project

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play a video ([this one](#) could work as a silent visual you while you teach) or show images from The Uniform Project, while you tell the story behind the project. You can read about The Uniform Project [here](#).)*
- Here's an example that might inspire you. I love how Sheena took on this challenge of limiting her own stuff so she could give others what they desperately needed.
- I don't know how God might be calling you to respond to this conversation today, but I hope you're listening. Our relationship with our stuff is so powerful—it has the ability to really help or really harm us, others, and the world around us.
- This week, it's my prayer for you that you would allow God to help you discover what it means to be in a right relationship with your stuff—that you would let Him help you own your stuff without it owning you.