



# FIRST THINGS FIRST

Week 4

## BREAKING THE ICE

Tell the group about your favorite summer vacation memory.

If you could travel anywhere in the world today, where would you go and why?

## MAIN CONTENT

Pastor Kevin opened this week's message by sharing a story about walking his friend, a pastor from India, around downtown Nashville. His friend's comment was that "It's hard to get past all the idolatry".

Pastor Kevin said it was surprising since there are over 300 million idols in India. But his friend explained further that idolatry is an action or thought which takes the human heart far from God or something people tend to worship or give more priority to than God. He observed that many people here in the U.S. were enjoying their lives with worldly pleasures. Those worldly pleasures had become their god.

1. What comes to mind when you think of idols? Can you think of any modern-day 'idols' that people may worship without realizing it?
2. Based on the definition of idolatry above, is there anything in your life that you are tempted to worship or give priority to over God?

In Matthew 6:24, Jesus taught His disciples (and us) to not worship money – namely that we can't serve both God and money. Jesus says, "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

You can't serve two of anything, whether it's money or something else – there's only room for One on the throne of our hearts.

3. Have you ever been tempted to serve or love money instead of God? Why is money so tempting to our hearts?

4. Is there something else that competes for the #1 position on the throne of your heart? What is it and how does it affect you and your relationship with God?

No matter who we are, we all have idols in our lives. Once we identify what they are, we need to know what to do with them and how to change them. The Bible calls this change of heart "repentance". In Ezekiel 14:6, God calls the people of Israel to repentance saying, "Turn from your idols and renounce all your detestable practices!" He's asking them to take action – to turn away from the idol and back to Himself, and also to renounce the things that they were doing that led them into idolatry.

5. If repentance requires a change of heart and change of practice, can you identify what thoughts, actions or practices are drawing you away from God?

Another component of repentance involves confessing our sins, both to God and to others we can trust. 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." Similarly, James 5:16 says "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed."

6. Do you make a regular practice of confessing your sins to God? How about confessing to another person?

7. What do you think confession does for us, and for our hearts? How does confession help us in turning away from worshipping idols?

Getting free from idol worship, through repentance and confession, sets us free to live in a right relationship with God. But how do we ensure that we continue in this freedom from idolatry?

Pastor Kevin recommended three strategies to help us: Give GLORY to God, give THANKS to God, and SERVE the Creator and others.

8. Can you name an example of each of those three strategies above? How have you seen those strategies work in your life before?

## CLOSING PRAYER

Father, we come to you with hearts ready and willing to repent. Holy Spirit, convict us of our own idol worship so that we may confess our sins and be set free. Jesus, continue teaching us what it means to follow your way instead of the world's way. Amen.

## ACTION STEP

- Set aside 15 minutes each day this week to pray. When you do, begin with **GIVING THANKS** to God, followed by **REPENTANCE** for any idols in your life, and finally ending with asking God how you can **SERVE** Him and others.
- Take time to ask God what idols are in your life currently – it might help if you start with [crosspoint.tv/firstthings](https://crosspoint.tv/firstthings) to help you identify the idols you struggle with. Once you have that list, find a trusted friend whom you can confess those idols, and ask if they can pray for you afterward.
- One way we serve others is by creating space for community to happen. Consider leading a group of your own in August! If you are interested and want to apply to be a group leader, head to [crosspoint.tv/groups](https://crosspoint.tv/groups).