

THE IDOL FACTORY – Part 4

OVERVIEW:

In session two, we identified idols at work in your company or industry, but how can we engage these idols in godly ways? We have an opportunity to displace idols through the way we respond personally, interact with peers, and advocate for change with superiors or fellow industry leaders.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Displacing Institutional Idols

Consider the suggestions for engaging idols below.

- Which resonate most with you?
- What practices would you add to this list?

Lead IN – Respond Personally

- Be proactive. Ask yourself, “What’s a distinctly Christian way to respond to this issue?”
- Look for ways to add value to the company in this area, even while you’re engaging idolatrous elements of daily operations.
- Resist temptation! Put support structures in place to help you withstand these idols (i.e. know your triggers, ask friends to pray for you, turn to God for strength).

Lead OUT – Engage Your Peers and Company Culture

- Don’t underestimate your influence, even if you don’t see yourself in a position of power; anyone can shape workplace culture regardless of title.
- Maintain positive rapport with your coworkers. To influence, you need their respect.
- Don’t feed the beast. Determine which behaviors, attitudes, or perspectives foster this form of idolatry and avoid them; rather, look for ways to nourish positive, life-giving practices at work.
- Speak into the area of idolatry in winsome (vs. moralistic) ways.

Lead UP – Address Your Superiors or the Industry

- If you are in a position of influence, dare to structure the company’s work differently. Resisting idolatry in this area could become a distinctive that sets you apart from your competitors.
- Many employees have the opportunity to speak openly to management one or twice a year

through the performance review process. Be prepared to take advantage of these windows of opportunity!

- If you have a vision for how the idol can be addressed in your company, make a business case for change to a superior. Ask the appropriate leader if you can pitch a new idea about how to do work well as a team.
- Recognize that this level of change takes place gradually over time. Have patience and take advantage of every opportunity. As a senior leader at a local public relations firm observed:

Use these principles to respond to the challenge presented in the case study below:

CASE STUDY: The Quest for Billable Hours

Ashley works for an influential marketing firm in her city, whose fortunes rise and fall with the number of billable hours associates charge their clients each year. This billing structure shapes the company's daily operations and culture in powerful ways. Colleagues quietly compete with each other to see who can accumulate the most hours and are tempted to inflate the number of hours they bill. Some have mastered the art of "double billing" – a technique that bills 2 separate clients for work done at the same time (i.e. logging time driving to Client A's location while participating in a call for Client B). Ashley worries that the quest for billable hours has become an idol in her own life, and in her company's culture.

- o How would you respond to this challenge if Ashley were:
 - A junior associate
 - A senior leader within the company?

A senior leader at a Denver public relations observed: "In my experience, a good manager will recognize if an employee is doing something in a distinct way that is positively shaping things. For the employee, I think that means being ready to accept a compliment or reward for your efforts to counter the industry idol and leveraging that to suggest how the company might encourage or support similar efforts in other employees/teams. Something as simple as framing your response to a compliment, such as, "Thanks for recognizing that I am conservative about my time entry and never inflate my hours. Have you ever thought about offering incentives to our team for things like client satisfaction or work quality to demonstrate the priorities you have in addition to billable hours?" "

Now, take these principles and apply them to idols you identified in your company or industry in a previous session.

- o How will you respond to the idols you encounter in your daily work?
- o What supports do you need to put in place to strengthen you as engage these idols?