

4. Choose one of the ways you sometimes wrongly center your life (see the list on the outline under point two) and reflect on how re-center your life on Christ.

5. How is it that we often treat God as a Baal?

6. What can you learn from Elijah's prayer for your own prayers?

7. Looking back over this week's sermon and study, what one thing is most important for you to remember and apply.

SERIES: Kings & Prophets

SERMON 1: "The God Who Answers with Fire"

TEXT: 1 Kings 18:17-40

DATE: September 9/10, 2017

MORE LIKE US THAN WE THINK

- We are just as _____ as they were.
- We have the same _____.

The only real difference between them and us is that they were more honest than we are—they called their _____.

- Our religious practices are almost identical.

HIDDEN DANGERS

1. Treating God and the gods as if they are _____

There's a infinite difference between coexisting with other religions in the free marketplace of ideas and coexisting with other religions i _____.

2. Treating the gods as if they are _____

We make created things the _____ things. We worship and misuse the things God gave us to enjoy as gifts from him.

- If you center your life and identity on your **spouse or partner**, you will be emotionally dependent, jealous, and controlling. The other person's problems will be overwhelming to you.
- If you center your life and identity on your **family and children**, you will try to live your life through your children until they resent you or have no self of their own. At worst, you may abuse them when they displease you.
- If you center your life and identity on your **work and career**, you will be a driven workaholic and a boring, shallow person. At worst you will lose family and friends and, if your career goes poorly, develop deep depression.
- If you center your life and identity on **money and possessions**, you'll be eaten up by worry or jealousy about money. You'll be willing to do unethical things to maintain your lifestyle, which will eventually blow up your life.

- If you center your life and identity on **pleasure, gratification, and comfort**, you will find yourself getting addicted to something. You will become chained to the “escape strategies” by which you avoid the hardness of life.
- If you center your life and identity on **relationships and approval**, you will be constantly overly hurt by criticism and thus always losing friends. You will fear confronting others and therefore will be a useless friend.
- If you center your life and identity on a **“noble cause,”** you will divide the world into “good” and “bad” and demonize your opponents. Ironically, you will be controlled by your enemies. Without them, you have no purpose.
- If you center your life and identity on **religion and morality**, you will, if you are living up to your moral standards, be proud, self-righteous, and cruel. If you don’t live up to your standards, your guilt will be utterly devastating. (Tim Keller, The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism)

3. Treating God like one of the _____

- Elijah prayed out of a covenant relationship with God as a member of God’s people.
- Elijah prayed a God-centered prayer.
- Elijah prayed for God’s mission, for people lost in sin.

When you pray, expecting God to come through because of what you’ve done, you’ve not prayed in the name of Jesus, you’ve prayed in your own name and you’ve prayed _____.

Family Discussion Questions:

1. What are some ways our family can do to face opposition today?
2. What are some “altars” our family has established that have caused us to neglect our relationship to God?
3. As a family, discuss “false gods” in our day that consume our time and effort?

CHRIST CONNECTION

The prophets of Baal danced and slashed themselves before the altar, thinking they must bleed in order to express their devotion. But the true God is different than false gods like Baal. He expressed His devotion to us by sending His Son—Jesus Christ—who bled and died for us so that we could receive His grace through faith.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Please complete this study on your own, then bring it to your small group for discussion.

1. Looking back over your notes from this week’s sermon, what particularly caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?
2. Read 1 Kings 18:17-40. Reflect on the statement from the sermon: “The only real difference between them and us is that they were more honest than we are—they called their gods gods.”
3. What are some of the ways we “slash” ourselves to appease our gods?

BIG PICTURE QUESTION

How many gods are there?