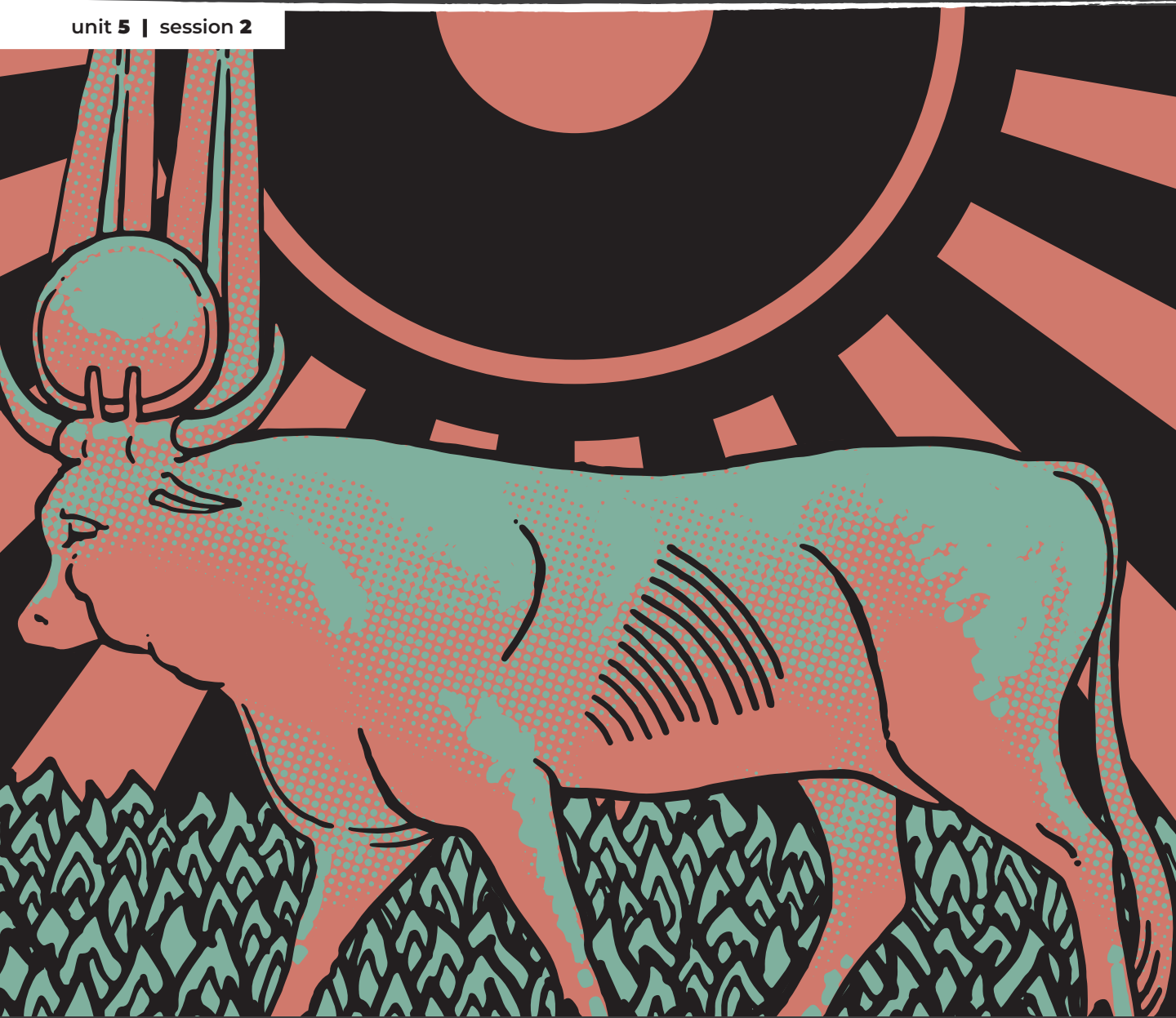


# MAKE GODS FOR *US*

unit 5 | session 2



## CHRIST CONNECTION

“The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love” and truth (Ps. 103:8). He will judge sin, yet He is faithful to forgive and save all who come to Him in repentance and faith.

# MADE TO

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to dig in and read all of the content on this timeline.

Exodus 32

Exodus 34

## WE'RE MADE TO WORSHIP

### EXODUS 32:1-6

1 When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, "Up, make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." 2 So Aaron said to them, "Take off the rings of gold that are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me." 3 So all the people took off the rings of gold that were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. 4 And he received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf. And they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!" 5 When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow shall be a feast to the LORD." 6 And they rose up early the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings. And the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.

## ONLY GOD IS WORTHY OF WORSHIP

### EXODUS 32:7-14

7 And the LORD said to Moses, "Go down, for your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. 8 They have turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them. They have made for themselves a golden calf and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it and said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!'" 9 And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. 10 Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, in order that I may make a great nation of you." 11 But Moses implored the LORD his God and said, "O LORD, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? 12 Why should the Egyptians say, 'With evil intent did he bring them out, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from your burning anger and relent from this disaster against your people. 13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring, and they shall inherit it forever.'" 14 And the LORD relented from the disaster that he had spoken of bringing on his people.

## MAIN POINT.

We're made to **worship God alone.**



## THEOLOGY CONNECTION

### SIN AS IDOLATRY

Sin is not only a physical act of rebellion against God, such as lying or stealing, but it is also a **matter of the heart**. The physical displays of sin are the fruit of what has been birthed in the heart of a person (Matt. 15:10-20). In Scripture, idolatry usually refers to bowing down to a statue made of wood or gold, worshiping created things instead of the Creator. But idolatry can take on more subtle forms: a seeking of approval, security, power, pleasure, and so on. We can diagnose the **idolatry of our hearts** by examining the areas where the desires of our hearts have turned into idolatrous demands (James 4:1-2).

# DISCUSSION

## WE'RE MADE TO WORSHIP EXODUS 32:1-6

- Why do you think humans are so prone to worship things other than God? What are some of those things?
- How do we justify merging different beliefs or cultural ideas into the way we follow God? Why do we do this?
- How do you define worship? Read Psalm 115:4-8. How do we become like what we worship?

## ONLY GOD IS WORTHY OF WORSHIP EXODUS 32:7-14

- Why does God withhold justice, and what does this show about His heart for us?
- What didn't the Israelites seem to fully understand about God?
- ✝ • How does Moses's intercession for the people point to Jesus?

**THE ISRAELITES GREW IMPATIENT WAITING FOR MOSES AND FELL INTO IDOLATRY. WHAT STEPS CAN YOU TAKE TO WORSHIP GOD EVEN WHEN YOU'RE WAITING?**

## CULTURAL CONNECTION

Many of us operate with a both/and mentality. You've probably heard the phrase, "have your cake and eat it too." We want to make a lot of money and not work too hard. We want to get good grades yet be free from studying. Here's what it means spiritually: we think we can have both God and other things. We both love Him and our sin; we both worship Him and obsessively follow culture's guidelines; we want both to go to heaven and to live like the world; we want both to praise Him and to gossip or curse. We think it's okay because God loves us; we're only human. God does love us, and we are imperfect. But we don't—we can't—follow God and other gods. The Bible makes it clear: gain the world and lose your soul (Matt. 16:26-27). It's never both/and. But here's the good news: losing the world and finding life in Christ is so much better. When we follow God's commands, we live the way God designed us to live—free from sin and shame.



## DAY ONE

# ROMANS 1:20-25

If you had to list the top three things that seem to matter the most to people in our society, what would you list? Many of us would probably list things like fame, success, money, sports, sex, and self-image. If we really examine all of these, most of them have something in common: self. What matters most to society is self. And this tends to become the object of our worship. We become our own idol. Instead of worshipping God, we bow to our own desires.

The Israelites consistently struggled with idolatry. Although they had left Egypt behind them, they carried it in their hearts. They had been immersed in Egyptian culture and religion for over four hundred years. And although they knew God and had encountered Him in mighty ways, they continued to allow surrounding cultures' beliefs to creep into their beliefs. This passage reminds us that people have done this since creation. They knew God; He was evident in all He had made. But they still fell into idolatry, worshipping creation instead of its Creator. We often fall into this trap too. We worship the created. We worship ourselves, activities, social media, good grades, or relationships; we devote our hearts, our time, and our attention to these things. Our idols may look different than those of ancient Israel, but the root issue is the same. Worship only belongs to God, and when we give it to anything or anyone else, we're committing idolatry.

- **WHAT THINGS IN YOUR LIFE ARE COMPETING WITH GOD FOR YOUR HEART?**
  
- **WHY DO WE SETTLE FOR WORSHIPING THE CREATED INSTEAD OF THE CREATOR? HOW CAN YOU PROTECT YOUR HEART FROM DOING THIS?**

## PRAY

GOD, ONLY YOU DESERVE MY WORSHIP. HELP ME TO IDENTIFY THE THINGS IN MY LIFE THAT ARE COMPETING FOR MY HEART. HELP ME LAY DOWN ANY IDOLS.



## DAY TWO

# PSALM 115:4-8

If you were getting ready to fly, you'd probably want assurance that the airplane was in good working condition. If the pilot announced that one of the engines wasn't working properly, would you feel good about flying? Probably not! You'd lose trust in the airplane's ability to safely get you to your destination. Many of us would probably want to get off the airplane.

Putting our trust in anything other than God would be a lot like staying on that faulty plane. Like the psalmist explains, we often place our hope in idols of "silver and gold, the work of human hands" (v. 4). We place our hope in getting a good education so we can make a lot of money. We put our hope in relationships, in popularity, in our own identities. The psalmist goes on to say these idols appear to be alive—they mimic the real thing—but in reality, they're lifeless. Our idols often mimic what we can only find in God. They give the appearance of abundant life, but they'll one day cease to exist. They won't last. And this psalm warns that those who place their trust in idols will one day become just like them. What does that mean? If all idols fall and end in destruction, then those who place their faith in them will share in their outcome. In contrast, when we trust in God alone, we'll share in the abundant life Jesus offers us. So, get off the plane. Quit trusting in things that can't save you. Walk away. Place your hope in the only One who can give you eternal peace: Jesus.

○ **HOW DO SOME OF OUR IDOLS MIMIC WHAT WE CAN ONLY FIND IN CHRIST?**

○ **HOW CAN REMEMBERING THAT ALL IDOLS FALL HELP YOU TO WORSHIP THE ONE TRUE GOD, WHO LASTS FOREVER?**

## PRAY

LORD, I PLACE ALL MY TRUST AND HOPE IN YOU. I KNOW YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN GIVE ME LIFE. HELP ME TO WALK AWAY FROM IDOLS THAT WILL FALL.



## DAY THREE

# ROMANS 12:1-2

There's an important truth we need to revisit from our main passage this week. The Israelites begged Aaron to make them an idol out of gold. Moses had been meeting with God on Mount Sinai for forty days, and the people were tired of waiting for him to come back. They felt the innate desire to worship something. But look again at Exodus 32:5. After Aaron fashioned a bull out of gold, he then built an altar before it and claimed, "Tomorrow shall be a feast to the LORD." Did you catch what was happening? The people were trying to mesh the two things together: idolatry and worship of the one true God. Is that even possible? Don't these two things directly contradict one another since God clearly said He is the one true God? We must consider if we often do the same. We worship self and created things while attempting to worship God. We worship the idols of our culture and attach God to them to soften the fact that we're committing idolatry. We conform to the ideas of this age (v. 1). But God made it clear that He is a jealous God—jealous for the glory that only belongs to Him. He won't share it with another (Ex. 20:5). When we claim to worship God yet worship other things by devoting our hearts to them, then we aren't worshipping God. We can't be. Because to genuinely do so is to offer Him our entire heart and all of our worship. True worship is laying our lives down as a "living sacrifice" (v. 1)—heart, mind, and soul. And when we do this, God is faithful to continually renew our minds so we can discern His will. He is faithful to help us live in our culture without conforming to it.

○ **IN WHAT WAYS ARE YOU CONFORMING TO THE IDEAS OF THIS AGE—OUR CULTURE?**

○ **HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE GENUINE WORSHIP? WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO BE A "LIVING SACRIFICE"?**

**PRAY**

**GOD, I KNOW YOU WON'T SHARE YOUR  
GLORY WITH ANYTHING ELSE. HELP ME TO  
BE A LIVING SACRIFICE AND CONTINUE TO  
TRANSFORM MY MIND.**



## DAY FOUR

# PSALM 20:7-8

Think about movies you've seen which depict Greek and Roman gods and goddesses. What were they supposed to do for humans? In most movies, they're cast as heroic. They're powerful and supernatural. But if you study the Greek and Roman gods, they weren't perfect. The stories portray them more like humans with special powers. They're immoral, manipulative, selfish, and controlling. In reality, they're terrible gods. The truth is, they're not gods at all, and they can't be trusted.

What we place our trust in matters greatly. In this psalm, David wrote about deliverance in battle. He mentioned that some take pride in their chariots and horses; they lean on them and trust them for deliverance. But in a real battle, these things can't save anyone. They may offer assistance, but horses eventually tire; chariots break apart. They "collapse and fall" (v. 8). We often place our hope in things which will fail too. We depend on our own strength; we lean on our own understanding; we trust in our popularity, our intellect, and our abilities. But none of this can save us. And here's why: we make terrible gods. The thing we most need saved from is our sin, but we're powerless to save ourselves. We needed a Savior, and only Jesus Christ could save us. Worshiping and trusting in anything other than God will leave us disappointed. Everything else will collapse and fall.

○ **WHAT HAVE YOU TRUSTED IN BESIDES GOD? HOW HAVE THESE THINGS FAILED YOU?**

○ **HOW DOES KNOWING GOD WILL NEVER "COLLAPSE AND FALL" AFFECT YOUR TRUST IN HIM?**

**PRAY**

**GOD, I REPENT OF THE TIMES I'VE PLACED MY HOPE IN THINGS WHICH WILL FALL. I PLACE ALL OF MY HOPE IN YOU. THANK YOU FOR BEING MY STRONG FOUNDATION.**



## DAY FIVE

# MATTHEW 16:24-27

We're taught from a very young age to pursue our dreams. We're encouraged to go after what we want in life—to fight for a starting position on a sports team, to get a great education, to make a lot of money, to live comfortable lives, to be successful. Here's the deal: these goals aren't inherently sinful. In fact, we can honor God when we do things well. Scripture even tells us to do everything as if we're doing it for the Lord (Col. 3:23-24). But what often happens is that we lose what's most important in the process of pursuing these things. Somehow they become priority over our walk with the Lord. They take a seat on the throne in our hearts.

What does this look like? Maybe you're so exhausted from fighting for a starting position on a team that you're neglecting meeting with God each day. Maybe you're pushing really hard to get a top scholarship and don't have time to read God's Word. Maybe you're doing everything you can to make extra money so you can buy the latest trends and have stopped going to church. Maybe you're so focused on building a great life here that you're forgetting eternity. You're missing what matters most. What we chase reflects what matters most to us. But here's the hope: we can often pursue all these things and more in a godly way if we pursue God first. When we put God first, we'll gain everything we need. He'll guide us in life and help us make godly decisions. We can release our grip on the things we're chasing and chase God wholeheartedly. It's the only way to find life (v. 25).

- **WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO GAIN IN THIS WORLD? HOW IS IT AFFECTING YOU SPIRITUALLY?**
  
- **READ MATTHEW 6:31-33. WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO SEEK FIRST? HOW CAN DOING SO GIVE US ALL WE NEED?**

## PRAY

**GOD I DON'T WANT TO WASTE MY LIFE  
CHASING OTHER THINGS. HELP ME TO  
PURSUE YOU FIRST. I TRUST THAT IN DOING  
SO, YOU'LL GIVE ME WHAT I NEED.**