



## 2020: Best Year Ever?

Knowing \_\_\_\_\_ is the ultimate \_\_\_\_\_.

Worshiping \_\_\_\_\_ leads to ultimate \_\_\_\_\_.

God loves \_\_\_\_\_.

God hates \_\_\_\_\_.

Idolatry creates \_\_\_\_\_.

Idolatry desensitizes us to its \_\_\_\_\_.

We must be \_\_\_\_\_ from that \_\_\_\_\_.

That wake-up call is often \_\_\_\_\_.

But it's always meant to bring us back to the \_\_\_\_\_.

God's grace is most \_\_\_\_\_ when it eliminates what's most \_\_\_\_\_.



## 2020: Best Year Ever?

Knowing **GOD** is the ultimate **GOOD**.

Worshipping **IDOLS** leads to ultimate **BAD**.

God loves **YOU**.

God hates **IDOLATRY**.

Idolatry creates **DECEPTION**.

Idolatry desensitizes us to its **DANGER**.

We must be **SHAKEN** from that **SLUMBER**.

That wake-up call is often **UNPLEASANT**.

But it's always meant to bring us back to the **ULTIMATE GOOD**.

God's grace is most **POWERFUL** when it eliminates what's most **DEADLY**.

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

For the week of December 27, 2020

(Questions and Scriptures for further study & discussion)

1. It may be difficult for many of us to be thankful for 2020. Scripture instructs us to be thankful in all circumstances, not just when it's easy, and not just as an option or a good idea, but as a call on our lives. As you look back on the past year, how would you describe how well you lived out the principles of thankfulness in the verses below?

## **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 New International Version (NIV)**

<sup>16</sup> Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup> pray continually, <sup>18</sup> give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

## **Philippians 4:4-7 New International Version (NIV)**

<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! <sup>5</sup> Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup> Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

## **Colossians 4:2 New International Version (NIV)**

<sup>2</sup> Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

2. This weekend, Christopher talked about how God disrupts our idolatry to bring us back to the ultimate good of knowing Him better. Tim Keller defines an idol as "anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give..." Oftentimes, we seek for idols to provide security, happiness or self-fulfillment. As you read the verses from Isaiah below, take note of what they say about what only God can provide in comparison to the worthlessness of idols.

## **Isaiah 40:18-25 New International Version (NIV)**

<sup>18</sup> With whom, then, will you compare God?  
To what image will you liken him?  
<sup>19</sup> As for an idol, a metalworker casts it,  
and a goldsmith overlays it with gold  
and fashions silver chains for it.  
<sup>20</sup> A person too poor to present such an offering  
selects wood that will not rot;  
they look for a skilled worker  
to set up an idol that will not topple.  
<sup>21</sup> Do you not know?  
Have you not heard?  
Has it not been told you from the beginning?  
Have you not understood since the earth was founded?  
<sup>22</sup> He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth,  
and its people are like grasshoppers.  
He stretches out the heavens like a canopy,  
and spreads them out like a tent to live in.  
<sup>23</sup> He brings princes to naught  
and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing.  
<sup>24</sup> No sooner are they planted,  
no sooner are they sown,  
no sooner do they take root in the ground,  
than he blows on them and they wither,  
and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff.  
<sup>25</sup> "To whom will you compare me?  
Or who is my equal?" says the Holy One.

## **Isaiah 57:13 New International Version (NIV)**

<sup>13</sup> When you cry out for help,  
let your collection of idols save you!  
The wind will carry all of them off,  
a mere breath will blow them away.  
But whoever takes refuge in me  
will inherit the land  
and possess my holy mountain."

## **Isaiah 44:6-10 New International Version (NIV)**

<sup>6</sup> "This is what the LORD says—  
Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty:  
I am the first and I am the last;  
apart from me there is no God.  
<sup>7</sup> Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it.  
Let him declare and lay out before me  
what has happened since I established my ancient people,  
and what is yet to come—  
yes, let them foretell what will come.  
<sup>8</sup> Do not tremble, do not be afraid.  
Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago?  
You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me?  
No, there is no other Rock; I know not one."  
<sup>9</sup> All who make idols are nothing,  
and the things they treasure are worthless.  
Those who would speak up for them are blind;  
they are ignorant, to their own shame.  
<sup>10</sup> Who shapes a god and casts an idol,  
which can profit nothing?

Good things can become idols when they have an improper place in our hearts. As you look back on this past year, is there an area of your life that could be a potential “idol” that was exposed to you through the trials of 2020? (money, health, government, security, family, friendships, convenience, recreation, etc.)

3. James 1:2-4 tells us that trials produce perseverance and maturity in us. Have you seen any ways that the trials of this past year increased perseverance in your walk with Christ and made you more mature or closer to Him?

***James 1:2-4 New International Version (NIV)***

*<sup>2</sup> Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, <sup>3</sup> because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. <sup>4</sup> Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*

What might it look like to consider the trials of 2020 “pure joy” as this verse instructs us to do?