

FIELD-TESTED SERMON RESOURCES

SERMON SERIES

TRUSTED | BIBLICAL | FIELD-TESTED

Thank you for downloading this sample PDF from our Sermon Series line of resources.

When you stand up in front of students to proclaim the Word of God, you need trusted, creative, and biblically solid content. YM360's Sermon Series are exactly what you're looking for!

Field-tested, from-the-trenches of youth ministry, YM360 Sermon Series are complete detailed sermon outlines, discussion questions, and graphic packages designed to help you lead students closer to God through proclaiming His Word.

SERIES OVERVIEW FOR IDOLS: Putting God Back on the Throne

What do you think of when you hear the word "idols?" Something old and outdated? Something only the people in the Old Testament dealt with? While we may not carve our idols from stone anymore, anything we value more than God is our idol. The fact is, our hearts are notoriously guilty of elevating and worshipping people, ideas, and things instead of God. Sometimes, we might not even be aware of what we're doing, so half the battle is learning to recognize and identify these idols. Once we've been equipped with the right tools, we must reorient our desires and passions to God instead of what the world says is most important.

"IDOLS" COVERS THE FOLLOWING PURPOSES AND PASSAGES:

- **Session 1 – Image (Exodus 20:3-6)** | According to the world, to be successful, we have to create an image of ourselves that other people find pleasing and acceptable. While wanting to be accepted may not be inherently wrong, we've made an idol when we begin to base our value and worth on what other people say about us. When chasing our image becomes more important than God, how do we turn back and believe that what He says about us is enough?
- **Session 2 – Feelings (Genesis 3:1-6)** | Our lives are full of decisions. We make hundreds of them every day. But who, or what, are we listening to when we make them? Our feelings can be persuasive, but a deceitful heart can lead us down the wrong path. Learning to hear and listen to God can be hard, but with the help of the Holy Spirit, it's far from impossible.
- **Session 3 – Possessions (Luke 18:18-23)** | Is it bad to have a lot of stuff? Are we better than the people around us if we don't have as much stuff? Possessions don't have to be bad, but if our hands are so tightly clasped around them that we can't let go to receive what God has for us, they can be destructive. How can we learn to live more faithful lives by trusting that God will give us everything we need?
- **Session 4 – Comfort (Matthew 5:2-12)** | In a world that tries to tell us that endless sources of comfort are right at our fingertips, we're susceptible to making comfort our idol. Living comfortable lives free of pain and hardship might sound tempting, but only God can adequately fill the role of refuge and hiding place. What hope do we have when life begins to feel uncomfortable?

"IDOLS" IS PART OF YM360'S SERMON SERIES LINE OF RESOURCES AND IS IDEAL FOR:

- Any large group setting
- Mid-week youth service
- "Master teacher" format

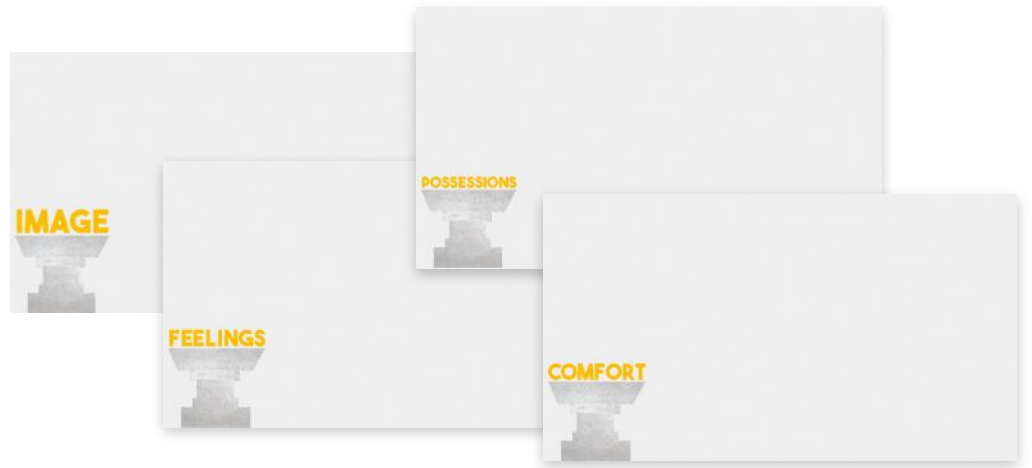
BACKGROUND SLIDES, PROMOTIONAL ARTWORK, AND MORE . . .

EVERY SERMON SERIES FROM YM360 COMES WITH:

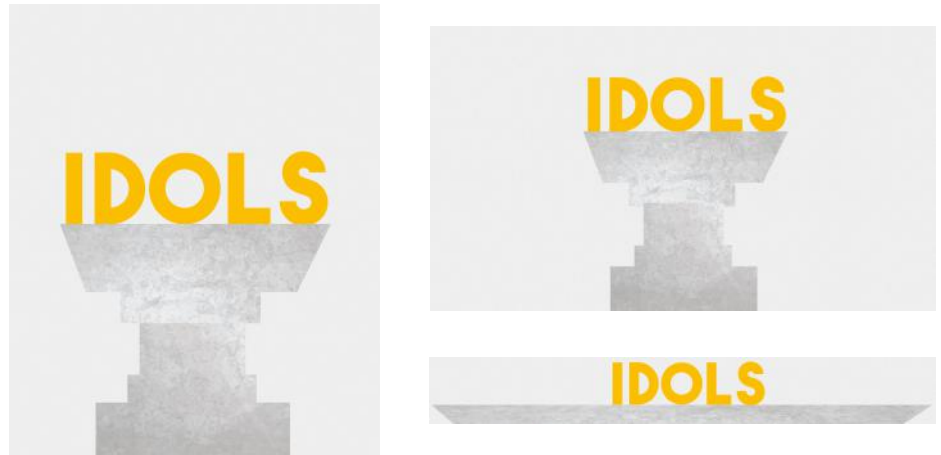
- **Detailed Sermon Outlines** – Every Sermon Series comes with detailed sermon outlines. Teach them "as is" or adapt them to suit your specific ministry context.
- **Discussion questions** – Questions are designed to foster conversations, help students think critically about the teaching, and wrestle with how these Biblical truths impact their complicated and ever-changing lives. You can use these discussion questions to facilitate small groups after your large group teaching or even create handouts for students to work through the message as you go.
- **Title and Background slides** – These are designed to be dropped into your favorite presentation software to help you build a creative environment around your sermon. Use them as a backdrop for song lyrics, Scripture passages, teaching points, and any illustrations you choose to display.
- **Artwork for promo and social media** – Social media images, web banners, and a printable poster file are included. Perfect for newsletters, websites, social media platforms, or print them off for posters and bulletin inserts.
- **Logo (including native logo design files)** – We include a logo file and the native design files to allow you to use the logo in ways you see fit.
- **100% downloadable and adaptable**

Each YM360 Sermon Series comes with title and background slides, promotional art (including Instagram images), and logo treatments. Here is what to expect.

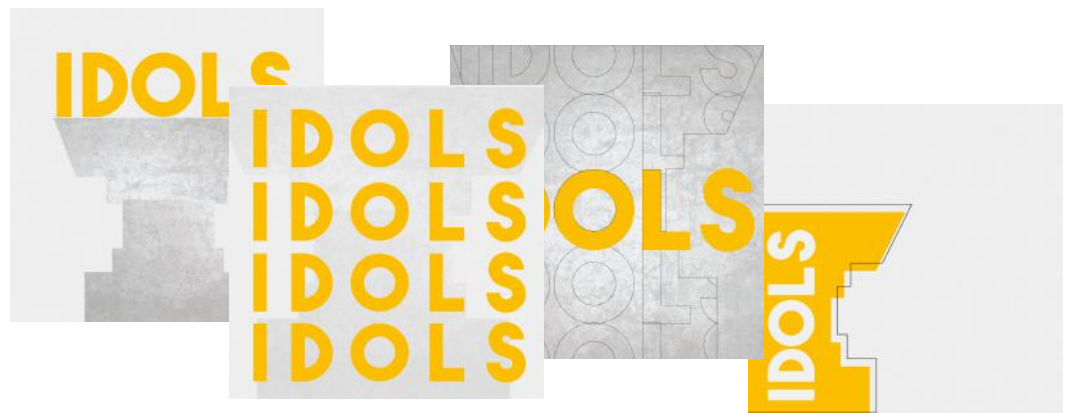
**BACKGROUND AND
TITLE SLIDES**



**PROMOTIONAL
ARTWORK**



**INSTAGRAM
IMAGES**



**LOGO
TREATMENT**



NOTE: Each YM360 Sermon Series also comes with the native files of the logo in case you want to replicate the design for other uses.

Idols Sermon Series | Session 1: Image

How To Use A YM360 Sermon Series | YM360 Sermon Series are designed for use by a communicator in a large group setting. Each series download provides various elements such as a detailed sermon outline, suggestions on illustrations or images, Scripture passages, background information, and application points that you can use to craft a message that speaks to your students in your specific context.

This series download also includes discussion questions that can be used to facilitate small groups after your large group teaching or even create handouts for students to work through the message as you go. These questions are designed to foster conversations, help students think critically about the teaching, and wrestle with how these Biblical truths impact their complicated and ever-changing lives.

Make sure to leverage the series logo, title slide, background slides, and social media artwork this YM360 Sermon Series provides for promotion and message support. We've even included the native design files to allow you the freedom to use the logo in any way that meets your needs.

This YM360 Sermon Series was created to be suitable for all types of churches and ministry environments. It was intentionally designed to provide you with everything you need while also allowing you the freedom to make it fit your particular ministry context. Nobody knows your ministry like you do. Therefore, we encourage you to make any adjustments to this series you feel are necessary to best fit the needs of your students, church, or ministry context.

A Prayer Before You Prepare | Heavenly Father, all glory, honor, and praise belongs to You alone! Without You, we would be unable to even notice or identify the idols in our hearts. Lord, as I prepare to teach this series, please search my heart and expose any areas I need to offer back to You. You are the Author and Perfecter of our faith, and apart from You, we can do nothing. Lord, this is Your church, Your youth group, and You care more about these teenagers than I could ever hope to. Thank You for Your love, Your grace, and Your mercy. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Idols Teaching Guide | A One-Page Glimpse Of Everything You Need To Prepare

Series Snapshot | *Idols* is a four-session sermon series that will challenge your students' idea that idols are merely ancient statues that have no power over our lives. This series will explain to your students that, even though they may not look like they used to, many idols are still at work today. *Idols* will equip your students with the tools they need to recognize and identify the idols in their lives and give them the steps to reorient their lives to God.

Series Overview | What do you think of when you hear the word "idols?" Something old and outdated? Something only the people in the Old Testament dealt with? While we may not carve our idols from stone anymore, anything we value more than God is our idol. The fact is, our hearts are notoriously guilty of elevating and worshipping people, ideas, and things instead of God. Sometimes, we might not even be aware of what we're doing, so half the battle is learning to recognize and identify these idols. Once we've been equipped with the right tools, we must reorient our desires and passions to God instead of what the world says is most important.

- **Session 1 - Image (Exodus 20:3-6)** | According to the world, to be successful, we have to create an image of ourselves that other people find pleasing and acceptable. While wanting to be accepted may not be inherently wrong, we've made an idol when we begin to base our value and worth on what other people say about us. When chasing our image becomes more important than God, how do we turn back and believe that what He says about us is enough?
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Idols Series | Session 1

Large Group Teaching Summary | According to the world, to be successful, we have to create an image of ourselves that other people find pleasing and acceptable. While creating and maintaining our image may not be inherently wrong, when we begin to base our value and worth on what other people say about us or see in us, we've created an idol. When chasing our image becomes more important than God, how do we turn back and believe that what He says about us is enough?

Key Takeaway | You are who Jesus says you are.

Scripture Focus | Exodus 20:3-6

What You May Need | *Optional Illustration: An Idol in Your Heart (Personal Story)*

I. Introduction

- A. Tonight, we are starting a new series called *Idols*. Before we get into it, does anyone here think that idols are still a big deal? What do you even think of when you hear the word “idol?” It’s probably something like this, right?
1. **NOTE: Show a few photos of ancient idols—gold statues, stone carvings, etc. You could also go ahead and say, “Or maybe you don’t think of that, but something more like this,” and then show a photo of American Idol or some other culturally relevant, celebrity-based reality TV show.**
- B. A lot of us may think that idols are something people only dealt with in the Old Testament way back in ancient history, but I’m here to tell you that idols are still at work today, and you most likely have some in your own life. Our hearts have a terrible tendency to elevate and prioritize things other than God, and anything we view as more important than Him is an idol. In a way, our hearts can act like idol factories, and even though they may seem harmless, the idols they create can be extremely dangerous to our spiritual lives. What’s worse is that this can sometimes happen without us even noticing.
- C. **Optional Illustration: Tell a story about an idol area in your life.**
1. Ex.: I told a story and showed a video clip from a time when my favorite NBA basketball team, the OKC Thunder, got eliminated by the Portland Trail Blazers from the NBA Playoffs. I remember right before the final shot was made, I said out loud to myself in the basement of my house, “This is going to hurt.” And it did. And the fact that it hurt exposed me just how much of an Idol I had allowed this area to become in my life.
- D. I believe that idols, similar to the story I just mentioned, are things we all need to deal with.

II. Tension

- A. YOUR HEART IS AN IDOL FACTORY
1. You may not believe that your heart is an idol factory, so let’s talk about whether or not this is true. Because until we see that this is the reality we live in, we won’t be able to recognize or identify the idols we have in our own lives.
 2. In 1830, Alexis de Tocqueville recorded a famous observation about Western societies.
 - a) He said that there was a “*strange melancholy that haunts the inhabitants...in the midst of **abundance**.*” Even though there was an abundance of wealth, people were still sad and unfulfilled. Even more recently, in 2020, when the world was shutting down, everyone went to their local grocery store to hoard toilet paper.
 - b) When the perceived lack of abundance runs rampant, how do we typically respond? How would you react if you lost all of your money today? How would it feel? What about if all your friends left you? Or your grades at school absolutely tanked? What if all the material possessions you love were taken away?

- c) In Matthew 6, Jesus warns us not to store up treasures on earth, where they will be destroyed. And He wouldn't have warned us about this if it wasn't our tendency to do it. We tend to treasure the things that we can have or achieve here on earth, and in that same passage, Jesus says, "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Our hearts rally around these things because we believe they can give us significance, security, safety, and fulfillment if we attain them.
 - d) So what we can see here is that the human heart takes good things like a successful career, love, material possessions, sports, school, and even family and turns them into ultimate things. It places the highest possible value on those things instead of God. It takes the things this world says are most important and turns them into idols.
3. To really understand where we're going in this series, let's take a look at the book of Exodus to see what God has to say about the idols we create in our hearts.

III. Scripture

A. Read [EXODUS 20:3-6](#)

1. *"You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments."*
2. This passage of Scripture comes to us during the Ten Commandments, the ten things God told the people of Israel to live by. In the list of ten, these are numbers 1 and 2.
3. God lays it out very clearly,
 - a) We should have no gods before Him (v.3)
 - b) We should not make for ourselves any idols of any kind (v.4)
 - c) And we should not worship anything other than Him (v.5)
4. But is this an "old covenant" way of thinking? Is this something that should stay in the Old Testament and not really apply to our lives now?
 - a) Sometimes, the Ten Commandments get ignored or neglected because they're old. They're part of the Law that God gave to the Israelites in what we call the old covenant, which was basically just the nature of God's relationship to His people before Jesus.
 - b) And some people think that because we now live in the new covenant, we don't have to pay attention to anything that came before. But Jesus came, not to abolish or get rid of the Law, but to fulfill it! He came to give new meaning to it.
 - c) So no, these commandments aren't outdated or archaic! In fact, check out what Jesus says when asked what the most important command is.
 - d) In Matthew 22:37-40, Jesus says, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your

Idols Sermon Series | Session 1: Image

neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

B. THE IDOL OF IMAGE

1. So both the Ten Commandments and Jesus give us the same command. God should be #1 in your life; anything you elevate to being more important than God is an idol.
2. I’ve already given a few examples of what these modern-day idols can be, but throughout this series, we’re going to look at four of them in detail. These four tend to be the most significant and widespread across people your age, and you need to know how to identify them and fight back against them.
3. So let’s double click and zoom in on the idol of “image.” To help us get started on that idea, check out these stats:
 - a) 94% of young people engage with social media on a daily basis
 - b) 4 out of 5 of Generation Z’s favorite ways to spend time include screen-based activity
 - c) 92% of children in the U.S. have a “digital footprint,” meaning 92% of people your age have entered some information about themselves somewhere on the internet at some point in time.
4. In a study done in the 1950s, teens were asked if they were a “very important person.” Less than ten percent said they were. Fifty years later, more than 80 percent of teens said they were.
5. So why do so many young people spend so much time on their phones? What’s with the massive increase in teens wanting to be seen as important people?

C. Image

1. It’s all about image! Social media helps rev the popularity engine, much like a gas pedal revs a car’s engine. Even if you are attempting to create healthy boundaries around social media, your awareness of it exists, and you’re more than likely keenly aware of how your image is portrayed.
2. Your image can quickly become the most valuable thing in your world when your whole life revolves around social media, how others see you, and what you want them to think of you. Our world tries to tell you that to have influence, gain friends, or be successful, other people need to think highly of your image. And if you buy into that, so much of your time and energy can be spent creating this image of yourself for others to see and judge. But when you place your treasure and value in your image, your heart brings it into the factory and turns it into an idol.
3. Before long, you’ll end up worshipping your image, spending all your time thinking about your image, and valuing your image above everything else. Now, let’s be honest with ourselves. Do you *want* a good image? Do you *want* to be desired by the people around you? Do you *want* people to like you?
 - a) Of course, you do! Those aren’t inherently wrong things! But one more question...*do you also want and desire these things from God?*

- D. Tim Keller says that *“every human being must live for something. Something must capture our imaginations; our heart’s more fundamental allegiance and hope. But, the Bible tells us, without the intervention of the Holy Spirit, the object will never be God Himself.”*

Idols Sermon Series | Session 1: Image

- E. If the stats from earlier are any indication, the fact that we spend most of our time on screens and not engaging with God means that our natural gravitation will not be *toward* God but *away* from Him. We will gravitate toward ourselves and the image we can create.
 - 1. But YOUR RELENTLESS PURSUIT OF IMAGE WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU FEELING WHOLE OR FULFILLED. There are always more likes, more followers, and more edits we can make to our image to make ourselves look better or feel better. Your image will undoubtedly fail you at some point. Sooner or later, someone will disapprove of your image and all the hard work you put into it.
 - 2. When you're trying to create or maintain an image, you're trying to find acceptance from another source that isn't Jesus.

IV. Application

- A. So what are you to do? If I've been talking about you, and you know that you're someone who values their image above everything else, how can you flip the script? I think we can do a few things to curb our desire to make ourselves look good to other people.
- B. CONTROL YOUR SCREENTIME
 - 1. This may sound a little silly or trivial, but your phone is only perpetuating this problem of creating and maintaining an image. It's only kindling your desire to be liked and accepted by others.
- C. Second, I think you should ask yourself a question.
 - 1. DOES YOUR IMAGE IN THE EYES OF OTHERS MATTER MORE THAN YOUR IMAGE IN THE EYES OF GOD?
 - 2. If you answered "yes" to this question, ask yourself why.
- D. Lastly, the only way you can escape this desire to be accepted by others no matter the cost, is to come to the realization that YOU ARE ACCEPTED BY GOD.

V. Gospel

- A. Jesus sacrificed Himself on the cross and took the burden of all our sins so that we could be made right with God. When He rose from the grave and defeated the power of sin and death, He gave us the opportunity to become children of God. All we have to do is repent of (ask forgiveness for, turn away from) our sins, believe that Jesus is our Savior, and give our whole life to Him. And when you give your life to Christ, you don't have to worry about how other people see you anymore because you're considered acceptable to God. YOU HAVE GOD'S APPROVAL BECAUSE HE HAS MADE YOU IN HIS IMAGE. YOU ARE WHO JESUS SAYS YOU ARE.
- B. So who does Jesus say you are? When you say "yes" to Jesus, what does He say back about you?
- C. As we walk through these, I want you to think about who you are as a child of God and what Jesus says about you.
 - 1. **RIGHTEOUS**

- a) **2 Corinthians 5:21** – *For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.*
2. **HOLY AND BLAMELESS**
 - a) **Colossians 1:22** – *He has now reconciled in His body of flesh by His death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before Him.*
3. **SANCTIFIED**
 - a) **Hebrews 10:10** – *And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

VI. Conclusion

- A. Those are incredibly life-giving and life-changing truths. But the fact of the matter is you're going to walk out of here tonight, and the pressure to create an image and all the platforms that existed before tonight's message will still exist.
- B. Maybe some of you have felt a slave to your friends, screens, or digital version of relationships for a while now. But tonight is your opportunity to leave that behind, follow Jesus, and know for a fact that you are accepted by Him. You can leave behind being a slave to the idol of image and know that how God sees you and what He says about you will never change. Because the bottom line is this: *you are who Jesus says you are.*
- C. Let's pray.

Idols Sermon Series | Session 1 Discussion Questions: Image

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Scripture Focus | Exodus 20:3-6

Idols | Session 1 Discussion Questions

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Get Them Talking | An Optional Opening Question To Get Students Talking

1. How much time do you average on your phone per week? What’s your number one used app?

Discussion Questions

1. Read Exodus 20:3-6. What does this teach you about God? What does it teach you about yourself?
2. What area of your life do you find yourself most concerned about your image? Why do you think it’s that area?
3. Fill in the blank, “If I had more _____ I would feel fulfilled in life.” What did you say? Why do you think that thing would make you more fulfilled?
4. God says that we are righteous, holy, blameless, and sanctified. Which one of those means the most to you? Why that one?
5. How can you embrace the truth that you chose in the question above? What do you think it would look like to live out that truth?
6. How does God view you? What does it mean that God has made you in His image? What might be some ways to embrace God’s image of you?
7. Do you think your screen time has anything to do with how you view your image? Why or why not? How can you control your screen time this week? How can you spend more time with God this week?