

Scott's Thoughts by Scott Deneen, Pastor to Youth and Families

"Success, money, true love, and the life you've always wanted. Many of us placed our faith in these things, believing they held the key to happiness. The recent economic meltdown has cast a harsh new light on these pursuits. In a matter of months, fortunes, marriages, careers, and a secure retirement has disappeared for millions of people. No wonder many of us feel lost, alone, disenchanting, and resentful. But the truth is that we made counterfeit gods of these good things – gods that can't give us what we really need. There is only one God who can wholly satisfy our cravings – and now is the perfect time to meet Him again... or for the first time."

Pastor Tim Keller (Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York City) wrote these words in his book *Counterfeit Gods*. In his book, Pastor Keller shows how we attempt to substitute created things for God – an attempt that fails every time.

When we think of idolatry, we normally picture people bowing down to little statues made of wood or stone – and that would be correct – but idolatry goes far beyond that little ritual. Idolatry is basically finding our significance, joy, hope, identity, security, or purpose in anything other than the true and living God.

Therefore, when I think I *must* have this new outfit to make me feel beautiful, I've made an idol out of it. When I base my self-worth on how my kids behave, I've made an idol out of them. When my emotions go up and down

with the stock market, I've made an idol out of my finances. When I love my kids, my spouse, and my family more than I love God, I've made idols of them.

Idols make grand boasts – "I will satisfy you!" "You'll be beautiful and everyone will envy you!" "You'll be the coolest

guy in town with me as your new car." "Life will be awesome with me!!" Unfortunately, as Pastor Keller wrote, idols *always* let you down. *Always*. Maybe not in this life but as people stand before God in judgment, their idols can not save/help them.

The scary thing about idolatry is that it's very easy to do – even with good things. In fact, a wise old man once wrote that our minds are perpetual idol factories – and I believe it! I am constantly basing my identity on things other than God – cars, clothes, wealth, how much fat is around my waist, etc...

Therefore, I am in constant need of repentance. I am in constant need of God's Spirit to bring me back to worshiping and adoring the true God. See a need to place your real hope, security, and self-worth in God? He rules and reigns supreme already but stands ready to receive you as you are. You just need to admit your need of him in Christ. He is willing and able to forgive you and to set your heart and mind straight – giving you what you desperately need in Him and satisfying all your heart's desires with good things. Don't be disappointed by idols anymore, they were never meant to satisfy you. We were made for God and nothing can substitute for Him!

Pastor Scott

*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."
Isaiah 44:6*

SUMMER HAPPENINGS

Children's Ministry
Summer Schedule will be released soon!

Youth Group
High School Retreat
5/14 - 5/16

Summer Sports Camp
**** Register NOW**
June 14 - June 18, 2009
Ages 6 - 12
Soccer, Basketball, Cheer
9:00am - 12:15pm
Soccer, Baseball, Volleyball
5:30pm - 8:45pm

Youth Baseball / Softball
Registration on June 19th
June 19 - August 21, 2010
Ages 5 - 16, evenings

Vacation Bible School
July 25 - July 29, 2010
Ages 3 - 5th grade
Mark your calendars!

Adult Sports
16 yrs - 99 years

Men's Basketball Open Gym
Saturdays 2:00 - 4:00pm

Soccer Finale
Sat., June 5th
Mark your calendars!!!



Team
Pictures

This Saturday!!
May 15th
Arrive 30 minutes early



Photos courtesy of Bill Ward

Matthew 10:14

*Let the little
children come to
me, and do not
hinder them, for
the kingdom of
God belongs to
such as these.*



ACHIEVEMENT?

With summer vacation looming on the horizon, our teenagers are looking forward to getting out of school. I still remember the amazing feeling of heading off to that last day of school, knowing that in just a few short hours, "freedom" – at least for a dozen weeks – would soon be mine. The bus ride home on that last day was interrupted by an enthusiastic chorus of "No more pencils, no more books," and ended one line later with us slandering our teachers.

While the celebration of the end of the school year has not changed, the volume knob on the academic pressures many kids feel has progressively turned up to the point where many kids are caving. I was reminded of this fact on a recent visit to a secondary school where expectations run high. During the day, I moved from classroom to classroom asking kids about their lives, their cares, their concerns, and their stressors. By the end of the day, I was convinced that the overwhelming pressure these teenagers felt was academic in nature. In fact, nobody mentioned anything other than academic pressure in response to my questions. When I probed into the source of those pressures, it became obvious that there was pressure coming from multiple sources including parents, teachers, community, peer group, and even the pressure the students were putting on themselves. One student told me her parents were living vicariously through her. Another said he felt the pressure now – as a 16-year-old – so that he would be able to retire and do all the things that he wanted to do later in his life. By the way, did I mention that the school I visited was a Christian school?

By Walt Mueller, President, CPYU
www.cpyu.org

In their wonderful book, *The Outrageous Idea of Academic Faithfulness*, Donald Optiz and Derek Melleby challenge Christian students to avoid the performance trap they label as "grades and accolades." Increasingly, I'm running across students who have allowed academic success and the drive for "grades and accolades" to become an idol. Academic success becomes the end, rather than a means through which to honor and serve God. We sometimes forget that when we pursue societal standards rather than God's standards, we can – as Walker Percy writes – "get all A's and still flunk life."

Let me suggest that you use this end-of-school time of the year to sit with your kids to ponder their view of academics, the pressures you might unknowingly be placing on them, and a Godly perspective on school achievement. As you do so, keep these realities in mind:

First, remember that God has granted all kids a unique mix of gifts and abilities. Consequently, some are more academically gifted than others. Our role is to help our kids work to do their best, not to achieve some socially-defined standard of best.

Second, remember that if you are finding your identity through your kids and their achievements, you are placing undo pressure on them. Not only that, you will facilitate resentment on their part. And, you should examine yourself to see how and where you need to find your identity in Christ and Christ alone.

Third, teach your kids that we endeavor to do things well, not to draw attention to ourselves, but to bring God pleasure. It's not about us.



Presenting Everyone Complete in Christ

Morning Service

8:30 Worship Service

9:45 Sunday School

11:00 Worship Service

Sunday Evening

Beginning in June

6:30 Family Worship

On the first Sunday night each month, we'll have a family meal at 6pm & worship at 7pm

Call us at 704.263.4275

Visit us online at

www.fpcstanley.org

Team Rosters
Game Schedule
Parent's Corner