

Are We Aussies Polytheists?

Polytheism refers to belief in, or worship of, multiple gods or deities. This mode of belief is an extremely common form of religious expression. Most ancient religions involved belief in pantheons of deities ruling over various aspects of life. These "gods" exert huge influence on a devotee's life. Today polytheistic beliefs remain a vital part of Hinduism and Shintoism.

I asked via Face Book and email the question: "Who can list 25 idols/gods Australians worship? Help me out! I'm preaching on Acts 17. Athens in first century was being swamped by its idols."

What is an idol/god? Any person, object, thing, real or imaginary, that we allow to control some aspect of our life is potentially an idol that we bow to or are subject to in some way. Idolatry is regarding "any person, object or thing with blind admiration, adoration, or devotion."

Most Aussies are polytheists. Why? Because we allow a range of false gods to control different aspects of our lives. Are you controlled or being influenced by any of the following? Sport; Sex/porn; Self; Body image; Designer labels/fashion; Status/position; Beer/alcohol; Drugs; Food? Some respondents allege Aussies are enslaved by at least one of the following gods: Partying/clubbing/getting drunk; Cars/V8s; Social media; Celebrities/Pop Stars; Music bands; iphone/gadgets; Individual freedom as opposed to duty and responsibility; Non-judgmentalism (whatever is right for you is right); Environment/nature/whales/animals; hymn book/Hillsong/music styles.

An orthodox Pharisee says that in his own eyes he was sinless until he came to the last of the commandment: "You shall not covet." "That" he says, "slew me." "Covetousness" is the intense love and desire for any object or person, a desire which is given more than human and common importance, and which becomes a substitute for the devotion and love due to God. [ZPBEP] Because of the intensity of this desire, covetousness ignores moral demands and justifies any actions/means to take possession of the coveted object.

Bible characterizes "covetousness" as the ultimate form of idolatry (Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 3:5). "Covetousness" will exclude a person from heaven, 1 Corinthians 6:10. The pervasive power of "covetousness" accounts for it being in a very real sense the root of so many other forms of sin, including the departure from the faith (1 Timothy 6:9,10); lying (2 Kings 5:22–25); theft (Joshua 7:21); domestic trouble (Proverbs 15:27); murder (Ezekiel 22:12); indeed, it leads to "many foolish and hurtful lusts" (1 Timothy 6:9). Aussie culture pressures us to bow down to the shrine of "covetousness".

A young man who boasted he had kept all the commandments asks Jesus what is required to inherit eternal life? Jesus replies: "Go sell everything . . . come follow me." The young man walked away. Why? His god was Money; \$uper/\$hares; Financial security. Money controlled his life. It was his god. Is it your god? My god?