

LET DAGONS BE BYGONES

1Sa 5:2 *When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon and set it by Dagon.*

1Sa 5:3 *And when the people of Ashdod arose early in the morning, there was Dagon, fallen on its face to the earth before the ark of the Lord. So they took Dagon and set it in its place again.*

1Sa 5:4 *And when they arose early the next morning, there was Dagon, fallen on its face to the ground before the ark of the Lord. The head of Dagon and both the palms of its hands were broken off on the threshold; only Dagon's torso was left of it.*

Many today are fighting addictions of all kinds. They find themselves in the grip of addictions to food, drink, substances, pornography, sexual perversion, compulsions of all kinds and the list goes on and on. Multitudes are trying to find freedom from these by fighting them with their will power, programs, and drugs. Many are trying to work through steps to find freedom but the best they can become is a recovering addict. What is at the root of addictions? Is it mom or dad not treating us right when we were little? Many leading "specialists" today would say yes. God says no! What is at the root of bondage and addictions today is idolatry! An idol is something or someone that we look to in order to meet our need that is not God Himself. Nothing in creation was created to meet your needs. God created you to meet your needs. He is the source of all that you need. God will use people and things to provide for you, but things and people are not your source for what you need. What is holding men and women bound today to addiction and bondage is idols. Whatever we turn to in order to meet our needs becomes our god. Whatever is our god will have authority and power over us. There is only one way to deal with idols. It is to bring them into the Presence of the only true and living God. That is what happened when the Philistines took the Ark of God's Presence one day into the temple of their god Dagon after winning a battle with Israel. They thought that they were bringing the Ark of God to their god Dagon so that he could boast in victory over the God of Israel. They left the Ark over night in the temple of Dagon and when they came back in the morning they found that Dagon had fallen down face first before the Ark. It was as if the god Dagon was bowing in worship. It had submitted to the Presence of the only true God! The Philistines quickly propped up their idol once again

and left it over night again. They thought that surely it was just a fluke that the idol had just fallen over on its own. This time when they came back in the morning, not only had the idol fallen down face first like the night before but this time it's head and hands were broken off of it!

What does this teach us? Idols, addictions, and bondages will only be broken when we bring them into the Presence of the Lord God. When we ourselves turn to God and seek His Presence then all our idols will bow before God. Everything bows in the presence of God! Notice that both the head and the hands of the idol were broken off. The head speaks of authority and the hands speak of power. The word head in the Bible always speaks of authority. When we remain in the presence of the Lord then the authority of the idol in our life is broken. No idol has inherent authority over us until we give it authority by making it our god. The hands speak of power. Power flows from the hands. Hands are used to grip and control. When someone turns to an idol in their life the idol gains power over them and will hold them tightly in its hands. By remaining in the Presence of God however the hands [power] of the addiction [idol] will be broken!

If the Presence of the Lord will break an idol's authority and power over our lives how do we enter and stay in His Presence. In the Old Testament God's Presence was located above the Ark of the Covenant. It was called the Ark of His Presence. It was located in the Holy of Holies. Only the High Priest was allowed into God's Presence. This High Priest represented Jesus. Only Jesus had access to the Presence of God. However, when Jesus died on the cross and fulfilled the Law completely and became the perfect sacrifice for sins, the veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom. It was by the finished work of Jesus on the cross that the Presence of God was free to be released to come to all people who would accept His sacrifice for them. When Jesus rose from the dead He sent His Spirit to earth to permanently reside with each believer. We carry the Presence of God all the time! The Presence of God is given by the unmerited favor of God! We cannot earn it or deserve it! It comes by faith in Jesus! It is the manifest Presence of God that makes idols bow. To experience the manifest Presence of God as a believer first you must acknowledge His Presence. When we verbally acknowledge that God is present with us then His manifest Presence will

be experienced. Worship, praise, and thanksgiving are God given ways to experience the manifest Presence of God. We do not have to go to church to experience the manifest Presence of God. We can experience it 24/7 as we acknowledge, welcome, and place our trust in God's Presence and grace with us all the times. In the Presence of the Spirit of Jesus all idols will start to bow. **Dagon bowed the first night, but he was broken the second night!** We might not see our addictions broken immediately but if we continue to practice the Presence of Jesus then the idols will soon bow and be broken for good! The Presence of Jesus will heal our wounded heart and flood us with His love. The Presence of Jesus will empower us to live a God honoring life. He will cause us to live more holy accidentally than ever on purpose! The power of Christianity is not found in rules, rituals, rites, or dogmas. The power of Christianity is the Presence of Jesus with the believer. It is that simple folks! We have made the Christian life WAY too complicated. We have taught multitudes of principles and laws and guidelines to be blessed and live victoriously. All we need is Jesus! His Presence and unmerited favor brings all the blessings and benefits of God. Jesus is the Living Word of God and His Spirit breaks all yokes! Many think they need to break the addictions and bondages in their life before they can come before God. This is a lie and deception of the enemy! It is only by coming into His Presence will the idols, addictions and bondages be broken! Acknowledge God's Presence. He will never leave you or forsake you! God's Presence is with you believer. His Presence is unearned, undeserved, and will not change due to your performance. If you will acknowledge and trust in His Presence then Jesus will empower your performance and make your life take on the image of Himself. It is up to you today. You can serve idols and be held by them or you can let Dagon be Bygones! Choose Jesus today!