

2. Flee Idolatry!: The lure of closest earthly affections

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 13 June 2010

Preacher: William Philip

- [0 : 00] We'll do turn, if you would, to Deuteronomy chapter 13, page 157, I think it was, in the Church Bibles. And we're thinking in these studies, in this chapter in Deuteronomy, about fighting and fleeing the powerful lures to false worship.
- And today I want to think about what these verses 6 to 11 in particular speak to us, of the lure of closest family, or closest earthly affections of different kinds.
- Now, our text, remember, comes from that last verse that we read in 1 Corinthians chapter 10, verse 14. Therefore, my beloved, flee idolatry. And that may seem a strange text to choose, but in fact, that is actually, in a way, the key message of the whole Bible from beginning to end.
- From the Ten Commandments, right through to the teaching of Jesus himself. I am the Lord your God, said God to Moses on the mountain.
- You shall have no other gods before me. You shall have no idols. That's the first two commands that God gave through Moses.
- [1 : 20] And Jesus said exactly the same thing. That's the great commandment, he said. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind and all your strength.
- And he just put the same thing another way when he said, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me. No other gods.
- Flee from idolatry. You have to think to yourself, well, hang on a second. We're modern people. We're not primitive people. We don't go bowing down to idols.
- What possible relevance can that have to us? Well, first of all, it is worth remembering that vast swathes of the world's population today in the year 2010 do, in fact, bow down to images and statues and gods of that kind.
- I've seen it myself and many of you will in places like India, where despite all the mod cons, all the wealth, all the modernity of that land, and in some ways it's leaping ahead of us economically, a very advanced culture in many ways, but countless millions of people bowing down to things that they've made with their own hands.
- [2 : 37] And that's true in many other very advanced cultures today. It's not just something in the primitive world. But in fact, even that doesn't get to the heart of what the Bible is actually getting at when it's talking about idolatry.
- What is idolatry? Well, if you like, it's the reverse of those first two commandments of God. It's the very opposite of the great commandment to love the Lord as the only God, as the creator of the universe with all that we have and all that we are.
- Idolatry is the opposite of that. That's what we were created for. We were made to worship God, to serve God, to reflect his glory and his honour in this whole created order.
- With God at the centre of his world and with us as his chief worshippers. But what has happened in what we call the fall, what has happened is that we've turned everything upside down.

Human beings have rebelled against God and put ourselves at the centre of the story and God at the periphery. That's how Paul describes it in Romans chapter 1.

[3 : 49] Just listen. Romans chapter 1 and verse 21, he says this. Although they knew God, they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Claiming to be wise, they became fools, he says. And therefore, he goes on to say, God gave them up in the lust of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonouring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie.

And worshipped and served the created things rather than the creator who is blessed forever. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie.

A lie is the common Old Testament word for idols. Instead of honouring God and everything that he has done for us and for all that he's given us, we've deceived ourselves, we've become futile in our thinking, and we've started to live for ourselves.

Human beings want to be at the centre of the world, at the centre of the story of their lives. And instead of worshipping the true God, we want things to worship and serve us.

[5 : 05] You see, the things that we crave as human beings, the things that we desire and that we value, these things actually become our gods. They become the things that actually control us, the things that rule us, the things that enslave us.

And we end up worshipping these creative things. Things that we've convinced ourselves that we must have, or must have more of, and better of, and newer of, and finer of, to give us the satisfaction, and the meaning, and the identity, and all these things that we crave for our lives.

But, what we find is, that these things that we worship and long for, actually become the lords and masters of our lives. And that's why our lives are so often in this world today, beset by anxiety, and jealousies, and resentments, and obsessions, and pressure to succeed, and lack of security.

Because the things we are searching after, have actually come to rule over us. Because, says Paul, they have exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served, created things rather than the creator.

We have sought liberation, we have sought autonomy, to be our own rulers, and our own gods. But, as human beings, we have deceived ourselves. We've rejected the truth.

[6 : 32] The truth that we're not only made by God, but made for God. And that, as St. Augustine said, our hearts will never be at rest, until we find rest in God. God made us, as human beings, to find joy, and to find satisfaction, and love, and fulfillment, and meaning.

That's a true instinct, that it is within us. God has created that. But, he created us, to find all these things, in one place alone. In him.

And in a desire for him, and a worship of him. But, we've deceived ourselves, and lied to ourselves, and we've said, no, I want to find all these things, by myself, for myself, my way.

Like Frank Sinatra. So, we seek, all the things that God, wants to give to us, and can give to us, but we seek them, in merely created things, in impotent things, in finite things.

Things that can never, ever, ever, deliver, because they are not God, because they are not the creator. And that's the very essence, of sin friends. That's what sin is, according to the Bible.

[7 : 44] It's not just that it's wrong, and offensive to God, spurning his amazing love, and his generosity. It's not just that it's wrong, it's absolutely mad.

It's foolish. It's utterly absurd. Claiming to be wise, his body became fools. Only a fool, will take a good thing, and make it into an ultimate thing, and pretend that it really is God, and devote your life, to that thing.

Only a fool does that. We've got a word for it, don't we? In our language, very commonly. It's called addiction. You become a slave, to something.

It might even be, a very good thing, in and of itself. It might be tablets, that can help you to sleep, when your doctor tells you, that's what you need to do. But it can become, an addiction, and you're a slave to it.

It might be your work. It could be a hobby. It could be fine wine. It could be any number of things, whatever it is. But, it becomes something, that you're enslaved to.

[8 : 50] Our number, is one digit different, from Gart Naval Hospital.

That's why the telephone, keeps going off. Addiction, means that something, often a very good thing, can so come to dominate your life, that you become a slave of it.

You need it, to function. You need it, to feel secure. You need it, to feel at peace. But, it's no longer true, that it is something, that serves you, as a human being.

Something that you serve. You've become its slave, and it has become your master. And that is idolatry. That's, the essence, of what the Bible calls sin.

It's building your life, it's building your identity, your security, your future, on anything, or anyone, other, than God himself, in Jesus Christ.

[9 : 57] It's making something else, more important than God, in the reality, of your life. And that's why sin, is so terrible. Terrible for two reasons. First, because it's an insult, to God.

Because it's a flat rejection, of God's goodness, and his lavish generosity, on us, as the creator. It's the spit in his face. It scorns, the great depth of mercy, and his love, even further, because it also asks us, to reject his amazing salvation.

It's the scorn, the blood of his son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself, to save us, from our sin, and our folly, and our idolatry. And as long as we persist, in thinking, that we can find, in this world, all that we need, without God, we're rejecting God, as our saviour.

We're seeking other saviours, in our career, or our love affair, or our achievements, whatever it is, that drives us, in our life. And that's an insult, to God. Of course it is. But it's also, an insult, to ourselves, because it's just, sheer folly.

It's so self degrading, isn't it? To seek so much, to seek ultimate meaning, and salvation, and identity, in such futile ways. They became futile, in their thinking, says Paul, claiming to be wise, they became fools.

[11 : 23] And we deceive ourselves, and we're in denial about it, just in the same way, as the addict is in denial. We don't admit, the damage that, we're inflicting on ourselves, and on others, and on society, by our human behaviour, and rejection of God.

Because that's what it is, it's subhuman. True humanity, looks upward to God, to find real fulfilment, as we are meant to do. But idolatry, is subhuman.

Idolatry degrades us. Degrades us, as God's image bearer. Not only an insult, to God, but it's an insult, to us. It dehumanises us. And that's why, idolatry is so serious, friends.

That's why the Bible, constantly urges us, to flee from it. And we have to recognise it, for what it is. However subtle, it might very well be, in presenting itself, and often it is very subtle.

And that's why, this chapter is here. We saw last time, in verses 1 to 5, that sometimes, that subtle lure, to idolatry, can come in something, very spiritual looking, successful, and very spectacular, spiritualities.

[12 : 31] Which offers much, great signs and wonders. But in the reality, verse 5 tells us, may very well be teaching, rebellion, against the Lord, our God.

But these next verses, verses 6 to 11, I want to look at today, they speak also, of another, very powerful, lure, to idolatry. Lure away, from true worship.

And it's the lure, of our closest, earthly affections. That's, what these verses, are all about. And how true that is, so often, isn't it?

It's our relationships, that lead us astray. Either because we, we invest so much, in them, and effectively, worship them, seeking to find, our meaning, and our salvation, in life, in these relationships, or, by being led astray, in them, and by them, to seek, that fulfillment, anywhere else, than in the undivided, devotion to God himself.

And that's what verse 6, warns us, doesn't it? Look at it. There can be real danger, says this verse, not from the bogeyman, not from somebody, who comes along, and says, I am your spiritual nemesis.

[13 : 43] But who from? From your brother, your son, your daughter, your wife, your best friend. They can be a lure, to idolatry.

That's rather a shock, isn't it? It's very shocking, to think, that perhaps, if you can't trust, your own closest family, and friends, who on earth, can you trust? But that's very real, isn't it?

Very often it is, our real loves, and loyalties, that can be the cause, of agonizing dilemmas, and struggles for us, in our Christian faith. Just think of, as we were praying, just think of the young, eager Christian student, perhaps somebody, who's been converted to Christ, in their first year, at university, and has thrived, throughout the year, in church, and in Christian union, and so on.

They go home, for the summer, they're keen to serve, they're keen to love the Lord, and to witness to their families. But their parents, may be very antagonistic. What a waste, of your time and money, to actually spend money, your money, or even our money, so you can go, to a Christian camp, to try and indoctrinate others.

They want you to earn money, in the summer, and do something useful. That's very hard, isn't it, for a young student? Even harder, if perhaps, you're coming to the end, of your student career, and instead of going on, to the high paying profession, that your parents, had hoped for, you break to them, the shocking news, that in fact, you feel the Lord, is calling you, to serve him, in the mission field, in some foreign country, or even worse, in the clergy, in this country.

[15 : 28] And they're shocked, and they want to try, and persuade you out of it, or at the very least, they hope, that this is just a crazy phase, you're passing through, you'll grow out of. But it's very hard, to face that kind of pressure, from those who are very close to you, who love you, your parents, your family.

Or, it may be the case, that your spouse, just doesn't share, the same, spiritual enthusiasm, as you have. That is very, very hard, isn't it?

Some of you know that. It's wearing, year in, and year out, to have your life partner, resenting your faith, maybe seeking to erode it.

Verse 6 here, speaks, doesn't it, of, being enticed, secretly, enticing you, secretly, saying, let's go and serve, other gods. It's, the relentless, pillow talk, of the home, isn't it?

Think of Delilah, wearing down Samson, relentlessly, till at last, he gave in. And it's often like that, it's a, a gradual, erosion, it plays on your conscience.

[16 : 37] If your wife, or your husband, saying to you, why do you have to spend, so much time, on these church things? What about me? What about us, and the family? Surely, there's no need to be, quite so serious about it, as you are.

It's ridiculous. You're obsessed, with that Christian stuff. You really always, have to go, to that prayer meeting. Doesn't God, want you to spend time, with me?

I'm your husband, after all. It can be, relentless, can't it? Subtle, sometimes, sometimes not so subtle. But reasonable sounding, just looking for some sort of a reasonable compromise, surely there's room, for all of these things, in a balanced way, in your life.

Surely, you don't have to be, such a Christian fanatic. What about that holiday cottage, that we can now afford, because, we've had our lump sum, for retirement, we've always thought about that.

Why do you keep saying, no, I don't want to have that, because I want to be in church, every Sunday? What's wrong with you? Surely, you can recognize, God has blessed us, and it would be good for us, to get away, every second weekend.

[17 : 48] Of course, you know where it will end up, don't you? It ends up, ultimately, in verse 7. Dragged, into worshipping, the gods of the people, around you, whether from nearby, or from the very ends, of the earth.

One of the things, about our global village, isn't it, that all the gods, of the world, now are right at our doorstep. Every idol, every satisfaction, every enticement, that the whole globe, can offer, is right at the click, of a mouse, on our computer.

It's right down, our high street. Let's take sport, for example. Sport is surely, today, one of the greatest, and most universal idols, in our modern world, isn't it?

We're right in the midst, at the moment, of one of the greatest, religious festivals, that there is, in the great idol of sport, the World Cup. Well, it was Bill Shankly, long ago, wasn't it, the great Glaswegian, who managed Liverpool Football Club, that he shrewdly observed, that football, is not a religion, he said.

It's far more important, than that. And so it is. Just look at, all the old firm nutters, in this city, who will follow their team, to the very ends, of the earth, and shell out, vast amounts of money, and time, and effort, to do so.

[19 : 09] If the Christian church, let me tell you, had a fraction, of the loyalty, or the cash, that people were willing, to shell out, on their football teams, we would have, permanent revival. Isn't that so?

But we're surrounded, by endless sport today, endless variety, of every possible time, there's the, the cricket 2020 now, that's taking over the world, there's Formula One, there's the World Cup, as I've said, it'll be Wimbledon soon, the Open Golf Championship, endless, on and on, and friends, just one example, isn't it, of how sport, can be such an easy, lure to idolatry.

I don't just mean, for the world, I mean, for the Christian church. I'm not against sport, I enjoy it, just as much as anybody. But, and this is a big but, I have seen the worship, of sport, ruin Christian families.

Some parents, I've known, have put the sporting progress, of their children, well above, the spiritual progress, of their children. And it's very difficult, today, isn't it?

So much sport, it takes place on Sundays. And it's very hard. But it's easy to see, how little by little, God's place, and God's worship, is squeezed out, for the great idol, of the ball, or the bike, or the bat.

[20 : 35] Isn't that so? That's just one example, of many, many dozens, hundreds, that we could mention. But slowly, and subtly, many, a Christian believer, has been lured away, very often, by the enticement, of close affection, family, and friends, and others, to put other things, before, their devotion, and loyalty, to the Lord, their God.

Whether it's pursuing, career gains, or weekending away, or pursuing sports, or gardening, or sailing, or whatever it is. A friend of mine, who's a minister, in Vancouver, in Canada, once said to me, that he has seen it, so many times, skiing, ruining people's, spiritual lives.

People go to that, wonderful city of Vancouver, to live, and to work, for a few years, and of course, Whistler is just up the road, and they're skiing, for many, many months of the year. And having been involved, keenly as Christians, and in the church, the lure of the ski slopes, at Whistler, just gets them.

So we'll just go, for a weekend, and then you know, it's so good, that in a few weeks time, we'll just go, for another weekend, and another, and another, and another, and soon, skiing, has led people, right away, from the worship, of the Lord.

I've got a very, personal, and painful, experience, of exactly that, of somebody, known to me, whose, marriage, ended up breaking up, just through, exactly that process.

[22 : 11] And you see, God knows, that's how, things work, in the human heart. He knows how it starts, but he knows, where it's going to lead to, which we never see, when we start.

He knows, what happens, when what's described, in verses 7 and 8, begins. And that's why, verse 9, is so, stark, so shocking.

It's awful, isn't it? You shall not yield, to him, or listen to him, nor shall your eye, pity him, nor shall you spare him, nor shall you conceal him, but you shall kill him.

Your hand, shall be first, against him, to put him to death, and afterwards, the hand of all the people. It's awful, isn't it? It's shocking. But it's very, very clear, what it is saying.

God, must, come first. Flee, from any, idolatry. It's very shocking language.

[23 : 11] But you know, I think it's even more shocking, when we realise, that this is exactly, where the Lord Jesus himself, gets his language, when he talks about, exactly these things. Listen. If anyone comes to me, says Jesus, and does not hate, his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers, and sisters, and yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

Luke 14, verse 26. I have come, says Jesus, to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a person's enemies, will be those of his own household.

Whoever loves father and mother, more than me, is not worthy of me. And whoever loves son and daughter, more than me, is not worthy of me.

Mark 10, verse 37. That's just as clear as Deuteronomy 13, isn't it? Nothing, says Jesus, not even the closest and dearest ones in our lives, can ever be allowed to lure us away from the Lord Jesus.

That's idolatry. But the lure of our closest earthly affections can be so, so strong.

[24 : 29] Of course they can. And that's why the apostles of Jesus go on warning us in exactly the same way. Put to death, therefore, says Paul, whatever is earthly in you, which is idolatry.

He writes to the Colossians, Colossians 3, verse 5. You see, flee idolatry. Why? Because it is deadly. It draws you away, as verse 10 here says, away from the Lord your God, who is alone the Savior from slavery.

You have to be killing that, says God, or it will be killing you. It can lose you the Savior. It can lose you your salvation.

And therefore, the only solution, says God, is brutal and total destruction of any such lure away from the Lord your God. Stone him to death, he says, with stones.

It's fearful, isn't it? But that's the language that Jesus picks up. That's the language of the New Testament. Put to death all that is earthly in you.

[25 : 41] Can't get more radical than that. Of course, we today are not to apply these sanctions physically. We don't live in a theocracy as Israel did in those days.

For them at that time, the law of Moses was also the law of the land because it was the place of God's kingdom on earth until the great fulfillment in the coming of Christ when his kingdom extends now to all nations.

So today, it's quite wrong to identify the kingdom of God or his special place with any particular land or nation. There are no holy lands on this earth now.

There are no holy places on this earth. The whole earth is the Lord's. And indeed, this age, our age, is the great day of mercy.

Now is the day of salvation, says Paul. Now is the time when in God's just and holy war against his enemies' rebellion and against their sin, now is the time when he has held forth a wonderful offer of peace in the gospel of Jesus Christ, an offer of forgiveness, of reconciliation through the atoning work of Christ on the cross.

[26 : 47] So his judgment doesn't fall instantly by our hand and those who lead us into idolatry or who profane his name. Our weapons, says the New Testament, very clearly are not the weapons of this world, of the flesh.

But, be in no doubt that the time will come for complete and just judgment and punishment.

Far more severe, far more severe than any stoning to death for those who lead others away from loving and serving the Lord Jesus Christ.

That time will come. Listen to Jesus again. Whoever causes one of these little ones who believes in me to sin, it would be better for him, says Jesus, if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.

And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It's better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell to unquenchable fire where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.

[27 : 57] Mark 9, verse 42. Do you see how high the stakes are? At least if we listen to the Lord Jesus himself.

See, idolatry says it's deadly. It's eternally deadly. And that's why our reaction, even when and perhaps especially when the lure is from some of our closest earthly affections, that's why our reaction must be stark and brutal even, verse 8.

no yielding, no listening, no pitying, no sparing, no hiding the truth. But instead, total rejection of every snare, every lure to abandoning the one true God and Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ.

And friends, that's why we've got to be realists about this with one another and with ourselves. especially in the realm of our closest affections and ties.

That's why the Apostle Paul warns believers in the New Testament in 2 Corinthians 6. That's why he warns them against being unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what agreement, he says, has the temple of God with idols?

[29 : 17] Someone that you're deeply intimate with, but who doesn't share the love and the worship of your heart, someone like that will be a powerful lure to idolatry.

Always. Always. So let me just re-echo Paul's words to you. Don't do that. Don't be unequally yoked in that way.

Don't be tempted ever into some kind of romantic relationship, for example, with someone who doesn't really share your love for Christ. It will not be different with you.

It doesn't matter. Even if you do know of others for whom it has had a happy outcome by God's mercy, you can't ever presume on God's mercy. That's blasphemy to do that.

Don't do it. Don't yield or listen or pity or spare that desire. Kill it now before it kills you. I've seen it.

- [30 : 17] Kill people spiritually. Lure them away from Christ that way. I've seen it with my own eyes. And alas, I may well see it again. Sometimes, you will deceive yourself because your boyfriend or your girlfriend will say all the right things and they'll come to church and in the end they'll even say there'll be a Christian for you.

Friends, in my experience that is a disastrous course. Don't go there. I think it's especially difficult for girls whom Christian men so often seem to be so feeble and so slow to get into gear and too many of you are and you need a good kick and I will give you that kick.

But girls, don't be lured by a good and natural desire for marriage and for family life. Whoever good and right that is, don't be lured to find that in such a way as you will sacrifice forever your eternal union with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Don't do it. And friends, don't be lured away from Christ by making an idol of your marriage or of your family life or of your children either.

I've seen people also deny themselves and their children the vital blessings and strengthenings of Christian fellowship and teaching and training because they've wanted so much to indulge in family time or in their children's interests or activities at school or in sport or whatever it is.

- [31 : 52] And those things gradually take priority in an increasing way over the real and meaningful involvement in the life of God's family.

and it's been to their great spiritual impoverishment. Even their eventual drift away altogether from the life of faith. And I've seen and alas, I still see the great idol of career and of job attainment and of satisfaction squeeze the life out of those who are formerly serving joyfully among the Lord's people but drifting increasingly away so as they become almost invisible, choked, as Jesus says, by the cares of this world, by the deceitfulness of riches that choke the word and that ultimately render it utterly unfruitful.

Many of us have seen that. Those who are older will have seen it the most with great sadness. I think there is a particular word here for young people. You're especially vulnerable when life begins to get more complicated.

When you're at school, when you're a student, even you think you're so busy you have no idea that things will never ever be so easy again. They won't. You don't believe that but when you're my age you'll know it's true.

A job comes along at last if you're fortunate and maybe marriage. Well, I hope it does. I'll encourage you in that for sure. Don't leave it too long. There's no time to waste.

- [33 : 26] And then a child comes along, perhaps two and maybe more and there's bills to pay and there's mortgages and there's insurance and there's MOT and there's the tires in your car which are worn down.

There's a school run and there's parents' nights and there's school trips and there's your difficult boss and that painful person at work and there's the recession coming and maybe redundancy.

There's holidays to plan. There's DIY to sort your house out. There's middle age spread to start battling. There's promotion at work. On and on and on and on it goes. Life gets more and more complicated.

It is a life lived in a world of thorns and thistles galore in less and less time. And the voices in your head and the voices from the world and especially from loved ones and friends and family and from your firm and from the boss who loves you and wants to promote you.

It's just a little bit less. It's just a little bit less of all that church commitment and all that sort of things and just a little bit more of whatever that other thing is.

- [34 : 41] Whatever your particular love is. That's reality, isn't it? But the Bible shouts relentlessly through the megaphone flee idolatry.
- flee idolatry. It's a hard warning, isn't it? But you know, it's essential because we deceive ourselves so, so easily.
- The heart, said Jeremiah, is deceitful above all things. Think about this. What would a discerning Christian friend say about you?
- I was to ask them. What would they say really drives you? Really matters to you? What's your real goal and ambition and purpose?
- What is it that really gets the lion's share of your ambition and your energies, your thoughts and your desires? that's a question worth thinking about, isn't it?
- [35 : 50] Because the world is so seductive and so are its idols, so deceptive. Remember Paul's words. They become fools.
- Their thinking is futile. They're slaves to worthless idols, to dangerous idols. And friends, that can happen to you and it can happen to me. And that's why we're told constantly to put to death everything that is worldly in us, which is idolatry.
- You shall not yield to him or listen to him, nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare him, nor shall you conceal him, but you shall kill him. Total rejection of every snare, every lure away from our God and Savior, from the lover of our souls.
- That may be a very personal word for some of us here today. We know that there is a deep personal relationship that's doing just that. It's luring us away, pulling us away from the Lord Jesus, even though we hate to admit that.
- We don't want to believe it. Don't let it. Don't rationalize it away to yourself. Don't tell yourself you can handle it.
- [37 : 18] Trust the Lord Jesus Christ. He knows you better than you know you. And he wants your heart to be reserved for him alone. He's jealous for you. And he is so because he loves you so much.
- He loved you and gave himself for you. He won't share you with anyone else or anything else. However bright and beautiful it may seem to you.
- You don't want to betray the Lord Jesus, do you? And you know that his love surpasses all others. You know that as we've sung, knowing Jesus, there is no greater thing, nothing, no greater thing in the whole wide world or in the world to come.
- Why would you want to throw that away? flee from idolatry. That means, put another way, is flee again into the arms of the Lord Jesus Christ who loved you and who gave himself for you.
- And don't ever let the grip of those arms be prized away by any other worthless thing in this world. let's help one another, shall we, to keep ourselves only unto him in sickness and in health for richer, for poorer, for better, for worse, as long as our lives shall last.
- [38 : 53] Amen. Let's pray. Lord, how we thank you that though our arms and our grip upon you is often so weak and so easily dislodged, how we thank you that underneath us are the everlasting arms of your love.
- Help us, Lord, to be always fleeing from everything that would pull us away and fleeing into the arms and the heart of your great love for us.
- For Jesus' sake. Amen.