



Key Notes

We have CAT scans, X-rays, MRIs and EKGs to help detect the hidden presence of disease in the body. But is there anything to help us discover spiritual cancers that may lurk in the soul? As a pastor (soul doctor), I long for help in diagnosing spiritual diseases, so I have devised a simple test. Its purpose is to help in the detection of one of the deadliest forms of soul disease: idolatry. I make no claims for scientific accuracy and frankly confess the test is highly subjective. But if used honestly, it may help to reveal a problem before it is too late to do anything about it! I've given my little test a name: "Inventory for the Detection of Idols and Other Trash" (IDIOT).

The IDIOT Exam

Idols today normally come in the form of some activity, affection, relationship or habitual behavior. Examples include, but should not be limited to: family, children, career, security, power, a special person, sex, house, academics, status, health, beauty, politics, music, food, ministry, money, reputation, sports, etc.

Pray over this list and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the name of any idol that possibly usurps the place of God in your heart. Write down the name of this hypothetical possibility here: _____ . Now, respond to the following statements with a simple yes or no. The blank in each statement represents the possible idol that may reside in your soul. The purpose of this test is to help you determine whether or not this hypothesis is true. (Note: Because few idolaters are content with only one, you may want to take this test multiple times.)

1. It's easy to splurge time and money on _____. Y N
2. I often fantasize about _____. Y N
3. The thought of losing _____ causes me inner panic. Y N
4. I sometimes practice child sacrifice to the _____-god. Y N
5. I get defensive when others suggest I am obsessed with _____. Y N
6. My commitment to _____ causes me to sometimes make moral compromises. Y N
7. _____ is connected to my sense of worth and happiness. Y N
8. I give more of my affection and attention to _____ than to God. Y N
9. I find more joy and satisfaction in _____ than in God. Y N
10. If I had to choose between Jesus and _____, I would not know what to do. Y N

If you answered "yes" to even one of these questions, then you may have detected an idol in your life. Again, ask God to be the final diagnostician and then thank Him for revealing the truth about your spiritual health. Now you can destroy the idol before it destroys you! Maybe this little IDIOT test will prevent someone from becoming one.

Pastor Stan (1 John 5:21)