

REFLECTIONS

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Now Laban had gone to shear his sheep, and Rachel had stolen the household idols that were her father's. And Jacob stole away, unknown to Laban the Syrian, in that he did not tell him that he intended to flee.

Genesis 31:19-20 NKJV

Household Idols

When you read the whole story, maybe Laban deserved it. But that didn't matter. He was angry. Who wouldn't be if your son-in-law left with your daughters and grandchildren without so much as a fare you well? And if that wasn't bad enough, his household idols were missing too and that changed his anger into rage. Laban wanted to give Jacob a piece of his mind. But even more he wanted to recover his household idols.

The idols are part of the story that has been hard for me to understand. In my mind's eye, they are like a set of onyx chess pieces that we have somewhere around our home. We don't play chess, but perhaps they have provided entertainment from time to time. But never have they served as idols that we cherished or prayed to. So, it is difficult for me to relate to Laban's feelings toward his household idols. But then maybe I can.

The onyx chess pieces are not dear to me, but there are other things that are. And while I don't turn to those items in prayer, I do find them to be important in my life—too important. And there is a rather long list of them.

There are lots of items that fit the bill, and they fall into the categories of possessions, power, position, or pleasure. None are becoming to my character. But they are worldly things that divert my attention away from God. In fact they can become gods.

Jesus talked about such earthly treasures in the Sermon on the Mount. He tells us, *"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."* (Matt 6:21) When I do a little soul searching about my treasures, I find some convicting evidence that many of them are not much better than Laban's household idols. Apostle John talked of them:

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world — the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does — comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever. (*1 John 2:15-17*)

The possessions, power, position, and pleasure that I allow to become household idols in my life will one day pass away. But I pray to replace them with treasures stored in heaven—the kind that make a difference in the world; the kind that never pass away.

"You are the light of the world."

Richard +

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