

# **Boundless**

## *The God We Created (July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020)*

### **PREPARATION**

- Familiarize yourself with this Study Guide.
- If you missed it, watch the sermon online [HERE](#).
- Spend some time in prayer before your group gathers.
- You **always** have the option to use some or all the questions and/or prepare your own questions.
- Review the learning objective to focus the conversation, read the primary scriptures as a group, summarize the main points, ask the questions, and use supporting texts to enhance the concepts.

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **Opening Prayer:** (1-2 minutes)

*In light of what God is saying through this week's message, here's a suggestion of how your group can invite God into your time together.*

Thank the Father for being the God who is infinitely large, yet tangibly existent and immanent in our every-day lives! Pray that as we navigate the chaotic waters of our cultural moment that we would humbly listen and obey God's voice. Pray that the Father would fill us with His Holy Spirit and give us the words to speak in our daily lives as we interact with the people in our social circles. Finally, pray that we would continue to learn how supreme your authority is and how to submit to your word as we await your coming kingdom!

#### **Discussion:** (45-60 minutes)

##### **What's Going on This Week**

This Sunday, Pastor Larry led us into the second week of our new series titled *Boundless*. Pastor Larry focusses in on the story of the golden calf found in *Exodus 32* as the primary example of how humanity throughout history has attempted to create God in our own image. Pastor Larry points to the story of Israel's shortcomings in order to point out a certain set of conditions that are breeding grounds for idolatry, how their created god reflected their own treasures and preferences, and the tragic results that followed. However, Pastor Larry points us to the hope we have in a God who is patient with us if we repent and find forgiveness and peace in Jesus.

**“We have all been created in the Image of God, but ever since the fall, we have been busy creating god in our own image.” – Pastor Larry Vold**

##### **Suggested Questions**

**Check-In:** *Icebreaker* – What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of the word *idolatry*?

**Study Tip:** When many people hear the word idolatry, they often wonder how does an ancient practice involving foreign statues or “golden calves” apply to us today? Up to this point in the Exodus story, God had miraculously saved the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and positioned them at the foot of Mt. Sinai. At Mt. Sinai, God initiates His covenant relationship with the growing people group of Israel. If they were to obey the Lord’s voice and keep the covenant terms (i.e. the law), the Lord would make the Israelites a unique kingdom of priests to the nations, a place where God’s dwelling would reside with His people (Ex. 19:5-6). This scene invites the reader to think back upon another place where God gives a law and chooses to dwell with His people so they could, “fill the earth and subdue it” as a kingdom of God’s representatives, or “image bearers”. Need more evidence? Consider the garden imagery woven into the lengthy tabernacle instructions before Exodus 32! The two Cherubim, a lampstand that looks like a tree, the gold and onyx, the Spirit creating, and the Sabbath instructions are all throwbacks to show how God is establishing a new Eden. Given this relationship, let’s briefly consider our main text in Exodus 32 alongside of the original fall Genesis 3. While God was instructing Moses (did God actually say?), Aaron and the Israelites **saw** that Moses was gone (the woman **saw** that the tree was good for fruit), **took** their jewels (she **took** its fruit), **ate** of the idolatrous food (she **ate**, he **ate**), and indulged in “**play**” (they knew they were **naked**). As you engage in this week’s study guide, reflect on this study tip and recognize that idolatry is not something that was a distant practice involving cute miniature statues, but a true manifestation of the fallen human nature that attempts to cast YHWH on our terms.

**Objective #1: Expose any conditions in life that may be breeding grounds for idolatry.**

*Primary Texts:* Exodus 20:1-20; Romans 1:18-25 / Exodus 24:18, 25:1-9, 29:44-46, 32:1 – Pastor Larry uses the first two passages to explain how the Israelites chose **distance over intimacy** with God by replacing Him, usually elevating themselves as god. The latter passages explain how the Israelites assumed that they had found a **better way to worship** God than he prescribes, much like one admires creation or becomes spiritual without any allegiance to Jesus. Which breeding ground of idolatry do you relate with the most and why?

*Supporting Texts:* Matthew 22:37; Hebrews 10:31

**Objective #2: Identify treasures / preferences and reflect on their ability to interfere with God.**

*Primary Texts:* Exodus 32:2-6; 2 Kings 17:7-41; Matthew 6:19-24 – Next, Pastor Larry points to the story of the golden calf to illustrate how the god that we invent symbolically reflect our treasures and our preferences. Like Israel, we find ways to synchronize our treasures and preferences with our worship of the one true and Holy God. What are some of your treasures or preferences that may be standing in the way of your relationship with God? What would a healthy relationship with your treasures and preferences look like if you were to put God first?

**Objective #3: Commit to humbling ourselves before our sovereign and boundless Lord!**

*Primary Texts:* Exodus 32:7-14, 27-35; Psalm 106:1-23; Isaiah 30:18-22 – Finally, Pastor Larry explains five different results when we engage in idolatry: we forget God, we stumble through life, we are let down, we forfeit God’s best for us, and we invite God’s discipline into our lives. Which result do you resonate with the most? How might your group encourage you to repent and find forgiveness and peace in Jesus with your idolatry?

*Supporting Texts:* Psalm 24:1-6; Isaiah 45:20-25, 57:11-13; Jeremiah 10:1-5, 18:15; Jonah 2:8-10; Hebrews 12:4-6

**Closing Prayer:** (5-10 minutes)

*In light of what God is saying through this week's message, here's some suggestions of what your group could talk about with God in prayer.*

Thank our Heavenly Father for revealing Himself to us in the person of Jesus! Ask that the Holy Spirit would continue to teach us how to live and love like Jesus in situations like the one we face today. Finally, pray that we as a church would develop a boundless understanding of our Heavenly Father so that we could rest in the assurance that the Lord is in control and He is the God of salvation for His people!

### **THROUGHOUT THE WEEK**

**-Further Reading and Exploration:** *Read Exodus 32-34* The key text this week comes from a crucial point in the Exodus story. Chapter 32 breaks from the portion of the book that describes the laws of Israel and their instructions to build a tabernacle; a new dwelling place for the Lord. As you read this story, pay attention to how the sin of Israel is resolved by Moses and how this story foreshadows the salvation we experience through Jesus Christ.

**-Stay up to date with Coronavirus Ministry Opportunities:** Help us out by pointing the people in your Community Group to [3Crosses.org/coronavirus](https://3Crosses.org/coronavirus). If you or anyone in your group is looking to serve food in our pantry, access spiritual care, or seek financial assistance, you can find all you need at [3Crosses.org/neighborhood](https://3Crosses.org/neighborhood)

**- Find out how to pray for two people in your group this week!** Pray that the members of your group would let go of what they treasure and prefer and seek to put God first!