

Joshua 24:21-23

And the people said to Joshua, "No, but we will serve the LORD!" So Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD for yourselves, to serve Him." And they said, "We are witnesses!" "Now therefore," he said, "put away the foreign gods which are among you, and incline your heart to the LORD God of Israel."

The Children of Israel said that they would serve the Lord God, yet they still had false idols and foreign gods that they were they still holding on to (*put away the foreign gods which are among you*). Even a few verses before today's verses, we read that famous verse which we all love and quote and even have in our homes. *"But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."* (We also covered this in yesterday's devotional on in Joshua 24:15)

† *And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." Joshua 24:15*

And when Joshua said this, what was the peoples response in verse 16?

† *So the people answered and said: "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods" Joshua 24:16*

The words were theirs, yet they had not done it yet, because they still had these false gods and idols in their homes, because if they didn't, then Joshua would not had said to them, *"put away the foreign gods which are among you"*

Now, before we judge Israel for doing this. Haven't we all said that we will follow and serve the Lord God, and Jesus, yet how many of the false gods and idols are we still holding on to? Yet, the more we read God's word, the more we realize that we still do have these false gods and idols in our homes, and even in our hearts.

Now I can give you a laundry list of what those gods and idols that are in people's lives, but you know what they are in your own life, and not every one has the same idols or false gods that they worship, but there is always that one, or for some, many things that's holding you back from truly loving and serving the Lord with your whole heart. Because if you have something, or even someone else that has a hold of your heart to the point that you worship him or her or it, then your whole heart does not belong to the Lord, only part of it.

Didn't Jesus even say: *"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."* **Luke 14:26**

Now Jesus is not telling us to hate our family, because that would be against one of the Ten Commandments, but instead Jesus is telling us that God must be first over everyone, and everything else.

So if you want God to be your God, and you don't want these false gods and idols in your life, then ask the Lord what, or even who you have been clinging to as a false god or idol in your life that you need to get rid of, or even if it's a spouse or family member or even a friend that you need to stop worshipping. Then once God shows you, then "*put away the foreign gods which are among you.*"

† **Mark 12:29-30** *Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment."*