

## The People Worshiped a Golden Calf (Exodus 32–34)



Dear families,

After all God had done for the Israelites, the story of the Israelites' worshiping a golden calf may seem surprising. How could God's people turn so quickly from God, who delivered them from slavery and provided for them, even after they explicitly agreed to do everything He had commanded? (See Ex. 24:3.) When we think about the reasons why Israel fell into idolatry, we recognize that we are vulnerable to the same follies.

First, we fail to obey God's Word. The Israelites disobeyed the second of the Ten Commandments: "Do not make an idol for yourself." This might sound like an easy commandment to keep; you aren't crafting little statues to worship, right? Idolatry is dangerous because it's rooted in the heart. Our idols don't always look like golden calves. Idols are anything or anyone our sinful hearts look to, seeking what only God provides—such as true joy, meaning, or hope.

Second, we distrust God's purposes. The Israelites stopped trusting in God, who showed Himself to be powerful and good. They wanted their false god to save them. They thought God's plan wasn't working, so they made a plan of their own. Are you ever tempted to do the same? When we forget who God is and think too highly of ourselves or others, we put a person in the place of God.

Third, we forget God's grace. Aaron gave credit to the man-made idol for bringing the Israelites out of Egypt. We might convince ourselves that our success comes from the work of our own hands or the favor of other people. When we forget that every good gift comes from God, we fall into idolatry.

Finally, we fail to use our gifts to the glory of God. Don't miss that the Israelites used the plunder from Egypt—God's provision to them—to make the calf. We too can often use the gifts God has given us for our own satisfaction and to draw attention to ourselves, rather than to the One who gave them to us.

God was angry with the Israelites. He is a jealous God who will not give His glory to another. (See Isa. 42:8.) Yet we see how Moses stepped in between God and the people to intercede on their behalf. As those who have Jesus Christ as our Mediator, we trust in His power to overcome our idolatries and empower us for His mission.

Check out *The Gospel Project At Home* for resources designed to help you lead a family worship experience as well as suggestions for morning and evening prayer times and family activities:

<https://ministrygrid.lifeway.com/#/easy-link/SQVC/9613b504-df0f-47a9-f143-c5ff222103bd>

## **FAMILY TALKING POINTS**

### **CHRIST CONNECTION**

*This is the big idea of how this week's Bible story points to Jesus.*

- **Preschool:** Moses talked to God for the people. When we sin, Jesus talks to God for us. Jesus never sinned. God forgives those who trust in Jesus.

### **BIG PICTURE QUESTION & ANSWER**

*This is an important biblical truth that your child will encounter each week of this unit.*

- **Preschool:** What is worship? Worship is celebrating the greatness of God.

### **KEY PASSAGE**

Come, let's worship and bow down; let's kneel before the LORD our Maker. — Psalm 95:6

**\*\* Next week:** The People Built the Tabernacle (Exodus 35–40)