



DAILY DEVOTIONAL FRIDAY BIBLE STUDY FOR JANUARY 27, 2012

## WALKING THE WALK

*All the nations may walk in the name of their gods; we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever. (Micah 4:5, NIV)*

**I**F YOU WERE FORCED TO REDUCE THE GOLF SWING to the most important thing, to keep it as simple as simple gets, you might pick alignment, or weight transfer, or rhythm. This is the one thing that, for you, will hold everything else in place. Go ahead, what is it?

Although we don't often think of it in this way, God's commands can be captured in one alone. And to borrow a baseball term, it's the leadoff hitter in the Big Ten. Here it is: "You shall have no other gods before (or *besides*, depending on your translation) me."

Now, of course, we know: there were, according to Jesus, at least two greater commandments—loving God with everything you have and loving others as you love yourself. These are like the grip and stance, vital to all that comes after. But when I ask you now, as an experienced player, to come up with the thought that holds it all together for you, you probably go to something further down the road than grip and stance.

When, in the Old Testament accounts, God's people fell apart in waves of sin, he would say to them, again and again in so many words: "You've given yourself to other gods; you've chased after powerless idols. You have—even though I've loved you in every way—abandoned me."

And in truth the sins of the Israelites live on in us. Through our God-disdaining vanities, our work-laden concerns for money (rejecting the rest of Sabbath), our dishonoring of our parents, our insults and hatred (murder), our unfaithfulness (adultery), our thievery, our lies, and our covetousness—yes, through all of these, we have chosen other gods, not least among them our own self! We have not loved God with all our might or really loved others because we have been so busy loving ourselves.

But always, always we have a choice. Let's consider ourselves greatly blessed that we have been reminded today by a "minor prophet" named Micah to walk in the name of our real Lord. Yes, let's get moving!

## Idols in our hearts

*Read Ezekiel 14:1-5.* What is the basis of the Lord's rebuke in this passage? Why do you think we tend to see idols only as physical objects of our attention, while ignoring the many interior affections that are not God?

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*Read Ezekiel 14:6-11.* How do these verses serve to explain what God means when he says that he will answer idol worshippers in keeping with their idolatry? What is most fearful about the idea of a silent God?

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## The best choice

*Read 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10.* What positive things had been reported about the Thessalonians? What was the nature of the far better choice than idols that these people made?

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