

Thought provoking questions about Life's meaning from Tim Keller

"Life only has meaning / I only have worth if..."

- I have power and influence over others. (Power Idolatry)
- I am loved and respected by _____. (Approval Idolatry)
- I have this kind of pleasure experience, a particular quality of life. (Comfort Idolatry)
- I am able to get mastery over my life in the area of _____. (Control Idolatry)
- People are dependent on me and need me. (Helping Idolatry)
- Someone is there to protect me and keep me safe. (Dependence Idolatry)
- I am completely free from obligations or responsibilities to take care of someone. (Independence Idolatry)
- I am highly productive and getting a lot done. (Work Idolatry)
- I am being recognized for my accomplishments, and I am excelling in my work. (Achievement Idolatry)
- I have a certain level of wealth, financial freedom, and very nice possessions. (Materialism Idolatry)
- I am adhering to my religion's moral codes and accomplished in its activities. (Religion Idolatry)
- This one person is in my life and happy to be there, and/or happy with me. (Individual person Idolatry)
- I feel I am totally independent of organized religion and am living by a self-made morality. (Irreligion Idolatry)
- My race and culture is ascendant and recognized as superior. (Racial/cultural Idolatry)
- A particular social grouping or professional grouping or other group lets me in. (Inner Ring Idolatry)
- My children and/or my parents are happy and happy with me. (Family Idolatry)
- Mr. or Mrs. "Right" is in love with me. (Relationship Idolatry)
- I am hurting, in a problem; only then do I feel worthy of love or able to deal with guilt. (Suffering Idolatry)
- My political or social cause is making progress and ascending in influence or power. (Ideology Idolatry)
- I have a particular kind of look or body image. (Image Idolatry)

Let's look more closely at the first four categories:

If you seek **POWER** (success, winning, influence)...

- Your greatest nightmare: Humiliation
- People around you often feel: Used
- Your problem emotion: Anger

If you seek **APPROVAL** (affirmation, love, relationships)...

- Your greatest nightmare: Rejection
- People around you often feel: Smothered
- Your problem emotion: Cowardice

If you seek **COMFORT** (privacy, lack of stress, freedom)...

- Your greatest nightmare: Stress, demands
- People around you often feel: Neglected
- Your problem emotion: Boredom

If you seek **CONTROL** (self-discipline, certainty, standards)...

- Your greatest nightmare: Uncertainty
- People around you often feel: Condemned