

# Obstacles to Ascension

## Recap: Series called “Ascend:

- Using the primary image of a mountain
- Bottom of the mountain is ‘basecamp’ and a lower-level of experiencing God
- Top of the mountain (the SUMMIT) is the maximum amount we can experience God in this life - it’s much greater than most people recognize or realize

## Two weeks ago:

- Introduced fact there is MORE of God we can experience in this life - don’t settle for less
- God’s love language is OBEDIENCE (can’t ascend in friendship without obedience)
- We are able to experience God’s “MORE” as we ascend the mountain and grow in intimacy and relationship with God

## Last Week:

- Where are you?
- Not where we think we are
- Settle for less, when more can be had
- Seek and He will answer

## Tension:

- Things get in the way as we are trying to ascend the Mountain of God
- These things can be ‘bad’, but good things also get in the way and keep us from ascending

Exodus 32:1-10, 17-20 (NIV)

## The Golden Calf

1 When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, “Come, make us gods (or a god) who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don’t know what has happened to him.”

2 Aaron answered them, “Take off the gold earrings that your wives, your sons and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me.” 3 So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron. 4 He took what

they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then they said, "These are your gods,(This is your god) Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt."

5 When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced, "Tomorrow there will be a festival to the Lord." 6 So the next day the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offerings. Afterward they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.

7 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt. 8 They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, 'These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.'

9 "I have seen these people," the Lord said to Moses, "and they are a stiff-necked people. 10 Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation."

17 When Joshua heard the noise of the people shouting, he said to Moses, "There is the sound of war in the camp."

18 Moses replied:

"It is not the sound of victory,  
it is not the sound of defeat;  
it is the sound of singing that I hear."

19 When Moses approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, his anger burned and he threw the tablets out of his hands, breaking them to

pieces at the foot of the mountain. 20 And he took the calf the people had made and burned it in the fire; then he ground it to powder, scattered it on the water and made the Israelites drink it.

2 things that can 'knock you off the mountain of God', obstacles, roadblocks, get in the way

1. Sin

- Idols
  - False gods
    - 7 deadly sins
      - Lust
        - Pornography

Let's look at some data to see the scope and effects of porn in society and the church.

Over 40 million Americans are regular visitors to porn sites.

47 percent of families in the United States reported that pornography is a problem in their home.

Pornography use increases the marital infidelity rate by more than 300 percent.

Eleven is the average age that a child is first exposed to porn, and 94 percent of children will see porn by the age of 14.

56 percent of American divorces involve one party having an "obsessive interest" in pornographic websites.

**68 percent of church-going men and over 50 percent of pastors view porn on a regular basis. Of young Christian adults 18-24 years old, 76 percent actively search for porn.**

33 percent of women aged 25-and-under search for porn at least once per month.

**Only 13 percent of self-identified Christian women say they never watch porn—87 percent of Christian women have watched porn.**

55 percent of married men and 25 percent of married women say they watch porn at least once a month.

- Sex
  - Gluttony
    - Food
  - Greed
    - Money
  - Laziness
  - Wrath
    - Anger
  - Envy
    - Other people's stuff
  - Pride
    - Power
- 
- Making an image of God
  - Israelites making an image of God, wanted something tangible that they could see, touch
  - Asking God to join our plans
  - Here it is bless it
  - Good things
    - Job
    - Family
    - Relationships

## 2. Distraction

- When Satan can't entice us to sin he distracts us
- Some call that a sin and I'm not going to split hairs

Psalm 24:3-5 (NIV)

3 Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord?

Who may stand in his holy place?

4 The one who has clean hands and a pure heart,  
who does not trust in an idol  
or swear by a false god.

5 They will receive blessing from the Lord  
and vindication from God their Savior.

### Romans 6:6-11 (NLT)

6 We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. 7 For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. 8 And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with him. 9 We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and he will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him. 10 When he died, he died once to break the power of sin. But now that he lives, he lives for the glory of God. 11 So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus.

### Luke 9:23-25 (NIV)

23 Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. 25 What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?

- Death
- We must die. . . . to ourselves

## Closing