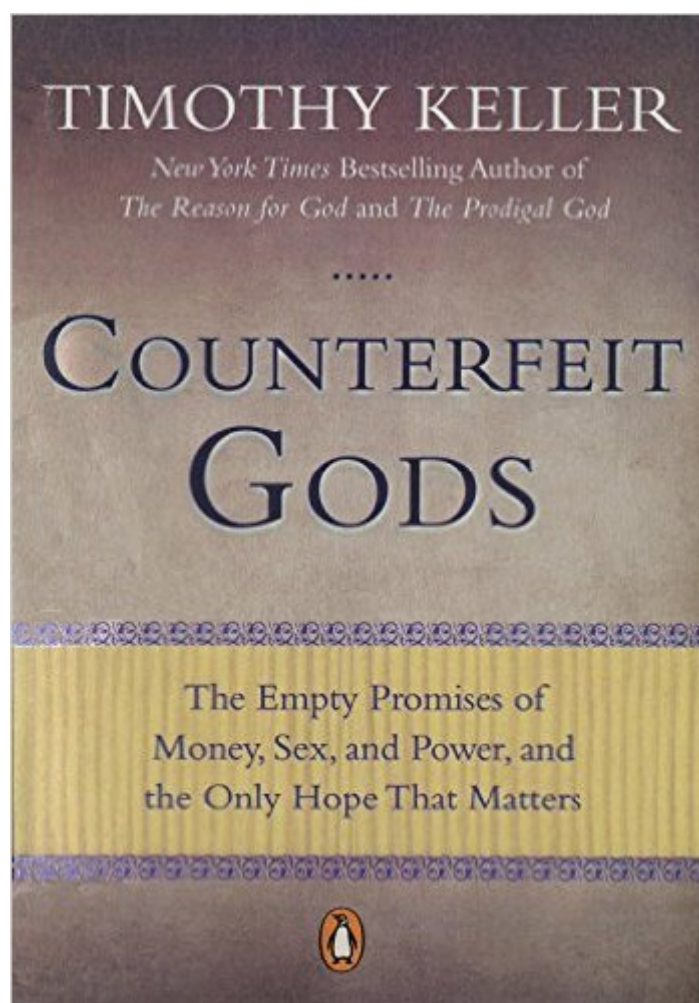


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# Counterfeit Gods: The Empty Promises Of Money, Sex, And Power, And The Only Hope That Matters



## Synopsis

New York TimesÂ best-selling author of the forthcoming *God's Wisdom for Navigating Life*Â and nationally renowned minister Timothy Keller exposes the error of making good things "ultimate" in this book, and shows readers a new path toward a hope that lasts.Â Success, true love, and the life you've always wanted. Many of us placed our faith in these things, believing they held the key to happiness, but with a sneaking suspicion they might not deliver. No wonder we feel lost, alone, disenchanted, and resentful. There is only one God who can wholly satisfy our cravingsâ "and now is the perfect time to meet Him again, or for the first time. In *Counterfeit Gods*, Timothy Keller shows how a proper understanding of the Bible reveals the unvarnished truth about societal ideals and our own hearts. This powerful message cements Keller's reputation as a critical thinker and pastor, and comes at a crucial timeâ "for both the faithful and the skeptical.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Praise for Timothy Keller and *Counterfeit Gods*"Keller's wisdom and biblical understanding, served up in clear, engaging writing, can help both Christians and non-Christians to identify the idols in our own hearts and replace empty promises with hope in Christ." â "World magazine"Offers much insight for shepherding local churches. Keller argues that Christians cannot understand themselves or their culture unless they discern the counterfeit gods." â "Christianity Today"Â "Tim Keller knows how to tell a Bible story. Like *The Prodigal* God before it . . . *Counterfeit Gods* is built around them. And every time I read one of those stories, I feel like I am hearing it for the first time. . . . *Counterfeit*

Gods is easily one of the best books I've read this year." â "Tim Challies"Smashes the arrogant conclusion that violation of the first commandment was merely an ancient problem. Combining biblical theology with experienced surgery on the soul over the years in modern Manhattan . . . Keller's heart diagnostics will leave us neither ignorant nor unmoved." â "David B. Garner, associate professor of Systematic Theology, Westminster Theological Seminary

Timothy Keller was born and raised in Pennsylvania and educated at Bucknell University, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and Westminster Theological Seminary. His first pastorate was in Hopewell, Virginia. In 1989 he started Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City with his wife, Kathy, and their three sons. Today, Redeemer has nearly six thousand regular Sunday attendees and has helped to start more than three hundred new churches around the world.Â He is the author ofÂ The Songs of Jesus,Â Prayer,Â Encounters with Jesus,Â Walking with God through Pain and Suffering,Â Every Good Endeavor,Â andÂ The Meaning of Marriage, among others, including the perennial bestsellersÂ The Reason for GodÂ andÂ The Prodigal God.

Be ready to have your biblical thinking transformed and your pursuit of living pleasing to God radically altered after reading this paradigm shifting book. I have been a Christian for about fifteen years, and few other books have impacted me as greatly as this one. Keller expands the idea of idolatry to anything that someone strives for at all costs, that gives a sense of pleasure, significance, and security. And when a drive for these "idols of the heart" overrides one's drive to pursue, love, and worship God, then it is an idol. The transformation in my thinking came after reading the book and looking at my Christian life through this framework. What really are the idols in my life? I'm sure every reader will, like myself, admit that there are varying idols that we pander to every day, with the major categories being: pride, control, pleasure, possessions, popularity or approval. This book puts worshiping these "idols of the heart" in perspective. Keller does a masterful job in expanding and explaining this theme of "idols of the heart" by drawing from Christian sources (Bible, some biblical counseling), observations of our society, philosophical and historical writers, and pastoral experience. His outstanding ability to pull insights from these sources and present them in an engaging way will, I believe, continue to put Keller's books at the top of the list for explaining and promoting Christian belief and spiritual growth. The end of the book ends appropriately by answering the question that is on the mind of every reader: So how does someone truly worship the one true God in life? He answers by saying the truth that many Christians have heard before but need to hear again in regards to this pivotal question: "This takes what are called 'the spiritual disciplines,'

such as private prayer, corporate worship, and meditation. The disciplines take cognitive knowledge and make it a life-shaping reality in our hearts and imaginations." (175). We truly worship God by infusing our lives with His Word which displays the wonder of His character, the Gospel message, tells us how to live pleasing to Him, and by drawing into His presence in prayer as we seek to live for Him in every moment of life. Truly I hope that Keller writes a book on these spiritual disciplines mentioned in his statement that will explain how to live for God in every moment of our lives in greater detail. Every book on Christian spirituality should move readers to render worship to the one true God in spirit and in truth, and this book accomplishes this with great insight and clarity. In the end this is a fantastic book that I highly encourage every Christian to read.

This was not an easy book to read....I got this book after reading the Reason for God and having serious doubts in my faith due to a string of really bad life experiences in the past 4 years: miscarriage, infidelity, divorce, depression, loss of multiple friendships, death of youngest sibling, the list goes on .... and I'm one of those people who did their best to please God and live a good Christian life style. Yet despite my efforts life just kept hitting me with some really hard punches. After reading the Reason for God last month I was at least convinced that God was real but I was still struggling to understand my life and what happened to me and WHY. I saw counterfeit gods and saved it in my to buy list on for many months. I was uncertain about reading it fearing it would just make me more angry with religion than I already was. So I took a risk and eventually downloaded it.... After the first chapter I wasn't sure I liked it... the examples given seemed to say that if you weren't fortunate enough to end up with good relationships it was somehow due to your lust and idolatry. The Leah Jacob Rachel marriage debacle didn't help because of the many hot messes in the bible that God allowed its a pretty big one. Its also probably one of the most misinterpreted bible stories used tell women to stay in unloving unfaithful marriages because God will bless them.... Or that ongoing debate of how not wanting to be single and wanting a stable marriage and a family makes you either ungrateful, desperate, or lacking in faith. Despite my opposition I kept reading....I'm glad I did....., the book got MUCH better the explanation of idols as not something we do wrong but actually the foundation of all sin and original sin was the catalyst for idolatry, the desire to live apart from God and manage our own lives as if we can control something..... The concept that in this broken world so many factors play into the lives we end up with and lack of FAITH has NOTHING to do with it was like taking a breath of fresh clean air. That one negative belief that has kept me in bondage for YEARS is that I can earn brownie points with God by being a good church going, tithe paying, Sunday school teaching, bible reading, Christian only music listening, modest dressing,

polite, abstaining Christian woman. Finally a pastor was admitting that life isn't all about moral behavior and you can't earn your way into blessings or God's mercy and grace. Don't get me wrong I think moral behavior is important but it has to be for the right reasons , which is to glorify God, frankly most examples I had seen were based on getting human approval or people pleasing which is a form of idolatry. He discussed this in excellent detail. He went over every area of idolatry and male and female idolatry and really explored this basic sin. He even admitted to maintain his own idolatry and that its an ongoing process.... for the first time in years I didn't feel like a lonely loser Christian who somehow didn't have faith the right way to not have a crap life.... In the end I not only understood the idols in my life that I needed to work on but I had a renewed hope in God that despite I was 40 divorced single and childless I still have worth in Gods eyes. But God doesn't judge me and he loves me and sees how hard I try. I just have to work on letting God love me in the ways the humans in my life haven't and healing is waiting for me if I'm willing to let go of what the world/church says my life is supposed to look like... God Always will love me and Always has I just couldn't see it because I placed too much importance on my human relationships for happiness. Don't get me wrong I'm not going to become a hermit. I will however be thankful for the family and friends I have left, and focus on replacing my idols with the love God has always had for me. With each passing day being alone is not feeling so lonely. Thanks for this book. If anyone who reads this has experienced any life hardships or doubts or you are just feeling lost in life then read this book... its really surprisingly nothing like what I expected at all and I'm so thankful for that. Tip: Be sure to check the footnotes esp on kindle he gives a lot of information for further study to let go of idols and experience God love, as well as, he gives good points that can't fit in the book. He took one section about the slave girl when discussing power and pride idolatry and in the notes was very clear that taking abuse or neglect was not acceptable and that biblical times had certain standards. All I can say is if you are struggling in your relationships in life or your relationships with God read this book

Idolatry is not a word used in everyday life. Rarely would someone admit that they're an idolater. Even as I read the historical books of the Old Testament as a young believer, I never imagined that I could be guilty of idolatry. Yet John Calvin wrote that Man's nature is a perpetual factory of idols. The truth is our propensity to worship things other than God runs deep. Timothy Keller defines an idol as anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give. In Counterfeit Gods, Keller gives us an

insightful look at how the good things of this world become idols. Romantic relationships, money and political causes can all be good things, but Keller states that when these become more important than God they become idols and we become idolaters. He skillfully uses the stories of Abraham, Jacob, Jonah and Zacchaeus to teach us about the prevalence of idolatry in the human heart. Finally, he ends the book with a proposed solution. The solution is not to love good things less. Idolatry cannot be remedied by repenting alone or by making up your mind that you're going to live differently. The solution is to love God more! The idol must be replaced by the Gospel, through God's grace in Christ. Keller's even and gracious tone is what sets this book apart. I highly recommend *Counterfeit Gods*.

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