

## Thought for the Day 16th October - John Reed

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Have you ever decided not to buy your favourite take-away food, and make your own at home instead?

One man did just that. He posted a picture on Twitter of his homemade meal, with the caption: "It's the fake nandos for me."<sup>1</sup> Nando's is, of course, a famous South African fast-food chain that specialises in Portuguese-African food, including its signature flame-grilled peri-peri style chicken.

The twitter response to this man's sharing of his homemade "fake nandos" was not kind. Many criticised the fact that the wraps were held together with sewing pins. Others were harsh about the chips, which looked very pale and undercooked (one person suggested they'd just been warmed on the radiator) – that is, what you could see of them under the overly liberal sprinkling of bright-red seasoning. The garlic bread likewise came under fire for looking as if it had been "cooked" under a lamp. One person said: "The longer you look at this the worse it gets ... Every single part of it is wrong."

I can only assume that the original poster was proud of his efforts – why else post it on Twitter? So I can only wonder what he felt when this Twitter storm engulfed him.

Now, it's true that with fast food it is possible to cook a homemade meal that is better. In fact, that's not really all that difficult! But with many other things in life, it's hard to match the original.

In this passage, Paul congratulates the Thessalonians for having turned away from idols to serve the living and true God (verse 9).

The Bible has a lot to say about idolatry.

The English word comes from the Greek word εἰδωλολατρία (eidololatria) which is a compound of two words: εἶδωλον (eidolon) meaning "image" and λατρεία (latreia) meaning "worship". So it literally means "worship of images."

Paul describes it well in Romans 1:22-23: *"Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things."* This is what is banned in the second of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:4-5): *"You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God ..."*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/weird-news/mans-homemade-nandos-brutally-ripped-22850109>

At its heart, idolatry is replacing the real God with fake “gods,” whether they be images carved out of wood, gold, silver or bronze (Leviticus 19:4; Psalm 135:15; Revelation 9:20) or indulgences of the flesh such as greed, gluttony and drunkenness ((Colossians 3:5; 1 Corinthians 10:7).

These idols cannot see or speak (Psalm 135:16-17). They are powerless to answer our prayers and save us (Isaiah 45:20). They are worthless (Isaiah 44:9). If they have any force behind them at all, it is demonic (Deuteronomy 32:17); and those who cling to them are turning away from the real thing in the love of God (Jonah 2:8).

So although you can feel free to make your own homemade versions of your favourite takeaway food, please don't replace the genuine God with worthless imitations!