

The Second Commandment

What do you see when you think of God?

- An old man with a long white beard.
- A radiant giant sitting on a glorious throne.
- An eternal flame.
- A brilliant light piercing the darkness.

Perhaps because we live in a physical world containing visible and tangible things, we are tempted to visualize the Person of God. It seems easier to believe in something you can see and touch. As the saying goes, 'Seeing is Believing!'

However, with God, the opposite is true. He reveals Himself to those who first believe.

Exodus 20:

- 4 "You shall not make for yourself an idol,
or any likeness
of what is in heaven above or
on the earth beneath or
in the water under the earth.
- 5 "You shall not worship them or serve them;
for I, the LORD your God,
am a jealous God,
visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children,
on the third and the fourth generations
of those who hate Me,
- 6 but showing lovingkindness to thousands,
to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

- Circle what we should not make for ourselves.
- Underline in what likeness we should not make them.
- Circle what we are prohibited to do.
- Underline why God prohibits this.
- Underline what God 'visits' on the children.
- Circle to what generations He will do this.
- Circle what God will show to those who love and obey Him.

Why do you think God forbade us from making a physical idol? _____



MEMORIZE!

Verse 4



Psalm 115:4-8
Isaiah 40:18-26

The Reason Behind the Commands

It is important to understand that God's commandments were given, **not** to make our lives miserable, difficult or restricting but, **because He loves us** and desires to keep us from calamity, deception and failure. God wants our best, and His commandments keep us from decisions that will take us down the wrong path in life.

One path He wants us to avoid going down is the one that leads to a wrong perspective of Himself. Notice what Jesus tells the Samaritan woman concerning God.

"God is spirit,
and those who worship Him
must worship in spirit and truth."

John 4:24

- Circle how Jesus describes God.
- Underline how we must therefore worship Him.

Prior to this verse, the woman told Jesus that her people worshipped God on Mount

Gerizim. In light of this, what is the significance of Jesus' statement? _____

How does Jesus' statement about God relate to the second commandment? _____

Archaeology reveals that the record of man's history is strewn with images and carvings of deities and personages of worship. They cover the spectrum from animals, small and large, to humans who have ascended the pedestal to demigod status. In Papua New Guinea, carvings of terrifying visages were said to contain spirits that the possessor (usually tourists purchasing artifacts) could potentially be oppressed by. In Hawai`i, even the stones on sacred volcanoes are best left in their place lest the innocent souvenir collector experience unexplained sickness after returning home.

There is within us a natural propensity to sanctify certain objects as **special** (ie good luck charms) or **sacred** (ie. holy items or persons) and to project into them powers that belong only to the LORD. These 'idols' may even be **secular** in nature as we idolize certain personal qualities (ie. athleticism, musical talent, beauty, etc.) and the power of inanimate things (riches, status, degrees, etc.). Whatever we place on a pedestal, whatever they may appear to be, **when we gain our security, our significance or our self worth from them, they become our gods** and we have succeeded in crafting an idol.

We may not call it worship, but worship it is, for the place which they take up in our hearts is reserved for One only ... the Creator and LORD of all heaven and earth.

 2 Corinthians 3:17
1 Timothy 1:17

The Samaritans were descendants of a mixed race consisting of the intermarrying of Jews and Gentiles brought to Samaria during the Assyrian invasion of the northern kingdom. Because of the mixing of Gentile and Jewish blood, the Samaritans were looked down upon by other Jews. And because the Samaritans were ostracized, they developed a corrupted form of Judaism that held to worshipping God at Mount Gerizim, not at the Temple in Jerusalem.

The Danger of Idolatry

There is a danger in replacing the Creator with created things. Paul outlines that danger in his epistle to the Romans.

- 20 For since the creation of the world
His invisible attributes,
His eternal power and divine nature,
have been clearly seen,
being understood through what has been made,
so that they are without excuse.
- 21 For even though they knew God,
they did not honor Him as God or give thanks,
but they became futile in their speculations,
and their foolish heart was darkened.
- 22 Professing to be wise,
they became fools,
- 23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God
for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds
and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.
- 24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity,
so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.
- 25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie,
and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator,
who is blessed forever. Amen.

Romans 1:20-25

- Underline what is clearly seen in God's creation. (v 20)
- Circle what those who are able to comprehend God's creation are. (v 20)
- Underline what they did not do. (v 21)
- Circle what they became. (v 21-22)
- Underline for what they exchanged the glory of God. (v 23)
- Circle what God therefore gave them over to. (v 24)
- Circle what for what they exchanged God's truth. (v 25)
- Circle what they chose to worship and serve. (v 25)

From the passage above, explain how one ends up rejecting God and embracing His creatures in His stead. _____

How does the rejection of God as Creator result in the increase of lust and impurity? _____



Jeremiah 10:8-15

The Evolution Trap

As people embrace the lie that is the theory of evolution as taught in the schools, their faith in the Creator God is diminished, and thinking themselves wise, they become fools. Without faith in God and His moral laws, they begin to trust in themselves, their own wisdom and goodness, which will ultimately fail when God's wrath is poured out at the Judgment. (see Romans 1:18)

When we reject God as our Creator, we also reject the high view He has for mankind. Instead of viewing others as God's creations, our darkened hearts begin to view others as objects to use and manipulate for our own purpose and pleasure. Our sin nature becomes inflamed by the lusts of our eyes, of our flesh and our egos so that, uncurbed, other people simply become the means to fulfill our selfish ends.

A second danger is found in *Psalm 135:15,18*.

- 15 The idols of the nations are *but silver and gold,*
The work of man's hands.
- 18 **Those who make them will be like them,**
Yes, everyone who trusts in them.

- Underline what idols are the work of.
- Circle what those who make them will be like.
- Underline who else will be like the idols.

How do people become like the things they idolize? _____

Can you cite any examples that illustrates this truth? _____

The principle expressed in the above passage is at once frightening and encouraging. It is **frightening** for those who idolize things or other people, for when they become implanted in their hearts, they will take root and grow and eventually take over their very lives. Examples range from the fictitious character of **Ebenezer Scrooge** to the real life personage of **Howard Hughes**. Notice how people begin to imitate those they idolize, while those who idolize money seem to become as cold and hard as the metal they worship.

But the principle can be an **encouragement** as well, for when Christ is planted into a person's heart, He, too, will take root and begin to grow, until His likeness is seen in that very person!

Therefore, we must be careful what we choose to idolize, for ...

*that which we idolize
is that which we become!*

There is an old story that when Abraham was a boy, he assisted his father, Terah, who crafted idols. One day, after being left alone in the shop, Abraham destroyed all of the idols except one. When his father returned and saw the carnage, he scolded his son and blamed him for the destruction. In his defense, Abraham pointed to the one unbroken idol and said, "But father, that idol destroyed all the others."

"Don't be stupid, son," Terah chided. "How can that idol destroy all the others. I made it myself out of wood!"

With that statement, Abraham had made his point and God's light was kindled in his young heart.

Would we all come to that state of enlightenment, to the realization that nothing made by human hands can replace the Only Creator, God and LORD of all!