

Subject: God's Moral Law – The Second Commandment

Scripture: Exodus 20:1-6

The first and second commandments have to do with the nature of God and the proper worship of God. When we think of the nature and attributes of God, nothing could be more important.

“What comes into our minds when we think of God is the most important thing about us.”
– A. W. Tozer

The first and second commandments are based on several attributes of God:

- 1) There is only one true God (He is unique, one-of-a-kind. There is no other God.)
- 2) God is eternal (idols have a beginning)
- 3) God is the Creator (idols are created by someone)
- 4) God is living (idols are not)
- 5) God is infinite (idols are finite)
- 6) God is spirit (He has no physical form is not to be fashioned into a physical image)

John 4:24 *God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

- 7) God is jealous (He is protective of His character and His exclusive rights as God)

The first and second commandments forbid idolatry. Idolatry is the worship of any false god other than the one true God and it is the worship of God in a manner that falsely represents God. These commandments forbid the worship of all false gods and the worship of the true God in a false manner.

More people are guilty of idolatry than you may think. Some people make a false god out of wood or stone. That kind of idolatry has been going on throughout history and is still going on.

But there are also other kinds of idolatry. People make an idol out of a person or an object or anything that takes the place of God (family, friends, money, position, education can all be idols). We can make an idol out of the blessings that God gives us.

Another way to make an idol is to make an image of God that misrepresents Him. While Moses was on Mt. Sinai receiving God's law the people were at the base of the mountain asking Aaron to make a golden calf. They were not asking for another god, but they wanted to make an image to represent God. It was a false representation of the one true God.

Exodus 32:1-4¹ *And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him.*² *And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me.*³ *And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron.*⁴ *And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving*

tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

Another way to make an idol is with the mind. Whenever someone thinks of God in a way that does not accurately represent His true character, he is guilty of making a false god. Many people want to make a god as if they were going down a cafeteria. They pick and choose what attributes they like and leave what they don't like. But God doesn't give us the freedom to do that. He jealously guards His own character, and He has revealed His character to us in the Bible.

The first and second commandments tell us about acceptable worship. We must worship the right God, and we must worship God in the right way. The two commands forbid the worship of false gods and false worship of the true God. In acceptable worship three things are required:

1. There must be A PROPER CONCEPT OF GOD

There was a little girl drawing a picture, when her mother asked, "Honey, what are you drawing?" "I'm drawing a picture of God." "But honey, nobody knows what God looks like." "They will when I'm done." Many people do what that little girl was doing; they draw God to be like they want Him. In Bible times, people made a graven or molten image of God. Today it is a mental image of God.

***Romans 1:22-23**²² *Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,*²³ *And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.**

2. There must be A PRECISE COMMUNICATION ABOUT GOD

The way we worship communicates truth about God. We teach when we worship. If we worship wrongly, we're teaching wrong lessons about God. We teach our children by our worship. What does God mean in the last part of verse 5 and verse 6 about "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children?" The children are not held guilty for the sins of the parents, but they suffer for the sins of the parents. What is the context of these verses? He is talking about false worship. Look at *2 Chr. 26:16-20* (the example of Uzziah). He sinned by worshiping the true God in the wrong way. Look at *2 Chr. 27:1-2*. Jotham, his son, did not go to the temple. He was a good man, but he did not worship. He seems to have had a take it or leave it attitude toward worship. In *2 Kings 15:4*, the Bible says that the places of idol worship were not removed in his reign and people continued to sacrifice to false gods. See *2 Chr. 28:1-3, 23-25*. Ahaz, the son of Jotham and the grandson of Uzziah, was an enthusiastic servant of Satan. In these verses we see Uzziah, a father and his misguided worship, Jotham, a son and his neglected worship, and Ahaz, a grandson and his perverted worship. Uzziah's great grandchildren were sacrificed to idols. The heart is easily distracted from acceptable worship of the one true God.

3. There must be A PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO GOD

The last part of verse 6 reminds us that there is a positive in this command. With every negative command, there is a corresponding positive command. Don't worship any other god. Worship the one and only God. Don't worship God in the wrong way. Worship God in the right way, the acceptable way. How? Love the Lord and keep His commandments. Jesus said in ***John 14:15*** *If ye love me, keep my commandments*. Love and obedience go together. Absolutely nothing is more important than worship.

A. God desires our worship

John 4:23 *But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.* That's what God wants from you. Why did God make you? He created you to worship and serve Him. Nobody can worship and serve God for you.

B. God deserves our worship

God says that He is a "jealous God" (vs. 5).

Exodus 34:14 *For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.*

What right does God have to be jealous? One athlete has no right to be jealous of another athlete because he is not the only athlete in the world. He doesn't own sports all by himself. One musician has no right to be jealous of another because he is not the only musician in the world. He doesn't own all the music. One artist has no right to be jealous of another because he is not the only artist in the world. He doesn't own art. There is more than one athlete, more than one musician, more than one artist in the world, but there's only one God.

Imagine how God must feel. Imagine how you would feel after you had created all things if people choose to worship the sun or the image of a fish or the image of a man instead of you the Creator? Wouldn't you have a right to be angry? God is saying He has the right to our love and devotion and He will not share it with another god. He deserves to be worshiped in a manner that brings Him glory.