

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

"NO IDOLS"

For individual study or group discussion

Continuing our studies in Deuteronomy chapter 5, we learn that the First and Second Commandments together form an inseparable pair. If we are to love God and worship him with all our heart, soul, and mind (Matthew 22:37), we first need to discover and displace the idols in our lives. According to author and theologian Dr. Michael Horton, "Not only does God command us to make sure we have the correct deity in mind when we worship, he also requires us to worship the correct God correctly."¹ The Second Commandment shows us how to rightly worship the one true God as it provides us with *a necessary corrective (v. 8), a sobering warning (v. 9), and an encouraging promise (v. 10).*

A Necessary Corrective (v. 8)

As the second generation of Israelites prepared to enter the Promised Land, Moses reiterated the Law given to their fathers at Mt. Sinai. A necessary corrective is found in verse 8 which prohibits the fashioning of idols. Knowing that the people of Israel would face constant temptation to adopt the idol worship practices of the neighboring nations, God intentionally *spoke* to his people at Mt. Sinai: "Since you saw no form on the day that the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, beware lest you act corruptly by making a carved image for yourselves, in the form of any figure" (Deuteronomy 4:15-16). Tim Keller explains: "It is impossible to understand a culture without discerning its idols...In the Bible, turning from idols always includes a rejection of the culture that the idols produce. God tells Israel that they must not only reject other nations' gods, but 'you shall not follow their practices' (Exodus 23:24)."²

- What does Deuteronomy 4:11-19 reveal about God and how he is to be worshipped?
- Read John 4:24. In his encounter with the Samaritan woman, how does Jesus explain the rationale behind the Second Commandment?

A Sobering Warning (v. 9)

In verse 9, God issues a sobering warning. Because he refuses to share his glory with anyone or anything, he requires an undivided heart in our worship of him. Note how God equates idolatry with showing hatred toward him. If the nation of Israel turned away from God's command, God's judgment upon them would affect multiple generations.

- God describes himself as a "jealous" God. How is his jealousy totally different from our own? J.I. Packer defines God's jealousy as "not a compound of frustration, envy, and spite, as human jealousy so often is, but [it] appears instead as a praiseworthy zeal to preserve something supremely precious."³
- How are you encouraged that God will zealously preserve and protect your relationship with him?
- Read Isaiah 42:5-9. How does God lay claim to our undivided affection and worship?

An Encouraging Promise (v. 10)

After God's sobering warning in verse 9, he delivers a promise to show his "steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments" (v. 10). Notice God's extraordinary grace and mercy in his desire to extend his blessings to a thousand generations (Deuteronomy 7:9), as opposed to punishing three to four.

- Read John 14:15, 21 and 1 John 2:3, 5:3. How does Jesus affirm the promise given to the Israelites in verse 10?
- Make it an item of prayer this week to ask God to grant you the faith to see his commands not as burdensome (1 John 5:3), but as loving direction that leads to life.

DATE: January 22, 2023

SPEAKER: Chad/Aaron

SERIES: Deuteronomy

PASSAGE: Deuteronomy 5:8-10

Family Dinner Table

In Spirit and Truth

When Jesus interacts with the Samaritan woman at the well, he tells her that true worshippers of God will worship the Father "in spirit and truth" (John 4:23). In both Old and New Testament times, religious syncretism was a persistent temptation for the children of Israel, because polytheism predominated the religious practices of the day. The Second Commandment not only prohibits the fashioning of idols, but also forbids trusting in anything other than God. An idol can be "anything more important to you than God...anything you seek to give you what only God can give."⁴ The Samaritan woman was relying on her cultural identity. She thought she was worshipping God, but instead she was trusting in the prevailing religious practices and observances of the day.

As a family, read through the [WCF Shorter Catechism Q&A 49-52](#) and discuss the following questions together:

- How does the Second Commandment extend your understanding of idols?
- Based on what you've learned, can you identify possible idols in your life?
- Read Leviticus 10:1-3. Using the WCF Shorter Catechism Q&A 51, explain how Nadab and Abihu sinned against God.
- According to Romans 1:21-23 and James 1:14, what heart attitudes lead to idolatry?

PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS
Metanoia Prison Ministries,
strategic partner ministry

PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS
Norma A., *supported missionary*
partner serving in Spain

¹Horton, Michael S. *The Law of Perfect Freedom*. 1993 Chicago, Moody Press. 71

²Keller, Tim. *Counterfeit Gods: The Empty Promises of Money, Sex, and Power, and The Only Hope that Matters*. 2009. NY NY, Dutton. 166-167; xvii

³Packer, J.I. *Knowing God*. 1993, InterVarsity Press. 153