

The First Commandment



Introduction

We've looked at how God created the world. We looked at how even when we disobeyed him, he loved us and promised to send a Savior rather than destroy us. We looked at what Jesus did so that we would be saved and live forever. We studied how the Holy Spirit makes us holy heirs of heaven through faith. After looking at all of that, we want to thank God. Today's lesson will begin to show us how we can do that.

Opening Prayer: Heavenly Father, I have indeed transgressed your commandments. I have been impatient in trials. I am unsympathetic and unmerciful. I do not help my neighbor. I am unable to resist sin. I do not tire of doing wrong. Dear Lord, pour out your grace on me and give me your Holy Spirit to help me to avoid whatever runs contrary to your commands so that I may be obedient and follow your will. Help me to give my heart and soul to you alone. Amen.

Lesson Aim: Why does God forbid us to have any other gods?

Part One

Read Exodus 20:3.

1) What is the First Commandment?

Read Daniel 6:3-23. Daniel's family and all the Jewish people had been forced to move to Babylon. Though he is a foreigner, Daniel grows up to work for the government. Other government officials do not like Daniel, and they get the new king to make a law that they know Daniel will not obey.

2) How had God blessed Daniel?

3) How did the other officials feel about Daniel?

4) They wanted to catch Daniel doing something wrong, but couldn't. What was the only way they realized that they could get rid of him?

5) What was the decree that they convinced King Darius to issue?

6) Daniel was faced with a choice: follow the king's decree or be faithful to God. Which did he choose?

7) Does it seem that it was a difficult decision for Daniel?

8) Soon the others caught Daniel praying to the true God. What was going to happen to Daniel?

9) Did the king join in the gladness that Daniel would be put into the lions' den? How did he react?

10) What happened to Daniel when he was put in the lions' den?

11) Why was Daniel willing to be tossed into the lions' den rather than bow down to the king?

12) How did Daniel keep the First Commandment?

Read Matthew 22:37.

- 13) How intensely are we to love our God?
- 14) List some religious views that do not honor the triune God as the only true God.

KEY POINT 1 - Do not minimize and insult God by pretending that there is anything else even remotely like him.

What I've learned so far:

Part Two

Read Deuteronomy 8:10-20. After he rescued them from slavery, God urges the Israelites to remember all that he has done for them, to continue to depend on him in times of trial and times of prosperity.

- 1) In these verses, what does God tell us to do?
- 2) In these verses, what does God tell us not to do?
- 3) In these verses, what does God tell us to depend on?
- 4) In these verses, what does God tell us to not depend on?
- 5) Where did you get your ability to do everything that you can do?
- 6) What will happen to you if you forget about God and his commands?

Read Matthew 10:37-39.

- 7) We are to fear, trust, and love God above all things. What is included in "all things"?
- 8) So if God comes first and we are to love him even more than our family members, is putting God before and above everything else always going to be easy or simple?

Read Psalm 62:10.

- 9) What else must we not love more than God?
- 10) What does this mean about the importance of God vs. everything else that we have?
- 11) How can we try to keep God #1 in our lives?
- 12) List some things that people commonly place before God in their lives.

KEY POINT 1 - God wants us to give him the glory that is due him by fearing, loving, and trusting him above all things. And when he says all, he means all.

What I've learned so far:

Part Three

Study pages 46-52 in the Catechism and answer the following questions in your own words.

- 1) What does God teach us in the First Commandment?
- 2) What does God require of us in this and all commandments?
- 3) What is God's glory?
- 4) What is idolatry?
- 5) How do people sin openly with idolatry?
- 6) How do people sin secretly with idolatry?
- 7) What does it mean to fear God above all things?
- 8) What does it mean to love God above all things?
- 9) What does it mean to trust God above all things?
- 10) How did Jesus save us from our sins against the first commandment?

Helpful Passages

1 John 5:3—Love for God is not just some kind of mushy feeling inside. It's a love that calls for action. Love is a verb. When the Bible talks about love, it is always an action.

How can we show love for God?

Exodus 20:5-6

What is the terrible threat God attaches to this commandment?

What is the wonderful promise God attaches to this commandment?

Joshua 24:14-18—Joshua spoke these words about 3500 years ago.

Is mankind's struggle with idolatry anything new?

How does Joshua show a good example of responsibility?

What reasons do the people give for why they want to serve the Lord?

What reasons can you give for why you want to serve the Lord?

Main point — God protects his glory by forbidding me to have other gods because he wants me to give him the glory that is due him by fearing, loving, and trusting in him above all.

Final considerations:

- 1) What are other gods in which people are commonly tempted to trust?
- 2) How can works righteousness become a god in itself?
- 3) God tells us he loves us before giving us his commandments ____ .
 - A. because he knows that he will get farther with us by being loved rather than by being feared.
 - B. to assure us that he doesn't really mind if we don't obey him.
 - C. to make us willing and glad to obey him.
- 4) In the First Commandment, God requires of us that we ____ .
 - A. stay away from idols.
 - B. do exactly as he says, whether we like it or not.
 - C. fear, love, and trust in him above all things.

True or False

- 5) ___ God's demand of perfection includes deeds, words, and even thoughts.
- 6) ___ Our conscience is always right.
- 7) ___ Anyone who puts anything before God serves the devil.
- 8) ___ Anyone who loves their father or mother or spouse or child is not keeping the First Commandment.
- 9) ___ God has given us his law because only by knowing his law can we live in a way that will merit salvation and earn eternal life.
- 10) Is the phrase "I am the Lord your God" nerveing or comforting?
- 11) Do things that can become secret idols have any value?
- 12) How does the phrase "everything in moderation" apply to the First Commandment?
- 13) What does the First Commandment show you about yourself?
- 14) What is idolatry?
- 15) Who or what is your idol?



Commit to Memory:

- The First Commandment with Luther's explanation.
 - Joshua 24:15
- The Ten Commandments—Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5

What I've learned: