

The Ten Commandments

Commandment 2: You shall not make an idol in the form of anything

People run after illusions for want of seeing reality. We keep our backs to the sun and see the shadow of the dignitary who is standing behind us and, instead of turning round and honouring the dignitary we honour the shadow. We talk about believing in God but the fact that we make idols reveals the unbelief of our hearts – we create god in our image and likeness because we don't believe in God in whose image and likeness we have been created.

Exodus 20: 4 – 6

1) You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything

- This was the first time that the issue of idolatry was addressed.
- Making idols out of created objects debases God our Creator.
- How can the eternal, invisible, almighty God be replaced with created objects?
 - The essence of idolatry is the entertainment of thoughts about God that are unworthy of him. A. W. Tozer (1897–1963)
- Even the Nobel prize honours the person for the work that they have done rather than the work itself
 - The difference is that honour is due to God regardless of the work that He has done whereas the Nobel Prize put a man's worth in his work. If he didn't do some exceptional work He wouldn't be considered worthy of honour.
 - Surely God should be honoured above His creation for what is the creation without the creator.
- Whenever God revealed Himself it was not in the form of any created thing:
 - He spoke to Abraham but Abraham did not see Him
 - He spoke to Moses from a burning bush but Moses did not see God
 - He was with the Israelites in their wanderings in fire and cloud
 - He spoke to Moses and the Israelites on Mount Sinai with a loud voice but He could not be seen.
- God is a jealous God expects that we have no other objects of worship before Him
- The problem is that when man sinned he became blind to God and not being able to see God by faith we tend to create idols that we can see with our physical eyes rather than see the true God with the eyes of faith
 - When we are blind to God our inbuilt God-consciousness tells us that there is a God that is to be worshipped.
 - The problem is that when we don't know who that God is we then embark on creating gods according to the way we imagine God to be – our finite minds would only consider finite objects to be made into objects of worship.
 - Isaiah 42: 8 "I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols.
- Besides God being our Creator He is also Jehovah – the God of the covenant
 - I, the LORD (Jehovah) your God, am a jealous God.
 - I, the LORD your God, am the only God
 - I, the LORD your God, alone am able to deliver from slavery
 - I, the LORD your God, alone am able to sustain all 3 million of you in the wilderness for 40 years providing food, water and even your clothes did not wear out.
- What idol created by the hands of man can do any of this?
- Did an idol made from wood or stone make a covenant with us?
 - Absolutely not!!
- Isn't believing that Jesus is God making him to be an idol in the form of man?
 - NO!
 - We are not looking at the man Jesus and lifting him up to be God but rather it was God who came down in the form of a man and took the name Jesus.
 - He was not created but begotten – he always was
 - John 8: 58 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!

- Exodus 3: 14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.' "
- Thus to worship Jesus is NOT idolatry but the worship of the God of the covenant

2) The foolishness of idolatry

- Isaiah 44: 6 – 20
 - To Lord proclaims that He alone is God and part from Him there is no God
 - All who make idols are nothing (v.9)
 - Idols are worthless (v.9)
 - Those who speak up for idols are blind (v.9)
 - An idol cannot profit anyone (v.10)
 - The craftsmen who make idols will be brought down to terror and infamy (v.11)
 - They take wood and burn half to bake bread and make an idol out of the other half to worship (vs. 15 – 17)
 - He calls on the idol to save him (v.17)
 - They are ignorant and blind (v.18 – 19)
 - He is deluded (v. 20)
- Jeremiah 10: 5
 - Like a scarecrow in a melon patch, their idols cannot speak; they must be carried because they cannot walk. Do not fear them; they can do no harm nor can they do any good."

3) The wrath and mercy of God

- God considers idolaters to be people who hate Him (Exodus 20: 5)
- He will punish children for the sin of their fathers down to the third and fourth generation.
 - Romans 1: 18 – 23 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.
 - Revelation 21: 8 "But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the **idolaters** and all liars--their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death"
- But God will show love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments
 - We show our love to God by honouring the covenant that that He made with us.
 - We keep ourselves wholly devoted to Him and detest the worship of all else.
- God's wrath is limited but His mercy is limitless.
- Idolatry is not only the adoration of images . . . but also trust in one's own righteousness, works and merits, and putting confidence in riches and power.

Martin Luther (1483–1546)
- Idolatry: trusting people, possessions or positions to do for me what only God can do.

Bill Gothard
- The question that we need to ask ourselves is what we have made idols of in our lives. Identify them and repent from them that we may stand under the blessing and not the wrath of God.
- The dearest idol I have known, Whate'er that idol be, Help me to tear it from thy throne, And worship only thee.

William Cowper (1731–1800)