

Why Choose a Lie?

Then God spoke all these words: I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery. Do not have other gods besides Me. Do not make an idol for yourself, whether in the shape of anything in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth. You must not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the fathers' sin, to the third and fourth [generations] of those who hate Me, but showing faithful love to a thousand [generations] of those who love Me and keep My commands. - Exodus 20:1-6 HCSB

To worship is to give our highest love and devotion. Have you ever heard someone say, “I worship the ground she walks on”? God says, “Worship only me”, but unfortunately, we tend to worship His creations or benefits. To do so is to worship a lie¹.

Do you know anyone that does this? Perhaps instead of obeying God’s command to not neglect assembling with other Christians, they choose to be on the lake, the beach, the golf course or the campground worshipping the god Recreation.

It’s amazing what people will worship today. Some worship nature – radical environmentalists. They worship trees and forests. Otherwise intelligent people worship astrology, crystals, good luck charms, animals... But why would people want to make God into a statue or a form that they can bow down to?

Perhaps they are trying to corner Him – limit Him. If they can make Him a statue or a crystal, then they know exactly where He is. If they don’t want Him around, they can put Him in a drawer, or leave Him at home. Then they can feel a lot better when they do something wrong. If they can keep God on a shelf or at church, then they’ve got Him under control – cornered.

Perhaps they are trying to constrain God – to reduce His power and glory. If God is only a statue or a box or an idea, then He is less imposing or threatening. But this reverses biblical teaching. God made us in His image², not the other way around. It’s a lot easier for people to change their image of God than it is to change themselves. If God says, “Don’t commit adultery”, they can just change their image of God to justify their sin. But that is idolatry and it angers the true God³.

Ultimately, however, this desire to change God is an attempt to control Him. It is an attempt to take His place. It is an attempt to make Him into something or someone who will accept the gift WE want to offer. It is, in essence Cain’s sin⁴. And we know where that led, don’t we?

¹ Romans 1:25

² Genesis 1:26

³ Romans 1:18-25

⁴ Genesis 4:1-8