

Be Faithful

Exodus 20:1-6 HCSB Then God spoke all these words: **2** I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery. **3** Do not have other gods besides Me. **4** 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. **5** 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, **6** but showing faithful love to a thousand *generations* of those who love Me and keep My commands.

INTRODUCTION



I want to conduct a little quiz this morning. I want you to raise your hand if you know the 4 following people:

Reuben Studdard (winner of American Idol contest)

Kenny Chesney (local boy, winner of his first Country Music award)



Annika Sorenstam (Best lady golfer, just competed with men in a tournament)

LaBron James (HS basketball player who just signed a \$90 million contract with Nike, and will be taken first in the NBA draft)



(Comment on these three people as living a dream and being idolized by many this week.)

Today's text speaks right to where we live today. Let's read it. The Second Commandment says basically two things:

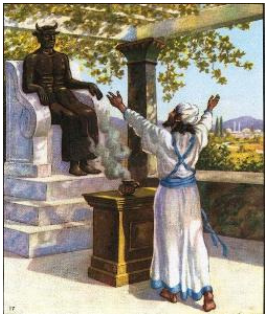
- (1) Don't idolize anything or anyone
- (2) Worship only God

I. DON'T IDOLIZE ANYTHING OR ANYONE

What is an idol? An idol is anything that takes the focus off God and puts it on something else. What does your life center around? What is the primary focus? An idol doesn't have to be a bad thing; it can be a good thing. Some people park their idols in their garage. Some people park their idol at the marina. Some people put their idols in their safe deposit box.

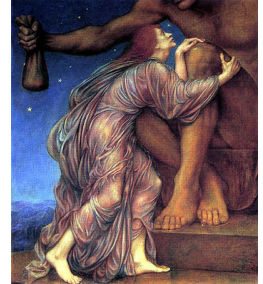
Archaeologists tell us that in every culture throughout history there have been idols: Statues little gods or goddesses. Man has a desire, for some reason, to turn objects or people or things into objects of worship. God does not like that. As a matter of fact He hates that! Idol worship is a serious thing. Look at verse 5, last phrase – “..of those who hate me.” God is a jealous God and desires our worship exclusively.

In Bible times there were three primary idols. There was Baal (female counter part, Ashtorah), who was the god of sex.



There was Mammon who was the god of money.

And, there was Molech who was the god of violence. Sex, Money, Violence – What does that sound like today? (Hollywood, movies, TV)



Our shrines are not the ones you find in the homes of those who live in the eastern part of the world made of wood, stone, clay or metal. Today we have mental images, not metal images. Our shrine in America is the little box you plug in called the TV. On it we watch and worship images of Sex, money and violence. Be careful that your children are learning to worship at these altars.

- [Deuteronomy 4:15-16 HCSB 15](#) "Be extremely careful for your own good--because you did not see any form on the day the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the fire--
[16](#) not to act corruptly and make an idol for yourselves in the shape of any figure: a male or female form,

A. Idols will Disappoint You

They always promise more than they can deliver.

- [Jeremiah 10:14 HCSB](#) Everyone is stupid and ignorant. Every goldsmith is put to shame by *his* carved image, for his cast images are a lie; there is no breath in them.
- We think that if we wear this label we'll be popular.
- When you drink this beer it doesn't get any better than this.
- If you buy this toothpaste you'll have sex appeal.

Anytime you put your expectation in something other than God you will be disappointed. Only God can fill the vacuum in your heart.

B. Idols will Dominate You

Paul said,

- [1 Corinthians 12:2 HCSB 2](#) You know how, when you were pagans, you were led to dumb idols--being led astray.

Emphasis on the words "controlled" and "always led astray." The word we use today for idols is the word – "Addiction." You can become addicted to work, sports, sex, drugs, etc. Do you have an addiction?

You will be led astray. Some men seek after a job promotion so much they neglect their families. Some people feed a habit so much that it destroys their health. Some of you are so

concerned for the approval of or disapproval of a person in your life that it dominates your life. You are not just co-dependent, you are involved in idolatry!

C. Idols will Deform You.

They will change you. They'll warp you. We become like what we value most.

- [Psalms 115:8 HCSB](#) Those who make them are just like them, as are all who trust in them.

We shape an idol and then it shapes us.



III.- Rich young ruler (yuppie) came to Christ and said “What must I do to follow you and have eternal life?” Jesus gave an odd answer, “Sell everything, give it to the poor and come follow Me.” Jesus never gave this set of instructions to any one else – ever. Why did He say it to this man? Because Jesus knew this man had an idol in his life – money, his bank account. What are you holding on to today? A relationship, a lifestyle, a career, a habit? An idol!

III.- A \$50 dollar bill doesn't look so big when you go through the check out lane at the grocery store does it? Why does it look so big when the offering plate is passed around in church?



Joke – A family was going home from church and the father was complaining: “The sermon was too long, the music was too loud, the room was too hot.” His little boy in the back seat said, “Dad, I didn't think it was such a bad show for a buck.”

Idols will distract you, dominate you, disappoint you and they will eventually destroy you. God says in this second Commandment “Don't Idolize Anything! Be faithful to me!”

II. WORSHIP ONLY GOD

What is worship? It means 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.”

- [Romans 1:25 HCSB](#) They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served something created instead of the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

Do you know anybody that does this? It's amazing what people will worship today.

- They may be on the lake right now or at the beach worshipping the god Recreation.
- Some worship nature – radical environmentalists. They worship trees and forests.
- Some worship astrology, crystals, good luck charms, animals - Intelligent people.

Why would people want to make God into a statue or a form that they can bow down to?

A. It is an Attempt to Corner God (limit His location)

If I can put him in a statue or in a crystal, then I can know exactly where he is. If I don't want him to be around I can put him in a drawer, or leave him at home. That way I can feel a lot better when I do something wrong. If I can keep God on a shelf or at church, then I've got

him under control – cornered.

B. It is an Attempt to Constrain God (reduce his power and size)

I'm going to whittle Him down to size. If I have God in a statue or box or in an idea (God's only in the Bible), then God is less imposing, less threatening. We have reversed what the Bible says in Genesis, chapter one, "Let us make man in our image." We are saying instead, "Let us make God in man's image." Everybody has an idea of God. They may say, "My idea of God is that He is universal force." Or, "God is Santa Claus." It is a lot easier to change my image of God than it is for me to change. If God says, "Don't commit adultery" I can just change my image of God to justify my sin. That is idolatry.

Joke – A little girl was drawing a picture at school and she told her teacher, "I'm drawing a picture of God." The teacher said, "But nobody knows what God looks like." The little girl said, "They will when I get done."

Isn't that what we do, draw our own picture of God with how we live?

C. It is an Attempt to Control God

When you have an idol, the worshipper has more control. Lots of people want a god that they can manipulate.

Joke – A little boy wanted a new bicycle and told his mom. She said, "Why don't you pray about it?" He decided to write a letter to Jesus. "Dear Jesus, I want a new bicycle and I've been perfect for the last year." He knew that wasn't right so he threw that piece of paper away. He wrote, "Dear Jesus, I've been a good boy most of the time." He knew that was wrong so he started again, "Dear Jesus, I want to be a good boy." He knew that wasn't right either, so he threw that away too. He goes into the living room, grabs the statue of Mary, wraps it in a towel and throws it under the bed. Then he writes, "If you ever want to see your mother again..."

We reason to God, "You owe me this." "I deserve this." But, we can't manipulate God. He manipulates us.

III. Three benefits of worshipping God only:

1. It will Delight Me (fulfillment)

- **Psalms 37:4 HCSB** Take delight in the LORD, and He will give you your heart's desires.

Many people who come to Christ late in life will say, "My only regret is that I didn't come to Christ sooner." They are enjoying life so much more now.

- **Romans 10:11 HCSB** Now the Scripture says, **No one who believes on Him will be put to shame,**

Don't settle for an image of God; receive the real thing.

2. It will Deliver Me (freedom)

Jesus said,

- **John 8:32 HCSB** You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

He further says,

- **John 8:36 HCSB** Therefore if the Son sets you free, you really will be free.

(1) Set free from the approval of others. You don't have to please 30 people- you can't. Live for an audience of One – God.

(2) You are set free from your past – forgiven. Your present- empowered to break habits. Your future – not afraid of dying.

3. It will Develop Me

- **2 Corinthians 3:18 HCSB 18** We all, with unveiled faces, are reflecting the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory; this is from the Lord who is the Spirit.

We are being changed into His image.

CLOSING

What do you idolize? What or whom do you worship? God wants you to worship Him and Him only. Will you commit your life to Him today? For you and your family you can pray a simple prayer, “Jesus, I want to know you, worship you, follow you.”