

# The First Commandment

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 27 November 2022

Preacher: Chad Bennett

[ 0 : 00 ] We're in chapter 20, looking at the Ten Commandments, so Exodus chapter 20, today's message is just verse 3. We'll read verses 2 and 3 together. All right, again, chapter 20, we'll begin in verse 2.

I am the Lord, your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me. Let's pray together.

Dear Heavenly Father, we pray again, asking that your spirit would be with us in the preaching of your word. Lord, help us to understand what you require, what you ask of this commandment.

Lord, we pray that you would work in us to have no other gods before you. Lord, even now, in the preaching of your word, even as we prayed earlier that we would worship you, Lord, may we honor you as the one and only God, in whose name we pray.

Amen. Amen. So today we begin getting into the individual commandments. We're looking at the first commandment. And I want to remind you of something that we talked about last week as an overview of the commandments.

[ 1 : 31 ] And that was that Jesus really is the purpose or goal of the law, the Ten Commandments. And so we want to keep that in mind as a frame in looking at the Ten Commandments.

Romans 10, 4 says Christ is the end, and by end it means the goal, what we're driving for. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

So the law was pointing always to Christ, his righteousness for everyone who would believe. J. Gresham Machen wrote, a low view of law always brings legalism and religion.

A high view of law makes a man a seeker after grace. So as we look at the Ten Commandments, we're going to spend a good deal of time looking at each commandment. And what I want you to see is, maybe you guys have a concept of this, but legalism is the idea that I become righteous by my obedience to the law.

It could even go so far as what gets me into heaven, what saves me is that I'm a good person that keeps God's law. And what Machen is getting at is, there's this misconception sometimes that if we focus on the law, we become legalists.

[ 2 : 42 ] If we spend a lot of time looking at the law, then we think we're going to be righteous by keeping it. But he argues the very opposite of the truth. The only people who are legalists are those who have a low view of the law.

Because when we rightly understand God's law, we realize we can't keep it. We realize our need for a Savior. And so we want to have a Christ-centered approach to the Ten Commandments.

As we think of the First Commandment, we remind her just that what we saw in Egypt, Egypt was polytheistic. They worshipped a multitude of gods. And we talked about how in the pledge that God was, or we could even say Yahweh to be specific so it doesn't get confusing with all the gods, but Yahweh was defeating the gods of the Egyptians.

And so as Israel comes out of this Egyptian polytheistic nation, in which they've dwelt for 400 years now, how easy would it have been generation after generation to pick up the ideas of worship from the culture in which you live?

We haven't yet been in America 400 years. And consider the influence our culture has had on Christianity and our view of God.

[ 4 : 01 ] How we fight against that. But they live in a polytheistic society, so it's easy to think of even the pluralistic nature of our world today. God is one God among many gods.

And so as we think about that context, we begin to understand what's going on here in the First Commandment, what God is calling them to. In Isaiah 42, 8, it says, I am the Lord.

Again, I am Yahweh. That is my name. I will not give my glory to another, nor my praise to idols. And so in the First Commandment, we're going to see God is a jealous God. He doesn't share his glory. And they coming out of a society that had multiple gods that shared the glory, it would have been easy for them to drift back into that. And in fact, we see examples of that later on with the people of Israel. And so that's part of what we're getting at here with the First Commandment. And the First Commandment is really foundational to the other commandments.

[ 4 : 58 ] It teaches us who God is and who we are. Who God is and who we are. We really need to understand that as a foundation in approaching the other commandments. It's also interesting that compared to all the other of the Ten Commandments, the other Nine Commandments, this is the one that requires relationship.

You shall have no other gods before me. There's to be a relationship. Even as we look at the other commandments, we might think of them as more, at least on the surface, behavioral restriction. It's about living a certain way. And we're going to talk about, well, of course they deal with relationship, but this specifically addresses relationship. The commandments begin with, you're to have a relationship with God. He alone is to be your God.

And so if we were to summarize, what do we see in the First Commandment? Second, you must have Yahweh to be your God. And then secondly, we must have no other gods.

Positive and negative there. We must have Yahweh to be our God, and we may not have any other gods. Now before I dive more into the First Commandment, I still have some more introductory material.

[ 6 : 10 ] Kind of in between last week and this week's sermon, but I want to address it here. And remind you that last week I referenced the Westminster Larger Catechism. I said, we're going to be using that as we go throughout this study.

And their question 99 and the answer deals with, how do we rightly observe the Ten Commandments? And I forget the number. They may have had nine or ten different ways we do that. Some of them were obvious, such as, if God commands it, you're supposed to obey it. Okay, got that one. You know, but I thought there were some others that would be really helpful for us to think about as we go into the study. And it's going to shape how we look at the commandments. So let's consider some, what are the right ways of observing the Ten Commandments?

One is, understanding that the law is spiritual and concerns our thoughts and our affections, as well as our words and actions.

So in other words, obeying the commandments is not just the stuff we do. It's also what we think. The things we don't act on, but we wanted to.

[ 7 : 21 ] Even the affections, that which we desire, what we long for. We have one example of that really in the Tenth Commandment itself, the idea of coveting.

Coveting isn't actually acting upon anything. It's that internal, I want it. And it's not mine. Romans 7.14 says, For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold under sin.

So again, the law is spiritual. Deuteronomy 6.5, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might. And so, Jesus then later summarizes the commandments in this way.

But notice, obeying the commandments means loving the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might. And so, we outwardly, to some extent, could attempt to obey these commandments.

And still be breaking them in our heart. We're not doing, or we're not obeying the commandments for the sake of other people to know that we're obeying the commandments.

[ 8 : 30 ] We obey the commandments out of love for the Lord, who searches the heart. Think of the Sermon on the Mount. It's probably the best expression of this.

Jesus talks about certain commandments, and we're going to look at those later on. But he says, if you hate your brother, you've committed murder. If you lust in your heart, you've committed adultery. It's not just the doing of the action.

There's a spiritual dynamic to this. 1 Samuel 16.7 tells us that man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks upon the heart. And so, even though we may deceive other people, as we go through the Ten Commandments, we're going to realize, I hope you will realize by the

Spirit, we don't keep any of the commandments.

We fall short of every commandment. Secondly, rightly observing commandments. We have to understand that there's both positive and negative aspects to every commandment.

There are things we are to do and things we are not to do. It's a simple way of saying it. Things we should do, things we should not do, in each and every one of the commandments. The way the Westminster Catechism says it is, where a duty is commanded, the opposite sin is forbidden.

[ 9 : 43 ] And where a sin is forbidden, the opposite duty is commanded. This will become more clear as we work through it. But they tell us what to do and what not to do.

Matthew 15.46. It says, for God commanded, honor your father and your mother. And whoever reviles father and mother must surely die. Well, there's a clear example.

You're to honor your father and mother. There's a positive command. This is something you're to do. What are you not to do if you're to honor them? You cannot revile them. And so reviling them even would have this capital punishment.

So along with that is also the idea that where there's a promise added, the opposite curse is also included. And where there's a curse added to a commandment, the opposite blessing is also included.

We'll see some examples of that later on. Third principle would be that they're comprehensive. And what I mean by that is that under one sin or duty, all of the same kinds of sins or duties that fit under that category.

[ 10 : 48 ] They're kind of heads of a category that includes everything that might fall under that. That all the same kind are forbidden or commanded together with all the causes.

Again, this is the catechism. Causes, means, occasions, and appearances of it and provocations to it. Now, again, that's not exactly how we might say it today. But what they're saying is what's included under this commandment is everything related to it, but also even those things that appear of it.

Do you ever, maybe adults, you do this. Kids sometimes do this. Well, I wasn't really lying. I was just pretending. I was just joking. It was just a joke.

Why are you so upset? I wasn't lying. Right? It had the appearance of lying. I think it, when we think of the legalistic mindset, it's easy for us to get someone to think something that's not true when we really didn't say that.

Right? And I've been in conversations with people and they say, well, that's not what I said. I'm like, but that's what you were implying to your sibling. Just as a general idea.

[ 11 : 59 ] Right? It's easy to lead people on. And that's kind of what it's getting at when it says even the appearance, but also it says the provocations. So provoking others to sin also falls under that category.

Matthew 5, 21 through 22 and verses 27 through 28 gives us two examples. You've heard that it was said to those of old, and again, this is a Sermon on the Mount. This is Jesus' really commentary on the law.

You've heard that it was said to those of old, you shall not murder, and whoever murders will be liable to judgment. But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother is liable to judgment. Whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council, and whoever says you fool will be liable to the hell of fire.

You've heard that it was said you should not commit adultery. But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. It's comprehensive. Even provocations I thought of, Colossians 3, 21, fathers, do not provoke your children.

There's a special command for fathers. Don't provoke your children. Don't push them toward, I think in this situation, primarily anger. But we have a responsibility under this that it affects not only what we do, but how we influence others.

[ 13 : 18 ] Do we encourage sin in our society? Are there ways we can do that even by being silent? Fourthly, we have a responsibility toward others and not just ourselves.

So it's easy when we look at the commandments to think, as long as I can keep this, who cares about other people? But the commandments are calling us to encourage this with people around us, to help keep them from breaking God's law.

I thought maybe a negative example of this that has always bothered me, not that I agree with the principle behind it, but some of the Amish believe that driving cars is a sin.

And so they will pay what they call the English, they will pay other people to come pick them up and drive them somewhere so they don't have to drive a car and sin. And I'm thinking, if this is sin, you're paying people to commit sin on your behalf.

That's a problem. Now, that's probably, we're not dealing with cars, but I mean, imagine again, buying a hitman. I didn't do the murder. Okay, David, I just put him on the front line.

[14:26] I didn't actually do that. I had my captain put him on the front line, right? He's brought him along into his sin. And so we are not even to encourage others to sin or sin on our behalf or obviously not compensate them for sinning on our behalf.

I think along with that, we set an example for others of how one should live before God. There's also the sin of failing to prevent it when we see it.

And again, we'll expand on that in some of the commandments. But parents are addressed in 1 Samuel 3.13. And I declare to Eli, the priest, that I'm about to punish his house forever for the iniquity that he knew because his sons were blaspheming God and he did not restrain them.

So Eli, the priest, has sons that blaspheme God, and he does nothing to stop it. And so God's going to curse his family forever. So there's a responsibility upon Eli when he hears his children blaspheming the Lord to stop them, to correct them, to point them in the right way in which they are to speak about God.

And so I think, again, as parents, being a lazy parent is not really an option.

[15:49] Right? The easy thing to do is just let your kids proceed in their sin. But the truth of God's word is he holds us accountable even for that. When we know their sin, we need to correct that, encourage them to walk in the right way.

We could take that further. It's not just parents to kids, is it? Brothers and sisters in the church. When you know someone's walking in sin, talk to them. Let me encourage you to talk to them before you go talk to the pastor.

Right? Sometimes I go and address things. And they say, well, why didn't they come talk to me? Or maybe it's the opposite. If you see sin in the elders, come talk to us, whoever it is, about it.

We're not somehow spiritually above you. We are brothers and sisters in the Lord. We need correction just like anyone else. Another example would be Saul, who later became the apostle Paul, approving of sin in the fact that he held the jackets of those who killed the martyrs.

He didn't throw a stone, but he's guilty of their blood just as they were because he approved of what they did and assisted them in the process. Again, under this heading, Luke 17, 1-3.

[17:01] And he said to his disciples, temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come. It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin.

Pay attention to yourselves. If your brother sins, rebuke him. And if he repents, forgive him. Here in the chapter, we're looking at Exodus 20. Look at verse 10. But the seventh day is the Sabbath to the Lord your God.

Own it, you shall not do any work. You or your son or your daughter, your male servant or your female servant or your livestock or the sojourner who is within your gates.

And so we have an example of that principle in the fourth commandment. It's not just that you're to keep the Sabbath, so is your household. There's a responsibility on the head of the household. Be sure that you're keeping the Sabbath.

And not just for your family, for the worker who's in your house, for the visitor who's staying at your house, the sojourner, for the livestock.

[18:04] You have a responsibility of, I can't even conceive of this, the livestock aren't willfully sinning, but you're using them to do work on your behalf. That's wrong.

Deuteronomy 6 through 7 says, And these words that I commend you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

And so there we see really a positive responsibility. Teach these things. All right, so again, let me just go through those, and then we're going to do the first commandment. Law is spiritual.

It concerns our thoughts, our affections, as well as the things we do, our words and actions.

Secondly, there's positive and negative to every command. When things are commanded, the

opposite is included.

And then thirdly, comprehensive. This one commandment also encompasses all things that are related to that commandment. Again, we'll see examples of that. And then fourthly, we have a responsibility of others and not just ourselves.

[ 19 : 09 ] And so those are kind of the principles that are going to be in our mind as we're working through the commandment. So let's look first at the first commandment. The way I'd like to approach this through the series, and if it doesn't work, feel free to let me know.

But again, kind of following the pattern of the larger catechism, the way they would approach it is the duties required and then the sins that are forbidden. Or it might be easier for us to think of what are the positive things that this command calls us to and what are the negative things that it prevents us or restricts us from doing.

So looking first at what does this commandment call us to do. And again, looking at the catechism, it would be question 104 in the answer. But I'm going to try to expand on that in my words and help apply it to our day.

So what does this commandment require of us? You shall have no other gods before me. Well, the first, probably the most obvious, and the summary that I gave earlier is we must have Yahweh as our God.

He must be our God. And as we think about this, this commandment is for all people. There is a positive command that we must have God for our God.

[ 20 : 29 ] Now, I'm not yet getting into what sins, therefore, are forbidden. But even as we think about this, and we think about people who might say, I'm keeping the commandments or I'm a good person, but they don't worship Yahweh.

Have they kept God's commandments? The only way, I mean, just the foundation as we begin the first commandment, the only way to truly keep the commandments, Yahweh alone is to be our God. Along with that, knowing and acknowledging God to be the only true God and our God.

So knowing Him to be the one true God, but also knowing Him to be our God. There's, again, that relationship. He's our God. And so what does this commandment call us to?

To know that Yahweh is the only true God and to own Him, we might say, as our God, for Him to be our God. Listen to David. He gives his charge to his son Solomon in 1 Chronicles 28, 9.

[ 21 : 31 ] And you, Solomon, my son, know the God of your father and serve Him with a whole heart and with a willing mind. For the Lord searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought.

If you seek Him, He will be found by you. But if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever. So I really see this as one father teaching his son the first commandment.

Know the God of your father and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind. This is what it means. Knowing and serving God with a whole heart and a willing mind.

Why? For the Lord searches the heart and understands every plan and thought. It's not just about what you do outwardly, Solomon. It's about what's in your heart. It's about what you're thinking about God.

If you seek Him, He will be found. But if not, if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever. And we might remember what happens to Solomon. He marries foreign wives that worship foreign gods.

[ 22 : 34 ] And in the process, his heart is swayed to not exactly give up the worship of God, but join the worship of God with the worship of these gods of some of his wives.

Thirdly, what's required of us is to worship and glorify Him accordingly. According to who God is to worship and glorify Him. Now, I address this a little bit in how I prayed earlier in the pastoral prayer. But I think our worship, our exaltation of God is often deficient because we don't see God or worship God accordingly. We don't glorify Him accordingly.

We haven't really understood who He is. And so, what's required of us is to know God and glorify Him as that God. So, I keep wanting to get into the sins that are forbidden, but ignorance is not an option.

We have a positive responsibility to know God. We can even think about the person who professes faith in Christ, but, well, I don't go to church.

[ 23 : 43 ] I don't read my Bible. God calls you to know Him, to grow in knowledge, relationship, and to worship Him, glorify Him according to what you see.

More than a dozen times, we saw God, through Moses, speak to Pharaoh and say these words earlier in the book of Exodus.

Let my people go in order that they may serve me and worship me. Why does God want them to be free of these gods and of Pharaoh and of Egypt?

So they can worship and serve the right God. This is why they've been freed. And so, as God begins to establish them as a nation, as a holy nation, as a kingdom of priests before Him, know me, glorify me, worship me.

I can think of the fact that our chief end is to glorify Him and enjoy Him forever. This is what it's getting at. Falling short of glorifying Him and enjoying Him forever is breaking the first commandment.

[ 24 : 44 ] God positively calls us to that kind of relationship and life. Fourthly, and again, this is the words of the catechism, by thinking, meditating, remembering, highly esteeming, honoring, adoring, choosing, loving, desiring, fearing, fearing of Him, believing Him, trusting, hoping, delighting, rejoicing in Him, being zealous for Him, calling upon Him, giving all praise and thanks to Him.

Now, I won't try to go through every one of those, but I hope the list there helps you. Maybe something in there stood out. But as you think about those things, this is what this commandment is calling us to do. And then it goes on and says, And so, it calls us to that relationship that we saw earlier, honoring, adoring, choosing, loving.

But also, this first commandment is calling to obedience. To have God as our God. Think of Yahweh as our master. He commands us.

He is the one we obey. I'm not my own God. I don't follow the gods around me. The one that I'm obeying is the Lord. And then, finally, by walking humbly with Him.

I think even the idea of walking humbly with Him implies the fact that we see God for who He is and we see us for who we are. God is on the throne. We're not.

[ 26 : 22 ] And so, we honor Him and, therefore, we walk humbly before Him and with Him. All right. The sin is forbidden. And this goes into the 105th question and answer of the catechism.

Now, the summary I stated earlier was, we must have no other gods. That seems simple. Again, what does that mean? What sins are forbidden when God tells us not to have any other gods? Right? The simple answer is almost a repetition of the second commandment, right? Well, it just means don't make any idols. But I think there's way more to that. Duma, who is one of the, he wrote a book on the Ten Commandments I'll be using throughout this study.

He says, people worship powerful forces within creation as if they were deities. They are not gods, but only so-called gods. He references 1 Corinthians 8 that we'll look at a little bit later.

Still, they are very real powers able to enslave a person totally. So, what he's getting at is there is a reality out there that is capable of enslaving us.

[ 27 : 29 ] I'll expand on that a little bit more with a quote from Phil Riken. He says, The reason false gods have this enslaving power, and again, kind of referencing the same thing that Duma does, is ultimately because demonic forces use them to gain mastery over their worshipers.

Thus, the gods of Egypt held real spiritual power over the minds and hearts of the Egyptians and also the Israelites. This is why God took the trouble to defeat them one by one.

It was to break their spiritual influence and thereby to show that he alone was worthy of worship.

Now, this is something I've argued all throughout Exodus. If you've been here with us, this is nothing new. But one thing I want you to understand is that there are real spiritual forces at play.

And so, when God says, We must worship no other gods, We sometimes indicate this in English with the lowercase g and the uppercase G. Maybe that might be helpful in your mind.

What God isn't saying is, There are choices of gods, and we have to prefer him among all the gods. Don't misunderstand. That's not what he is saying.

[ 28 : 39 ] What is he saying then? Well, I believe what he's saying is that these Egyptian gods very likely were spiritual forces.

But these spiritual forces are created. Demons, angels that have fallen. And even where it's not directly related to a spiritual force, what Ryken's arguing is basically these demonic powers use our love for other things.

The things that we make gods as a way of enslaving us to that thing. For America, oftentimes it's materialism. Right?

It may be that we want something so bad. And Satan, demonic powers, use that to enslave us. That's all we can think of. We can't concentrate on things of God. I'm not happy with God until he gives me what I want.

Which in many ways is making ourself to be God. But what we're getting at is the idea that there are real spiritual forces. But they are not gods. Even though scripture chooses to use that language at times.

[ 29 : 42 ] They are not on the same plane as Yahweh. Yahweh alone, the Trinitarian God, is the uncreated God. The self-existent God. Who has been for all eternity.

Everything else is creature. And so these real demonic powers that can enslave us, they're still creatures. And so as we look at have no other gods, he's not saying there are loads of gods. I'd rather you pick me. That's not what he's saying. Understand, he's saying, that there is one God. God alone. Now, this may be, okay, it is just a little further on.

Let me go ahead and hit this. But it says in verse 3, you shall have no other gods before me. Now, just reading this in English, I've always had the temptation to think, you're not to place anyone above me on the pedestal.

Is what he's saying. But in the Hebrew, it's really clear. What he's saying before me is before my face. And so it's not just that he's saying, I want you to prefer me among all the gods.

[ 30 : 50 ] Pick me. Again, that's not what he's saying. Before me literally means, don't do this before my face. In other words, God sees our hearts. He knows what's going on. And to choose anything else to worship is an insult to him.

This is another way of saying God is a jealous God. Maybe if we put this in terms of marriage, and I think that's appropriate in light of this.

We're going to talk about adultery in a little bit. But as we think about that, there's a difference between saying, if your wife says, don't choose another girl before me. Or, don't choose another girl before my face.

There's a difference implied there. Again, that's also not implying that if you hide it, because we can't hide it from God. But to do so, to go after any other god, is really to flaunt it before God. It's an insult to his face. 1 Corinthians 8, 4 through 6 talks about these other gods. 1 Corinthians 9, 5 through 6.

[ 32 : 17 ] 1 Corinthians 9, 5 through 6. And so, there again, there's these forces. But yet, we know that they're not really gods. There's one God.

So, as we think about no other gods, this means it's also calling us to faithfulness in our affections. There are some things that are not meant to be shared. I just hinted to one or discussed one with marriage.

Marriage isn't supposed to be shared. Neither is our relationship with God. Matthew 6, 24. No one can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.

You cannot serve God and money. So, here's one God that gives us an example. But he says a principle here. No one can serve two masters. When he says there are no other gods, we have to have God as our God.

He's the one alone who is our master. We must be faithful in our love, our passion for things. And again, I think this ties to the idea of adultery.

[ 33 : 17 ] We're not to commit spiritual adultery. That's exactly what God accuses Israel and Judah of when he sends them into exile. They've cheated on him with these false gods, with these idols.

Another example of breaking this commandment would be atheism. Denying or not having a God, I even think agnosticism.

I just can't know if there is a God. That doesn't get you off the hook. There's a positive command. Know the Lord. It's our responsibility to know the Lord. We can't just say, eh, I'm not sure about it. I haven't really looked into it. There's a lot of gods out there, different religions. I'm not really sure which one's the right one. God calls us to his worship. And failure to do so is the right of the commandment.

Obviously, atheism would be as well, denying God's existence. Idolatry. Or having and worshiping more gods than the one God.

[ 34 : 17 ] Or worshiping anything instead of the true God. I know some of you are going to say, you always use Lionel Messi when you talk about worship.

But I don't know. I mean, I'm sure most of you were glued to the television for this. But the World Cup's on. I'm sure none of you guys missed this. And Argentina played yesterday. Messi scored. They had already lost the first game. They needed to win to be able to advance. Messi scored twice. Think twice. And they said the stadium, which they kind of showed on the stadium, they were literally bowing down to him.

Worshiping. Worshiping. Now, again, I know many of you probably weren't watching the World Cup. I'm praying for you. Probably watching American football and all that. But you guys probably have some sense of this.

Maybe you just don't understand. But they're bowing down to a man. I think he's probably the greatest footballer that's ever been. But it's wrong for us to worship anything other than the true God.

[ 35 : 24 ] And as light as that may seem. Thank you for being on the game. I'm going through it today. As light as it may seem for us just to praise an athlete.

To bow down to him. To portray worship. To worship a man. It's to break the commandment. If the positive side is that we're to have Yahweh as our Lord, not having him as your Lord in any way is breaking the commandment.

And again, that includes atheism, agnosticism, things like that. This is a catechism wording. It says, The omission or neglect of anything due to him required in this commandment.

Well, that may be a little redundant. But it's saying, If this commandment causes this, then failure to do something. So all the positive commands we saw, the positive requirements, failure to do any of them is breaking, an active breaking of the commandment.

Romans 121 gives us an example of this. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

[ 36 : 34 ] The fool says there is no God. And so here we have the example, Romans 121. And this is my belief with Romans. Everyone knows there's a God.

God has revealed himself, his invisible attributes, his power through the creation, so that everyone knows there's a God. Although they knew God, they did not honor him as God.

God counts that as an offense. To know that there's a God, and I believe everyone does, and then not honor him as that God, that's sin. We have a responsibility to worship him.

If we write, we have a responsibility to worship him, period. Part of that should be rightly knowing who he is. Or give thanks to him. But their foolish hearts were darkened. I've already touched on this a little bit.

But ignorance, forgetfulness, misconceptions, false opinions, unworthy, and wicked thoughts of him. So I don't know about God. That doesn't get you off the hook.

[ 37 : 33 ] You've got to know God. I said that already. But also misconceptions, false opinions, unworthy, and wicked thoughts of him. Do we not see this in our culture? What was it?

I forget, the Talladega Nights movie. Not recommending that movie by any means. But the main character says, I love the baby Jesus. He's my favorite Jesus. Because he's cute and cuddly. That's the Jesus I worship.

Misconception. You take one aspect of who Jesus was, and that's the one aspect I'm willing to worship. Now, that's meant to be comedy. But that's our culture. Right?

I like the Jesus that loves everybody. I don't like talking about Jesus and judging. That's not really for me. Well, you don't worship the God of the Bible. It's not okay for us to think of worshiping the right God in the ways that we manifest.

What we're really worshiping is ourselves. Right? The God that we project. The God that we want. That's not okay. It includes all profaneness and hatred of God.

[ 38 : 41 ] Which is just another way of saying dishonoring God. Maybe there are people who are hating God because of things in their life. They blame God and hate him for it.

Self-love, self-seeking, and all other inordinate and immoderate setting of your mind, will, or affections upon other things, and taking them off from him in whole or part.

Now, big wording, but I think this is a good principle. We need to understand. Self-love, self-seeking. We make ourselves to be God. When we're more worried about us and what we want than what God calls us to, we've made ourselves to be God and we break this commandment.

But inordinate and immoderate. What is he saying? Out of proportion. When we love the things of this world, even things that are not sinful. Husbands, love your wife.

But if you love your wife inordinately, immoderately, out of perspective, proportion, that can be sin. Now, what would that look like?

[ 39 : 47 ] Loving your wife more than God? Loving your wife for a sake beyond God or apart from God? Loving your wife in a way that doesn't acknowledge that she is a gift from God, and therefore he ultimately gets the most glory.

Making your wife into being an idol is what I'm saying. That would be the inordinate or immoderate. It's out of proportion. Anytime we raise anything that we love beyond God, we've committed this sin. We've broken this commandment. I've said before, and this may be an illustration I saw years ago from John Piper, but he says something along the lines of, We don't go to the Grand Canyon and think how great we are.

How great we are. You look at the Grand Canyon, and likewise, you should not stop at, Oh, the Grand Canyon's great. I'm bowing down to the Grand Canyon, which a lot of our culture does. Right? We worship nature. But you go to the Grand Canyon and say, There's a God. He is great. Look what he's made. That's pretty. Right? Wow.

[ 40 : 50 ] Let's worship. Anytime we take the thing and make it the object to worship apart from God, we've broken this commandment. All the good things in this world are meant to lead us into the worship of God.

We should keep this command by delighting in the things he's provided, the legitimate and things that aren't sinful, the joys of this life. A way we might express that, the way I think of it is, when we settle on worshiping the creature rather than the creator who is forever praised, amen.

Right? We don't settle for that. It leads us to worship the creator. Loving anything apart from God without loving God for it.

That's another way of expressing that. The catechism again says, More sins. You guys probably thought, This should have been over a long time ago, right? How? Pretty easy.

Naivety. Unbelief. Heresy. Misbelief. Distrust. Despair. Unteachableness. Apathy under judgments.

[ 42 : 06 ] Not caring that there's judgment coming. Hardness of heart. Pride. Presumption. Worldly security. Tempting of God. All things that would violate this commandment.

Ways we're not having God as our God or we're pursuing other gods. It says, Pursuing delights and joys in worldly things and having corrupt, blind, and indiscreet zeal. Okay?

So, again, I think there are legitimate joys that God gives us in this world that are not sinful. We're supposed to delight in things. God's made us to have joy in his creation.

But what this is getting at when it says worldly, or the word they use is actually carnal. When we pursue delights and joys in carnal or worldly things, what it's saying is things apart from God.

When we find our joy in really sinful things that are apart from God, this is having other gods. And then likewise, it says corrupt, blind, and indiscreet zeal. Being passionate about things that don't deserve your passion.

[ 43 : 06 ] That don't in some way lead to our passion for God. Maybe as though, I don't know, it quite works this way. But you imagine your gas tank. You've got so much zeal in your body.

And when you expend that gas on worthless things, what it should go to God. Lukewarmness and deadness in the things of God.

Lukewarmness and deadness in the things of God. That may be some of you right now. Some of you might be thinking, boy, this is a long list. We should get on with it. Is this moving your heart to worship?

Does God's word move your heart to worship? Do you come to church and leave numb, dead, not worshipping or lukewarm? Along with that, separating ourselves and apostatizing from God.

Walking away from God in any way. Praying or giving any religious worship to saints, angels, or any other creatures. Now this is, again, from the catechism.

[ 44 : 17 ] They're right, and we live in a culture where this happens all the time. Not that I'm encouraging you to do so, but I always note when I leave work, there's an idol right across the way into one's yard.

And so people have them in their yard to protect their family and to pray to them. Praying or giving any religious worship to saints, angels, or any other creatures. Why is that wrong?

Because there's one God. There's one that deserves to be worshipped. Some of you are, I think, rightly appalled that there would be people bowing down to Lionel Messi. And yet, maybe some of you have bowed down to Mary before.

Or have family members that bowed down to Mary. And that seems legitimate. It's not. God alone is to be worshipped. No one else is to be worshipped. No man, no woman is worthy of our worship but God and him alone.

Now they say, all compacts and consulting with the devil and heeding his suggestions, making men the lords of our faith and conscience. Again, that's probably one that's more obvious.

[ 45 : 22 ] But when it says making men the lords of our conscience, I think they're primarily addressing the idea of the Pope. But this could be true in a Protestant context as well. It's not possible to allow any man to have spiritual authority beyond the word of God, to bind our conscience to things that God's word does not.

That's to make that man a God rather than God. Inasmuch as the things I say disagree with the word of God, you should completely disregard them. What authority God has given me as an elder and pastor is his word and his word alone.

If I go beyond that, I have no authority. There have been times that I believe there have been people in our church that have wanted me to go beyond that authority. Tell me how to do that. Now, I want to help you make wise decisions. But my authority is not in making every decision in your life. I don't have that authority. I don't want that authority. I don't want that responsibility before God.

Don't make any other man that authority. Don't make any other's. Don't make any other's. Dishonoring and despising God and his commands.

[ 46 : 28 ] I'm just going to run a little faster. Resisting and grieving of his spirit. Discontentment and impatience at his providence. Christian, do we ever start with that?

Discontentment and impatience at his providence. The things that God works in his sovereignty, do we ever get a little annoyed by? Do we get impatient? I wish he'd do this a lot faster.

I wish he'd answer that prayer. Charging him foolishly for the evils he inflicts on us. I think what it means by that is the acknowledgement that God is sovereign.

He works all things. So whatever happens in our life, whether it seems good or bad, is from the hand of our God. But it would be wrong. It would be sin for us to accuse God of evil or of sin in something in our life that we deem as evil.

We don't know the purposes and plans of God and what he's accomplishing. And so when we charge him, another way of saying this is we're unhappy with the circumstance and so we assume the motives.

[ 47 : 34 ] We charge God of false motives. Who would be the God in that instance? Right? The issue is no other gods.

Who's the God in that instance? It's me. I'm the one who's sitting on the throne judging God and his actions and saying, God, you're wrong. Finally, ascribing the praise of any good we either are, have, or can do to fortune, idols, ourselves, or any other creature.

Ascribing the good we either are, have, or can do to anything other than God. Good luck. Boy, that was a consequence.

I mean, a coincidence. No, it wasn't. Right? To understand that all that we have is a gift from God. There's no room for pride. This eliminates all pride. Right?

It's all from God. He gets all the glory, which really leads us to our application. My first point of application is to say, what this does, or if we were to summarize this in terms of what we're really familiar with, sola deo gloria, to God alone be the glory in all of our lives.

[ 48 : 49 ] That's what this commandment calls us to. Or we could say, this means all or nothing. God, to God alone be the glory. Either we're worshiping God alone, if we're giving him all, or we're giving him nothing.

God will not share his worship with anyone or anything else. He alone is worthy. But realize, when I say sola deo gloria, that's countercultural.

I really want to make some practical application to the world we live in. And especially young people listen up because I remember the adults, when I was a kid, thought things were changing fast.

And now I see an even stronger push in the next generation. But our culture is really played by a couple of things that are closely related. They both fall out of postmodernism. There's been a denial

of absolute truth.

And so relativism says there is no absolute truth. Everything's relative. You've got your truth and I've got my truth. And then the other big thing is pluralism in our society, which says basically we have to let people have their own truth and be okay with them having their own truth.

[ 50 : 01 ] There can be no acceptance of intolerance of other people's truths. J. Lig and Duggan writes, pluralism and relativism look over to the church and say, hmm, you're exclusive and that's the one sin that's left in our society.

Isn't that true? One sin left in our society. You're exclusive. We can accept you, Christians, as part of this society as long as you will admit that you do not have absolute truth and that your God is not the only God and that Jesus is not the only way of salvation.

You can be a part. I think that's a fair summary of our society. And young people, you're going to face this more than anyone. It's okay for you to worship your God as long as I can worship my God. And my God could be, it could be anything. It could be I'm dancing around this tree that I've, it's my God. It could be my pet rock I carry around.

That's my God. You can't tell me that's not my God. I think even more practically, we're dealing with things like homosexuality in our culture.

[ 51 : 23 ] And our culture is portraying for you to say that homosexuality is wrong is intolerant. Again, I'm annoyed to no end of this in soccer, football.

Because every team has to wear rainbow armbands to show their support for homosexuality. Because not to do so would mean you're intolerant.

I know there's one player for a team in France. He refused to wear the armband and they suspended and fined him. So they're intolerant of him not tolerating homosexuality.

But he's the one that's, anyway. The hypocrisy's there for me. I hope you see it. But I want our young people especially to understand this. To go along with society.

It's a sin against our God. It's to say God is not the absolute authority. There are others that are out there that are to be obeyed. There are in the equal plane. There are a multitude of gods.

[ 52 : 28 ] And the worship of any of those gods is legitimate. That falls all the way into various religions. Islam in our country. But it also falls into the very practical things of, like I said, homosexuality.

Abortion. It's my body. It's my right. How dare you be so intolerant? I try to avoid the politics.

But the commercials before the election. I think we were all happy for the election no matter how it turned out just so the commercials would stop. But I saw numerous commercials that said, this candidate says abortion is wrong.

That it's murder. He's against all abortions. And that was the major point of the whole ad. Like, so obviously you've got to vote against him. Because how could you be as intolerant as this?

Where are we at in society where virtue is counted as a reason to vote against someone? Loving human life is counted as a sin. We are not God.

[ 53 : 33 ] And therefore we don't determine how God is to be worshipped or thought of. God alone does that. When we decide God's to be worshipped in some other way, that he's no longer, or Jesus is no longer the only way, the way, the truth, and life.

No man comes to the Father except through me. When we begin to say, well, your past is as good as mine. We're not worshipping the same God anymore. We've broken his commandment. God is to be worshipped exclusively and the way he requires.

The way he set out. Okay, that was point one of the application. Point two, we've said it a little bit already, but it's a heart issue. As are all the commandments. And I want you to see this.

It's not just about the outward obedience. It's about the heart. Matthew 15, 18 through 20. But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart.

And this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person.

[ 54 : 38 ] So here's a list of sins that defile a person. And they parallel very strongly the second table of the law. But notice what he says. It's the heart that causes this defilement.

It's not about the outward appearance. It's about the heart. So as we think about that, the heart is the seat of the affections. If we want to get at this and the idea of what are our other gods.

And this will tie in some next week as well with idols. But the question will be, what do we love? What do we love? Anything that we love has the potential to be a god to us.

To compete with God for his worship. Jesus said to him, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. Is that true of us?

All your heart, all your soul, all your mind. What are the other competing loves that are taking away part of it? So God gets 85%. What are those loves?

[ 55 : 38 ] What do we shape our schedule around? What are the things that cannot be violated, that we have to have time for? What do we spend our money on?

All of these things will help us think about what really is our God? What is our priority? What are the sins in our heart that compete for affection to God?

We love the sin at times more than God. When we choose to obey it rather than God. But I also want you to consider, what are the legitimate pleasures that compete with God for his worship?

What are the things that God's given us that we were meant to enjoy? They're good things. And yet we raise them up inordinately, disproportionately to where they ought not be.

Thirdly, I want you to understand with all this, Christ fulfills his commandment. Now, there almost ought to be an audible sigh of relief here. Right? Christ fulfills these commandments, or this commandment.

[ 56 : 42 ] Think about when he was tempted by Satan to worship Satan in the wilderness. Jesus said to him, Be gone, Satan, for it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.

It's the first commandment that comes to Jesus' mind. He's going to live it out by not following Satan when tempted. Or bowing his knee, worshiping him. We're also told that Jesus always did the will of the Father.

My food, my meat and drink, what I eat, what I live off of, what sustains me is to do the will of the Father. And so he always, that's an honoring. That's saying, this is my God.

This is my master. He always did the will of the Father. He was always concerned for the glory of God. If we think about the chief in the man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

Christ did that. He lived it out. He met the requirements of God's law. This time we're looking at in the first commandment. So, fourthly, this first commandment should lead us to worship.

[ 57 : 42 ] That's part of what's commanded even. We're to worship this God. We're to give him the glory that's due his name. But what I hope this extensive look at what's required and what is forbidden will do for us is to realize the extent of our sin.

I think none of us really comprehend how much sin we have and just how sinful our sin is. But as we begin to look at this, if any of you felt like after we went through both lists, positive and negative, that you've kept all these, please see me after the service.

I'd like to talk. I feel like every one of these points as I go down, I feel like I can think to instances, I know ways in which I've done this and failed.

And so, as we see who we are, and then we think about the holy God, and then we think about Christ who kept this law.

I'm not going to make it through the day without breaking the first commandment. Neither are you. I feel pretty confident. Christ lived his whole life perfectly obeying this law.

[ 58 : 54 ] And so, we see how great our sin is. We see how holy the Lord is, and we know we can never measure up. Which shows us, remember one of the points of the Ten Commandments was to show us our need for a Savior.

It shows us the extent of the atonement. Think about at the crucifixion, Christ bore our sin. If your concept of sin is, well, I lied one time.

Eh, I carried that one lie on the cross. But if you think about all the ways in which we have not made God our God, and we've made other things our God, all the ways, each day, the extent of sin for you alone to be placed on Christ is massive.

Then you multiply that by all the Christians that will ever be saved. He bore all our sins. Now, if you just allow me to use that same application nine more times.

But it's true. As we see the sinfulness of us, we see how great was the atonement that Christ would die for us. We can never obey this.

[ 60 : 02 ] We can never keep the commandments. We know from this that our sin is no small total, but it's huge. And apart from Christ, it never would have been fulfilled.

But again, that leads us back to what we saw already. Christ fulfilled the law. Not only did he fulfill the law, he also died for us who broke the law. But he took upon himself that sin.

Psalm 29.2 says, Ascribe to the Lord the glory to his name. Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness. My prayer is that as we go through these commandments, you see who you are, and you see how great God is.

And therefore, you ascribe to the Lord the glory that's due his name. Because there's not one of us that are doing that now. That's the commandment. It's to worship this God above all else.

Ascribe to the Lord the glory to his name. How do we glorify God in our life? What does it look like? How do we set him apart as the one and only God?

[ 61 : 07 ] Finally, I think if we're going to do this rightly, if we're going to worship, we need a greater love for Christ. To deliver our heart. Deliver our hearts from the love of lesser things. There's lots of gods.

And by now you know my definition of this. There are lots of gods that are competing for our hearts. None of them compare to Christ. What we need is a bigger view of Christ.

That we won't be drawn away by lesser things. Let's pray to that end. Dear Heavenly Father, we praise you for your holiness.

Your worthiness of our worship. Lord, forgive us for the ways in which we've worshipped lesser things. We've set them up as our gods. We've obeyed them. Lord, we've made ourselves as gods. And we know we're not that great. But that only shows how low is our view of you. Lord, give us a state of bigger view of you.

[ 62 : 10 ] Help us to see the loveliness of our Savior, Jesus Christ. That we will not be tempted to bow the knee to any other god. Lord, we pity and feel for those who bow the knee to messy.

And so many other things in this world. As great as they can be in this life, they never compare to you, oh Lord. So show us yourself, your glory.

That we might rightly worship you. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.