

## Reasons for a series on the 10 commandments:

1. Modern Relevance: If God's commandments could play such a crucial role in positively transforming our contemporary society, then they undoubtedly hold relevance for our world today.
2. Modern Ignorance: Not a criticism of the ignorant but rather a reminder for us as a pastoral team to teach the "whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:26, 27).
  - 14% of Americans could name the Ten Commandments.
  - 25% could rattle off the seven ingredients in a Big Mac without hesitation.
  - Nearly 75% listed all three stooges even though their act ended 37 years prior.
  - 33% named all six kids from the Brady Bunch even though show ended in 1974.

## The Examination of the Commandments:

### Commandment 1: Putting God First

Exodus 20:3 *You shall have no other gods before me.*

### Why does God command us to put Him first?

- We put God first because He is the only God.
- All other gods are frauds.
- We put God first because He is the one true God of the universe who created, designed, and saved us. Who is currently sanctifying us, and one day in the future, He will restore all things to perfection.

## Commandment 2: Rejecting Idols

Exodus 20:4–6 *You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. <sup>5</sup> You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, <sup>6</sup> but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.*

Main Idea: Reject Idols, Rightly worship God, and Reap the benefits.

### Defining Terms:

Worship: “True worship is valuing or treasuring God above all things. Worship flows from the heart and is expressed through our words and actions.” - John Piper

Idol: “An idol is anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, and anything that you seek to give you what only God can give.” - Tim Keller

### Prohibitions:

1. The command prohibits creating and worshiping visible images that represent God.
2. The command prohibits creating and worshiping anything or anyone (idols) in place of God.

Why does God prohibit us from creating and worshiping visible images that represent God?

- God wants to be worshiped for who He is.
  - John 4:24 *God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.*
  - God is Spirit and does not have a physical body.

Why does God prohibit us from creating and worshiping anything or anyone (idols) in place of God?

- God is jealous.
  - God has no rivals: He is the only God, creator, designer, savior, and restorer.
  - God alone deserves to be worshiped.
- God cares about our well-being.
  - We are only functioning properly when we are worshiping God properly.
  - The iniquities to future generations
  - The benefits to future generations.
  - Who or what we worship gains control over our lives. Think about the idols of today and the control they have over people.

What idols are prominent in the world today?

- Our identity: It's often tempting to anchor our identity in something or someone besides God. Whether it's our social media following, our job title, our talents, or the goals we pursue, many find themselves misplacing their sense of self.
- Money: Whether wealthy or struggling financially, the quest for wealth and material possessions serves as an idol in our society. Numerous individuals place more trust in their finances than in God.
- Entertainment: It captivates us, manifesting in various forms. Whether through Netflix binges, vacations, video games, or podcasts, we wholeheartedly embrace entertainment as a means of escape from our problems.
- Sex: It dominates our culture; its presence is everywhere. It often consumes our thoughts more than even money. What was meant as a divine gift has been elevated to the status of a deity, dictating the lives of many.
- Comfort: Our lives today are filled with products that promise to simplify and add comfort. Tasks that once

took all day now take minutes, thanks to automation. While this ease is beneficial, our main pursuit shouldn't be just comfort. Jesus teaches that his followers will face trials and persecution. Pursuing comfort alone can become harmful, especially when it becomes an idol. When comfort is our main focus, we may struggle when faced with challenges that God calls us to embrace.

- Approval: Instead of seeking God's approval, we seek man's. This controls what we do and don't do. Often, instead of putting ourselves out there and going after what God has called us to do, we stay on the sidelines in fear of man's disapproval.

How do we reject the idols that are controlling our lives right now?

- Search me, God - Do I have an idol or idols?
- Seek God's help - Ask God to help you remove the idol(s). He will.
- Saturate yourself in the Word - Reminding yourself that God is the only one deserving of your worship.
- Surround yourself with Believers who will speak the hard truth. They will gently redirect when they see you drifting toward idols.

---

DeYoung, Kevin. The Ten Commandments (Foundational Tools for Our Faith) (p. 189), "*Americans Know Big Macs Better than Ten Commandments*," <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-bible-commandments/americans-know-big-macs-better-than-ten-commandments>.