

COMMANDMENT NUMBER TWO: NO GRAVEN IMAGES

Exodus 20:4-6

Introduction: The Ten Commandments are divided into two major areas. The first four deal with God and man, our duty to God.

The last six deal with man to man, our duty to each other. Jesus summed all ten together when He said, "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength...and shalt love thy neighbor as thyself...*"

IF you love God, you will certainly keep the first four commandments and if you love your neighbor as yourself as Jesus commanded, then you will certainly keep the last six.

The first commandment tells us WHO must be worshipped and the second commandment tells us HOW He must be worshipped. NO FALSE WORSHIP. There are some today who go around this commandment as they have statues of Christ, images of Mary and other "christian" characters in various forms.

I. MAN HAS AN INSTINCT FOR WORSHIP

1. Man is born with the instinct to worship a higher being. Archeology has proven this time and time again as they have dug up cities thousands of years old and always they have found some sort of religion, some god or gods they have worshipped. Let us be thankful that we have but ONE GOD and His written Word.

2. Look at the history of our own country. The first settlers found Indians who worshipped the sun, moon, stars, rivers and they spoke of the "great spirit." They believed that when their braves died they went to the "Happy Hunting Ground." The first settlers who were killed by the indians, had their church for they had brought their religion with them when they settled in this land.

- A man of the past said, "You can find cities without walls, without letters, without money, without houses, without theaters and games, but man has never seen and never will see a city without temples and gods, without prayer, oaths, prophecies and sacrifices."
- Man is going to worship something.

II. WHAT THIS COMMANDMENT DOES NOT FORBID

1. It does not forbid sculptures and paintings. God gives people talents for these things. Remember the serpent in the wilderness? Israel was complaining against God and God sent serpents to bite them and then He told Moses to make a serpent of brass and those who looked up at the serpent would be healed. Was this false worship?
2. Remember the tabernacle which the Israelites built for God? There were many pictures and images with a veil separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place that was adorned with embroidered figures. Images of Cherubims were to be crafted and placed at each end to guard the Ark of the Covenant.
3. When Solomon built the great Temple elaborate decorations were all in it. Images of flowers, fruit, trees, oxen, lions, and Cherubims were all around. Certainly God is not opposed to us building beautiful places of worship in His honor and decorated in beauty.

III. WHAT THE COMMANDMENT DOES FORBID

1. We are not to make a likeness of anything and bow down before it in worship. This does not mean not to bow down in prayer for when we bow in prayer we are not bowing before the preacher or the building are we?
2. The story has been told more than once about a man who had difficulty in realizing that God was present when he prayed to Him so his pastor placed an empty chair beside the man and told him to imagine that God was sitting

in that chair whenever he prayed. The man did and his life was drastically changed. Later when this man who had been very sick died, and they found him lying on the bed and one arm was stretched out and resting on that empty chair. He did not worship the chair but it helped him focus on God whom he did worship.

3. This commandment teaches us not to fix our gaze upon an image intended to help focus on God and become absorbed in that image so that one loses sight of the personality of God. The image is not to replace God.
4. There is not a true, authentic picture of Christ. How does one know the color of His eyes, hair, how tall was He, etc.? Christ left not a single physical thing behind although there are a lot of stories about His robe and the cup He used during the last supper. People try to imagine what Christ looked like so they paint pictures, make

sculptures

from their own "wants and likes." These images often are worshipped instead of who they represent, Christ.

5. Image worship limits God. It would limit Him to one place. God is not only here but is everywhere (Psalms 115.4-8).
- We become like what we worship.

6. You say that you are innocent, you have never worshipped an image? What about that mental image god? You know, the god of wealth, the god of popularity, the god of what we like to do the most? Every person worships.

IV. GOD'S WARNING ABOUT THIS COMMANDMENT

1. God is a jealous God. He is not envious but He is jealous. The covenant between God and Israel was like a marriage covenant. God was like the husband and Israel was like the wife. Today, Christ is the "groom" and the Church is the "bride" and every Christian is part of the Church. Have you been true to your spouse (husband/wife)? How about your covenant with Christ?
2. How then shall we worship God? "In spirit and in truth" Jesus said. Let's not look at any image expecting anything but let us look to God that the image is to remind us of. Let us worship God as He is: living, loving, caring, everywhere at the same time and wanting to do all we ask in accordance with His will for our lives.
3. There is private worship when we go to God and pour out our hearts before Him in privacy. Then there is public worship when we come together and sing, praise, pray, fellowship and hear God's Word proclaimed.

CONCLUSION:

1. There are those who attend public worship services but get absolutely nothing from them because their thoughts are not on the service or upon God, but on something else not even related to God or worship of Him.
2. There are those who attend public worship services and their hearts are lifted, tears come to their eyes, as they are encouraged, challenged, lifted up, reassured and truly worship God.
3. God is God and images cannot replace Him. Let us be mindful of this commandment.