

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT: NO OTHER GODS BUT ME

Exodus 20:3

Introduction: The Israelites were on their way to the promised land and God was going to make them into a great nation. They were going to settle in a land flowing with milk and honey. A country cannot be run without rules and laws, therefore God had Moses gather the people before Mt. Sinai and there the Laws were given. Some people are saying that these commandments are out of date and that we cannot live by them today and are taking steps to have the Commandments removed from all public places such as courthouses and such. People have forgotten that God is still God, He hasn't changed and His standards haven't changed either.

I. THE FIRST COMMANDMENT GIVEN

The first thing God does is to remind the Israelites that it was He, God, who freed them, brought them out and that it was He who is going to make a great nation out of them. God tells the Israelites that "I am your only God..." Egypt had many gods and Israel was going to a land where there were also many gods, so God was preparing them for that.

1. Man is incurable religious.
 - God planted the religious instinct deep into every person and therefore it is natural for people to look to some eternal source of power and help. If a person doesn't know the one true God, then he/she makes a god and bows down before it.
2. The Greeks had over 30,000 gods and when Paul went to Athens, he found god images everywhere, on every corner, in every home, in gardens, god images everywhere. In fear that that may have missed a god, the Greeks erected an image entitled "to the unknown god."
3. Through the ages mankind has worshipped the sun, moon, stars, rivers, trees, birds, fish and today in certain countries thousands of people are starving to death while there are cattle roaming the streets as these are "sacred" cows, worshipped by the people. All over the world today people bow down before "man-made" god idols.
4. At a display of an Asiatic temple, the guide told the tourists that if they wanted good crops to pray to this idol. If they wanted wealth to pray to that idol and if they wanted money then pray to the one over there. If a woman wants children then pray to this particular idol. It's sad that even today people still bow down before images made of sticks and stone and offer prayers expecting that particular idol to hear them.

II. THE IDOLATRY OF TODAY

The American people are "refined and cultured" and don't bow down before idols. Are they innocent? Are they keeping the first commandment? NO! The difference is that the idolatry of America and other countries is more "refined."

1. Some worship the god of NATURE. On the Lord's Day there are thousands who do not attend worship but go out to enjoy nature, fishing, hunting, golf, boating, a ride to the mountains. They say that they can worship God just as well doing these things. Well, if they would think of God and actually worship Him, perhaps they could, but their mind is not on God. Can nature comfort you when you or a loved one is dying? Can nature take you to heaven when you die?
2. Some worship the god of HEALTH. Having a strong healthy body does not keep one from having an immoral and sinful life.
 - Some stay home on Sundays to "rest" up from the week and say for "the sake of my health I must stay home." Strange that they can work five days a week, fish, hunt, visit on another day but then they have to "rest up" on Sundays.

Thousands suffer from "Sunday Sickness."

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3. Some worship the god of SPORTS. It seems that Sunday is the only day that ball games are played. Stadiums are packed and everyone knows every player and his/her history, yet they neglect their Bible and they don't know very much about any of the Bible people.
 4. Some worship the god of POPULARITY. People love to be popular. They love to get their names or pictures in the paper. They love to have their names known by everyone. People today often do things which displease God just in order to gain popularity. Our young people are being pushed into an adult world at an alarming rate. At the age of 10 they are already having sex and if a girl reaches 20 years of age without ever having sex, then there's something wrong with her.
Adults are teaching children everything in the world except about God.
 5. Some worship the god of WEALTH. Our coins bear the inscription "In God We Trust." Thousands of people have put their trust into the dollar instead of God. In this life, in this country, we have to have money but when we put money above, ahead of God, we are in great danger. Money in itself can be useful. It can be used to bless others and glorify God but when money becomes the master instead of God, when one loves money more than God, then there is danger.

III. WE SHOULD HAVE NO OTHER GOD BEFORE THE ALMIGHTY GOD OF HEAVEN

When the death angel comes knocking at your door, suppose tomorrow, suppose one of your loved ones should die, would your money comfort you? Would your popularity comfort you? Would your health comfort you? Would nature comfort you? Would sports bring you comfort? Would anything you have given your life to other than God comfort you?

Someday each of us will be at the "river of death" and the doctor would whisper, "he/she can't last the night." Your loved ones will stand around crying. You are going to need some help then. Will it help to know that you have money in the bank? No. When you come to the end of your life, it will help to know that Christ is waiting for you and that He has prepared a place for you.

CONCLUSION:

1. God said that there is to be no one else, no other thing, but Him as the center of our lives.
2. Israel stayed in trouble with God most of the time because they would "add" other so called gods along with God.
3. Maybe this is what we have been doing. We recognize God as "the God" but we have added some others along the way.
4. Take a look at your life. Has God been the center of your life? Do you have other "gods?"
5. "Thou shalt have no other gods but ME."