

How Then Shall We Live

1st Commandment

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

“for sin will have no dominion over you since you are not under law, but under grace.”
Romans 6:14

“What you will find is an absence of a true and realistic understanding of the seriousness of sin, superficial preaching that appeals to man’s felt needs and affection, a general listlessness and lawlessness in the lives of professing Christians, an absence of the fear of God in public worship and private living. Churches are relying on strategies borrowed from business and psychology and a growing confidence in ourselves and an accompanying loss of confidence in God.”

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:17-19

Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” Matthew 22:37-40

It doesn’t say you must have a god, it assumes you’ve already got a god.

When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, “The gods have come down to us in human form!” (Vs. 11). Paul then responds, “Friends, why are you doing this? We too are only human, like you. We are bringing you good

news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and everything in them.”

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.
Romans 1:18-23.

Definition of an Idol

“Anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give.”

Thomas Oden

1. Idols are anything that promises to us a life of power, peace, joy, fulfillment apart from God.
2. Idols engage the deepest emotions of the heart.
3. Idols demand sacrifices.
4. Idols need to be protected.

Identifying Idols

1. Look at your imagination.

Archbishop William Temple: “Your religion is what you do with your solitude.”

“Idolatry is when we make a good thing an ultimate thing.” Keller

2. Look at how and where you spend your money.

Jesus said, “Where your treasure is, there is your heart also.” Matthew 6:21

3. Ask the question honestly: “In whom or what do I really trust?”

4. How do I respond when facing the threat of something or someone being taken from me that I believe I cannot live without?

“Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.” Romans 1:23

Idolatry is not just wrong, it's foolish.

“As a thief is disgraced when he is caught, so the people of Israel are disgraced—they, their kings and their officials, their priests and their prophets. They say to wood, ‘You are my father,’ and to stone, ‘You gave me birth.’ They have turned their backs to me and not their faces; yet when they are in trouble, they say, ‘Come and save us!’²⁸ Where then are the gods you made for yourselves? Let them come if they can save you when you are in trouble! Jeremiah 2:26-27

Dealing with Idols.

i. **Uncover them!**

ii. **Love God more!**

Choose not to love your idol less, choose to love God more.

“be filled with all the fullness of God” Ephesians 3:19

iii. **Celebrate God’s love for you!**

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Colossians 3:1-5

“Idolatry is not just a failure to obey God, it is a setting of the whole heart on something besides God. This cannot be remedied only by repenting that you have an idol, or by using will power to try to live differently. Turning from idols is not less than those two things, but it is also far more. “Setting the mind and heart on things above” where “your life is hid with

Christ in God" (Col 3:1-3) means appreciation, rejoicing, and resting in what Jesus has done for you. It entails joyful worship, a sense of God's reality in prayer. Jesus must become more beautiful to your imagination, more attractive to your heart, than your idol. That is what will replace the idols of your heart. If you uproot the idol and fail to "plant" the love of Christ in its place, the idol will grow back." Keller