

10 Commandments Pt 3: “Proper Worship” -Aug 10, 2025, Ex 20:4-6; Dt 5:8-10; Is 44:9-20

Intro: We are just getting going on our study of the 10 commandments found in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. Since we are reading the commandments during our confession of sin and the catechism during our confession of faith, we will be looking at other passages that accentuate the commandments in some meaningful way. WLC Qs 108-110.

READ TEXT: Isaiah 44:9-20

The first commandment lays the **foundation** for all the other commandments stressing God’s uniqueness and exclusivity. The commandment to have no other Gods before the LORD is the bedrock that the other commandments are built on. Everything else is in some way a working out of the first commandment. Today, we’re looking at the second commandment.

I. The regulative **principle (again) (Ex 20:4 “any likeness”).**

The Regulative Principle of Worship asserts that God **alone** determines the proper elements of worship through His Word. Worship must be only directed by Scripture to avoid idolatry and human innovations, which are violations of God’s sovereignty.

During the Reformation, Reformed people opposed religious art, including images of Jesus, citing the Second Commandment. They argued that such depictions could distract from worshiping God in “spirit and truth” (John 4:24) and led to superstition or veneration of the image itself, as seen in some Catholic or Orthodox practices with icons.

The Westminster Larger Catechism explicitly states that the Second Commandment forbids “the making of any representation of God, of all or of any of the three persons, either inwardly in our mind, or outwardly in any kind of image or likeness.”

Human-invented forms of worship, even if well-intentioned, risk idolatry because they **presume** to know better than God.

- **Deuteronomy 12:29–32**, warns against adopting pagan worship practices and commands Israel to follow only what God has prescribed: “Do not add to it or take away from it” (Deut. 12:32).
- The Second Commandment (**Exodus 20:4–6**), prohibits “graven images” (*pesel* in Hebrew). We are to avoid any unauthorized **representations or practices** in worship.

- Examples like **Nadab and Abihu** (Leviticus 10:1–3), who were punished for offering “strange fire” not commanded by God, illustrate the **danger** of deviating from divine instructions.

Against: **Superstition** (RCC and Charismaniacs),

1. Pictures, figures, art, are all second commandment violations. Icons, relics, stained glass representations of God or Jesus, paintings, and anything else that could be construed as a physical representation of the eternal God is prohibited. Jesus on the cross is a second commandment violation. The image of the cross itself can be used as a magic device and this is also prohibited.
2. **Films** are included in this including but not limited to the Jesus Film of 1979, the rock opera Jesus Christ Superstar and the more recent Chosen.

Against **Chaos**, (1Cor 14:40).

1. Order of service
2. Simple
3. Biblical

Much of evangelicalism is either in direct disobedience, or ignorant or they don't think this applies to them. I submit to you that many modern church services have more in common with the frenzied worship of Baal (1Kings 18) than that of the Holy Triune God of the Scriptures. It is idolatry to seek experiences. **Don't do it. Do what He said, and only what He said. "be careful"... to obey all...**

II. The **theology of the commandment:**

The **incomprehensibility** of God. The statement preceding the first commandment, “I am the LORD your God” defines who it is that we are worshipping. There are certain things about God that are not easy to understand. He is Trinity. He is sovereign. He is all powerful (omni – potent). He is all knowing (omni – scient). He is all present (omni – present). He is unlike anything in our sphere of understanding. These are all His incommunicable attributes. He is unique. He is holy.

The **jealousy** of God. God is not soft. He is not squishy. God is intolerant. God is unyielding in His demand for our allegiance. He will not play second best. He requires exclusive access to our hearts. He is not polyamorous. He is, and there is no other. Our affections and devotion are to be uniquely His. God does not contend for our devotion, he commands it.

III. The **Practice of the Commandment:**

Reverence: reverence is being slow, methodical, and careful in our approach. We don't rush in. We don't go without a plan. We don't come to God haphazardly. Reverence affects our attitudes and demeanor. We get quiet. We get still. Psalm 46:10 says, "Be still and know that I am God."

Results: **cursing and blessing.** The text of Exodus 20 gives us the results of obedience and disobedience. God promises to "visit the iniquity" on the third and fourth generation of those who hate Him. Notice how he describes disobedience as "hate."

Blessing is the result of obedience. Proverbs is full of examples on both sides of this equation. The unrighteous fool is cursed and frustrated constantly, while the wise man demonstrates understanding and skill.

Psalm 1 demonstrates this reality specifically:

How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor stand in the way of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of Yahweh, And in His law he meditates day and night. And he will be like a tree *firmly* planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers. The wicked are not so, But they are like chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not rise in the judgment, Nor sinners in the ongregation of the righteous. For Yahweh knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish.

IV. The **futility and insanity of idolatry (Is 44:9-20). -judgement**

Ecclesiastes as a book outlines the utter foolishness and idiocy of a life directed by and devoted to anything other than the God of heaven and earth. "Vanity of vanities."

Modern idols:

Sports, Sex, Success, Self. **Control, significance** through accomplishment (vain glory), and **comfort**. All of these are in competition with God. Instead of finding contentment in the providence of God, we seek to create stability. Instead of trusting our God has placed us in the situations and circumstances we find ourselves in and being faithful, we seek to find something better or more important. When faced with difficulty, even the simple pain of provision (working), we avoid and complain. Example of modern men being "tired" all the time. Modern people work a third as hard and are twice as tired. Stop complaining and worshipping the God of comfort. Embrace the God who works. Stop waterboarding us all with your weariness. God calls us to forsake comfort and find solace in His provision and promises. We embrace pain and difficulty as an act of worship. We view our work as a way to worship, not as a curse.

Rom 1

You become like the thing you worship. In both, Is 44 and Rom 1, God gives people over to the things they worship. Idols are impotent, powerless, mockeries of God and creation. Idolatry doesn't work and it doesn't make any sense. Sin makes you stupid, sad, and irrelevant. Sin brings judgment. Sin pays in death.

We looked at the correct way to worship God, the theology behind it and the futility of fighting with him.

Application:

1. **Prepare** for worship. Physical and spiritual prep. We clean ourselves up physically. We wear our Sunday best. We get prepared to meet with God. Get your clothes ready the night before. Make food preparations, grocery runs, cooking, etc. **Be on time.** You wouldn't be late to a meeting with someone of great importance. Be ready with your Bible and having already gone to the bathroom and done whatever else you need to do. Spiritually, come prepared to meet with God.
2. Use **caution** when approaching. We don't rush into meeting with God. We are careful to examine our hearts. There is a certain amount of formality and function. We tread lightly but boldly knowing that Jesus is our mediator. This time is not the same as any other time. God is not like our friends. He is the Holy one. We approach with caution. Sunday divine worship is not the time for horseplay or unnecessary talk. It is a time of reverence and holiness. Quiet and solemnity are to be observed. We are here to meet with God.
3. Be diligent to **worship** God in the way He instructed (Is 44:19). We don't just invent whatever we want. We

Our God is a consuming fire. Oh, that He would consume the nations with His justice and mercy. For Christ and His kingdom, for a thousand years. Amen!

Closing prayer: Yes, Lord, let your glory fall down like rain. Make us people who understand the commandments and obey you faithfully. Thank you for this instruction. Would your Spirit apply it to our lives that we may be pleasing to You. Find us people informed and equipped by Your word, empowered by Your Spirit to make disciples of all nations, starting with these United States, The Great State of Texas, and our home here in the Permian Basin. May You use us in our generation, to destroy the works of the devil and build the glorious kingdom of our God and King. As we come to the table of communion, meet with us as we remember that Christ gave His life as a ransom for many. In Jesus' name, Amen.