NO OTHER GODS - EXODUS 20:1-3

THREE GOALS

I. To know God’s unchanging moral NATURE. (Matt. 5:17-18)

II. To learn God’s wisdom for LIVING. (John 10:10; 16:24)

III. To know God’s salvation by GRACE. (Rom. 3:20; Exod. 20:2-3)

THREE QUESTIONS

I. What is an “other god”?

II. What are the other gods in our lives?

   • The god of POPULARITY.
   
   • The god of PLEASURE.
   
   • The god of POSSESSIONS. (Luke 16:13; Job 1:21; Matt. 6:19-20)
   
   • The god of PASTIMES. (Col. 1:17-18)

III. How do I put God first in my life?

   • Put God first in your FINANCES. (Prov. 3:9-10; Matt. 6:21; Deut. 14:23)
   
   • Put God first in your INTERESTS. (1 Cor. 10:31)
   
   • Put God first in RELATIONSHIPS. (Prov. 27:19; 12:16)
   
   • Put God first in your SCHEDULE.
      - Give God the first MINUTES of each DAY.
      - Give God the first DAY of each WEEK.
   
   • Put God first in your TROUBLES. (Ps. 50:15; 46:1)
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

INTRO

Begin by sharing:

1. What have you been reading in God’s Word this week? How was your time in the Word?
2. What do you need to obey from what you’ve read from God’s Word this week?

We’re studying through the Ten Commandments over the next ten weeks. These are the ten foundational laws God gave to Moses that would form the basis of Israel’s relationship with the God who rescued them from Egypt out of slavery and is now making His presence known.

Jesus Christ Himself said “heaven and earth may pass away, but not a jot or a tittle of the Law of God will pass away until all is fulfilled.” What Jesus was saying is that the Law of God, the Word of God is greater than heaven and earth. Everything in this world is scaffolding compared to the Word of God.

In the Bible there are two lists of Ten Commandments, also called the Decalogue (“deca” meaning ten, “logue” meaning words - literally the “ten words.”) The first is in Exodus 19-20, where God dictates the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai, laying down the terms for His covenant with His people. The second comes in Deuteronomy 5:4-25, and is God retelling the Ten Commandments to a new generation of Israelites about to enter the land of Canaan.

J. Alec Motyer, a commentator on the Old Testament, points out that “it was the God of salvation who imposed His law on His people; the grace that saves preceded the law that demands. The people were given the law not in order that they might become the redeemed, rather it was because they had already been redeemed that they were given the law” (The Message of Exodus, J. A. Motyer). Rather than some sort of shallow legalism, the Ten Commandments reflect the character of the God who saves. Grace and law belong together; saving love explodes into grateful love expressed in obedience.

So far from being an empty morality or obligatory rules, each of the Ten Commandments show us some principle or some attribute of the God who spoke them to Moses. Since we all were created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27), our obedience to these Ten Commandments aligns us with the image of God - our true humanity.

READ

Take some time to read the Ten Commandments out loud (Exodus 20:1-21).
This week we’re going to focus specifically on the first of the ten Commandments in v. 2. “I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me.”

- What does this passage say about who God is?
- What does this passage say about people / who we are?
- What are some things that we place before God in our culture? What do we substitute for Him?
- Another way of asking this is in what ways do we serve these ‘other gods’ today?

Read Exodus 32:1-6.

- Why did Israel build a golden calf?
- What need did the golden calf fulfill for the people?
- What strikes you as odd in these few verses?
- Is it possible to think you’re worshipping God but really be worshipping idols?

DISCUSS

1. The human heart is made for worship, wired to give devotion to something. Ezekiel 14:3 reminds us that whether we are making golden calves, fashioning statues, or bowing down to images, it’s possible to fashion idols in our hearts. If an idol is something you give ultimate value to, something that, were you to lose it, you would feel as if life had lost its meaning, what are the idols in your own heart that need to be exposed?
2. How do you know what your idols are? How do you identify deepest desires of your heart?
3. There can also be cultural idols (see Acts 17:23, Paul at Athens). What are the things you think our culture worships above all else? What does our culture run to for ultimate fulfilment?
4. Friedrich Nietzsche, the renowned atheistic philosopher, once said that “there are more idols in the world than realities.” John Calvin said that the human heart is an idol-making factory. What is it about the human heart that is constantly looking for something to give its devotion to?
5. Contrary to the assumption that idols are always bad things, Tim Keller writes: “We think idols are bad things, but that is almost never the case. The greater the good, the more likely we are to expect that it can satisfy our deepest needs and hopes. Anything can serve as a counterfeit god, especially the very best things in life.” What are the ‘good things’ in your life that are in danger of becoming ‘ultimate things’?
**PRAYER**

Pray for God to open your eyes to idols.

Ask God to give you “clean hands and pure hearts,” to turn yourself away from idols (Psalm 24).

**TAKE IT HOME**

On a 3x5 card, write this down:

God, I confess to you that I have been putting _______________ ahead of you in my heart.

God, I will put you first in my life by _______________. Share what you wrote with the group. Keep your card for next week.

**Recommended Reading:**

*Counterfeit Gods: The Empty Promises of Money, Sex, and Power and the Only Hope that Matters* by Timothy Keller

*Gods at War: Defeating the Idols that Battle for Your Heart* by Kyle Idleman

*Household Gods: Freed from the Worship of Family to Delight in the Glory of God* by Ted and Kristin Kluck