



Honest Answers for Honest Questions

“No Other Gods”

Exodus 20:1-17

We have just begun a study of God’s moral law, as summarized in the Ten Commandments. This week let’s talk about the first commandment, “You shall have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3).

The ancient Egyptian empire was filled with belief in gods. This was the world with which the Israelites were familiar, since they had been enslaved in Egypt for over 400 years. The Egyptians worshiped the god of the Nile, the god of the crocodile, the sky god, and the great sun god, not to mention human deities – the Pharaohs, who built huge monuments to their own memory on the backs of slaves. Parents sacrificed their children to these gods. So you can imagine the culture shock it must have been to the Israelites when Moses announced the first of the Ten Words: “No other gods!” Yahweh demanded and deserved exclusive allegiance from those he had redeemed from slavery.

What do you worship in addition to or instead of the one true, living God? There is no more probing yet liberating question than that.



KNOWING GOD

Read Exodus 20:1-3. What is the significance of verse 2 for properly understanding and obeying verse 3?

Put the first commandment into your own words.

Why is it right and good for God to receive your undivided, exclusive worship?

Read Daniel 3. How did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego obey the first commandment? What did it cost them?



GROWING TOGETHER

What are your “functional gods”? In other words, to what (or whom) do you typically turn for relief from guilt or shame, to get a sense of significance, or to get yourself through the day? What does the first commandment say about your functional gods?

The *Westminster Larger Catechism*, which dates back to 1647, is a valuable tool for getting at the practical application of the Ten Commandments. About the first commandment, it says that “making men the lords of our faith and conscience” is a form of breaking the commandment. Do you fear the opinions of others to an unhealthy degree? **Read Proverbs 29:25.** In what situations do you cave to the “fear of man”?



SERVING OTHERS

Through the prophet Isaiah, God often said “I am the Lord, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God” (Isaiah 45:5). In what specific ways is that message relevant for our times?

What are you doing to help people see that only God meets the need of the human heart?

How can our church grow more obedient to the first commandment?



IN YOUR FAMILY...

- a) What false gods is your family tempted to worship? After you’ve identified your false gods, spend some time confessing, repenting, and praying for each other. Mom and Dad, take the lead in this.
- b) Begin this week to memorize the Ten Commandments. The first commandment is a short one and not hard to learn. Practice it until each family member can say it without looking.

SERMON NOTES