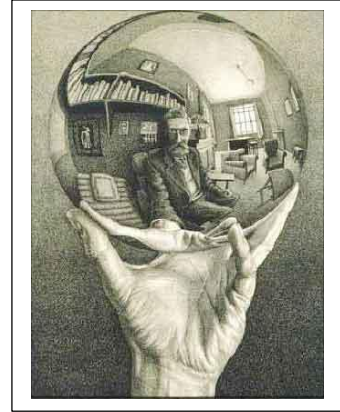


# *How Do We Please God?*



## **2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment**

Ex. 20:4-6

Today, we examine the second of the Ten Commandments which is:

*"You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them, ... "*

*(Ex. 20:4-5, ESV)*

Let's be reminded at this point, of the same thing we have observed before. The commandments do not first tell us what to do. They first tell us who Jesus, himself, is and what He did. Our greatest joy is knowing that by our faith in Jesus, His righteousness has become our own. We didn't earn it, He did. And therefore, our obedience unto Jesus, by following His law, is out of our gratitude and zeal to live the life that Christ has given us to live.

### **Is there a true image of God?**

If we were to construct an image of God, what would that look like? The first thing we must realize here is that man, himself, is the one who bears himself the image of God (Gen. 1:27). Man was made by God to represent Him on earth and to commune with God directly. And by that representative image, God's rule over all of His creation was to be made manifest (Gen. 1:28). The glory of man is his reflection of God.

### ***Idolatry begins with the rejection of the true God and proceeds on to the invention of false gods.***

But man, God's very image on earth, sinned against God and fell by giving himself over to worshipping his own very image in selfishness and rebellion rather than worshipping the One who made him. When the image of God thought himself to be as God (Gen. 3:5), he had no use for God.

Now, the fall of man into sin did not destroy that imagehood totally. As a fallen creature, man still bears the image of God, but it is marred, scarred, and nearly ruined by the enmity and distance this fall put between him and God and by the sin that man continues to commit every day by his continuing to worship and be pre-occupied with anything in creation that attracts his attention. Idolatry begins with the rejection of the true God and proceeds on to the invention of false gods.

But then God sent forth His own Son, Jesus; and in him, God took upon himself the very form of man – the Creator came to creation in the image of the created. The fullness of God dwelt in the fullness of man. God Himself became the second Adam (rf. 1 Cor. 15:45) – the one who took our punishment for us so that, through faith and new birth, we might be conformed into His likeness (rf. Phil. 2:7).

Christians honor the God who made them when their attention is off of themselves and focused singularly on the God who redeemed them through the gift of His son, Jesus Christ.

## *Christians are the image of God to the world.*

Therefore, the lesson for our obedience to the 2nd Commandment is this: as the 1st Commandment told us *Who* we must worship, the 2nd Commandment, which forbids false worship and false gods, tells *how* we must worship God through Jesus as our Lord and Savior. Jesus told the woman at the well in John 4 that those who worship God must worship in spirit and truth - we must worship Him with as much devotion and attention and faithfulness as we learned to love this God in the 1st Commandment.

### **Who Says?**

So how are we to properly worship God? How do we determine what that is? Theologians use a term to discuss this called the “Regulative Principle”. It means that someone decides or regulates what proper worship to God truly is. But who should do that? Who should determine what is proper worship? We might all have different ideas about what would be good, nice or proper in worship. Some would like to see this. Others would like worship services to include that. But who is right? Who is to say?

Let me take an illustration from a holiday we’re all familiar with: Christmas. Have you ever known exactly what you wanted for Christmas but didn’t get it? Have you gone out and purchased “just the right present” for someone else only to have that person not appreciate your gift or take it back and exchange it for something else? Most often the problem is that the one giving the gift didn’t really know what this person wanted; or worse, he thought he did know but was dead wrong!

But the problem would have been easily solved if only the one giving the gift had done one thing: thought about the person, studied the person, or simply asked the person what he wanted!

Sometimes people come to church with the sincere intention of worshipping God but what they bring with them are all kinds of their own ideas as to what they think the worship service should include. They think of things that please themselves or the things that they enjoy seeing and hearing. Or they want things in the worship service by which they think visitors and newcomers might be attracted. And they think that because they are offering these things in sincere worship, what pleases them should also please God. They are bringing gifts to God but are they gifts that God truly enjoys?



How do we know how to please God? We do know, because He has told us in His word how we are to worship Him – what we are to do, what we should not be doing –

and that makes all the difference. When we worship God as He wants us to, He delights in our praise and prayer and study of His Word.

## *Who is to say how we offer our worship to God?*

This is what we mean by the Regulative Principle of worship. Who should decide how we worship God? Our worship is something we are giving Him, so the proper way to worship Him, then, is to do so as He tells us. Here is a list of the things God wants in worship:

*Calling on Him in the name of Christ  
Singing of Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs  
Offering up our prayers to Him  
The trustworthy proclamation of His Word  
The observance of His sacraments  
Tithes & offerings  
The blessing of His benediction*

### **All Life is Worship**

If we can be so certain concerning what God wants to receive from our formal service of worship together, then we can also be certain as to how to live our lives *Coram Deo* – before the face of God – when we are about the living of our individual lives. When we are not in church, when we are out in the world, we are Christ’s image-bearers to the people of the world. We represent Christ and the attributes of godliness that he has given to us through the fruit of the Spirit and the gospel message. We know how to honor the Lord’s name by living the way He wants us to live - for we follow Christ’s example by obeying the Moral Law. People look to us to find out what God is like, Christians must be the image of God in the world.

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