
***Seeking the heart of the command:
“You shall have no other gods before me.” Exodus 20:3***

- I. Approaching the law well – a (fictitious) story.
- II. How can thinking about how we approach the law/command give us a greater appreciation for the fullness that is intended?
- III. Using the framework of questions provided, let’s read Exodus 20:2,3. Are there questions that are of particular value as we think about the first commandment? What do we learn about God’s relationship with his people? Exclusivity of worship?
- IV. Review of Israel’s history thus far, and thoughts about idolatry:

Israel has lived (for more years than the U.S. has existed!) in a polytheistic culture (worship of many gods). These gods have also infiltrated their own patterns of worship. (Ezekiel 20:5-7, Joshua 24:14-15)

“What is an idol? It is anything more important to you than god, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you only what God can give.” – Keller, “Counterfeit Gods” p. xvii
- V. With Keller’s definition in mind, what might compete with our exclusive worship of God? What are some of our modern day idols? (surface vs. deep)

“...idols are good and necessary things that are turned into gods.”

– Keller, “Counterfeit Gods” p. 103

“We think that 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 very best things in life.” – Keller, “Counterfeit Gods” p. xvii

- VI. What are some biblical examples of characters who have fallen into the trap of idolatry?
- VII. Let's take a look at 2 Kings 5. Who are the characters and how are they dealing with individual temptations toward idolatry?

- | | <u>Potential idol:</u> | <u>Response:</u> |
|---|------------------------|------------------|
| • Naaman | | |
| • Servant girl | | |
| • King of Syria | | |
| • King of Israel | | |
| • Elisha | | |
| • Servants
(Elisha's and Naaman's) | | |
| • Gehazi (Elisha's servant) | | |
| a) For those who were successful in resisting the idols at play, what seemed to give him/her strength? | | |
| b) For those who succumbed to the temptation of idolatry, how did his/her sin progress? What were the points of struggle? | | |

Questions for reflection in small group and this week:

1. With which character in the story can you most easily identify?
2. How can you be engaging in Christian community that can help you resist the temptation of idolatry and speak truth to you in the midst of struggle?
3. Pray that God would begin to reveal the idols of your own heart in the weeks ahead, and be in prayer for us as a nation, that our hope would rest in the One who directs the hearts of kings. (Prov. 21:1)
4. Pray also that God will stir our hearts toward love as we seek to worship Him and Him alone, and praise Him for evidence of his work already in progress toward that end.

"...choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD." Joshua 24:15b