OUR GUIDELINES FOR WORSHIP

 **DATE: 1/28/2018 am**

**TEXT: Exodus 20:4-6**

**INTRODUCTION**

We continue today looking at the 10 Commandments,

A Perfect Ten for a Perfect Life

As we do, we will look at the 2nd Commandment

We saw in the 1st Commandment that God is the One and only God, and we are to have no other gods before Him

We are to Worship God and God alone

The 2nd Commandment hinges on the 1st

In this study we’ll look at how the 2nd Commandment gives us Guidelines for our Worship

How we are to Worship Him as the One and Only God

The Bible says in **Psalm 29:2 - *“Give unto the LORD the glory due unto His Name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness”***

As well, we read in **Psalm 99:5 - *“Exalt ye the LORD our God, and worship at His footstool; for He is holy”***

So, How are we to worship God?

We will also look at how are we Not to worship God

Let’s study the 2nd Commandment and what it says to us about Worship

The 2nd Commandment is **“Our Guideline for Worship”**

**~~~Prayer~~~**

First, let look at …

**I. THE “REQUIREMENTS FOR PERSONAL” WORSHIP**

**v. 4 – *“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:”***

The 2nd Commandment speaks of ***“graven”*** Images and the ***“likeness”*** of things in heaven, on earth, and in the sea

The word ***“graven”*** speaks of an Image that has been created …

Such as a stature that has been carved out of wood or chiseled out of stone

The word ***“likeness”*** means *fashioned* and describes something or someone that has been embodied in an Image or Idol

For example if you went to Washington D.C. you could visit the Lincoln Memorial and see a ***“likeness”*** of President Abraham Lincoln

As we think about these Images and Likenesses,

I’d like to point out a Few Things …

**A. The ‘Purpose’ for Images**

The Images spoken of in the 2nd Commandment speak

of something that has been created as a representation of God or a god for the Purpose of Worship

The 2nd Commandment implies that people should Not take objects found in the heavens (such as the Sun, Moon or stars), or things found on the earth (Man or Beast) and in the sea, (Aquatic Life) and make gods out of these objects

Polytheistic nations have made gods out of just about anything you can think of and often these gods are represented in carvings of stone and wood

As I mentioned in our last study, Egypt boasted in having more than 2,000 gods

Many of these gods were embodied in relics, statutes, and images that were worshipped by the people

Don’t think for one minute that Christianity is exempt

So-Called Christians have been worshipping Images and Likenesses for a long time

The Church of Rome is permeated with these religious relics and images

For example, …

… churches in both Naples and Rome claim to have the hair of the Virgin Mary

Another claims to have her wedding ring, another her holy girdle, and still another, drops of her milk

Wow! That’s out there

One Cathedral claims to have the basin used at the Last Supper to wash the Disciples feet

The Church of Sebastian claims to have a rectangular marble stone with the footprints of Jesus in it

The lance that pierced the side of Jesus and the head of the Apostle Andrew are supposedly kept in the massive piers which support St. Peter’s Dome

As for John the Baptist, three shoulder blades, four legs, five arms, 13 heads, and 50 index fingers (which pointed to the Lamb of God) are claimed by various churches to be his

Then there is the Holy Grail and the Ark of the Covenant

In St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome is a marble stature of Peter

People visiting will either rub or kiss the toe of that stature

In fact, it has been rubbed and kissed so many times; half of the foot had been worn down and replaced with metal

And that is just a few examples of some of the statues or religious relics to which so-called Christian people pay homage

There are numerous statues of the virgin Mary and Jesus throughout the world where people bow and pray

If we are not careful, we can even make the Cross an object of Worship

In **Romans 1:23** Paul described the making of Images and how man has changed …

***“…the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things”***

He then adds in **v. 25** that in the making of these images, man has …

***“…changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen”***

Understanding the Purpose of these Images and the Role they play,

We understand, why in the 2nd Commandment we see…

**B. The ‘Prohibition’ for Images**

God says - ***“Thou shalt not make any graven image”***

God says - ***“Thou shalt not bow thyself down to them, nor serve them”***

God Condemns both their Creation and Adoration

He Prohibits both their Production and Purpose

The word ***“bow”*** means *to prostrate* and speaks of paying homage or reverence

The word ***“serve”*** means *to work* and is descriptive of a slave working for a master

The idea is that we are not to treat such Images and Likenesses as if they were the Lord over our life

We are not to bow down to such Images and treat them as God

Now, you may be thinking, *this commandment does not have any relevance’s to you*

*I don’t pray to a statue or have some image in my home to which I pay homage*

Yet, it is very possible that we are just as guilty of breaking this Commandment as some Buddhist bowing before the statue of Buddha

Many will tell you that these Images are just Aids to Worship

But nowhere in the Bible do I see God telling us to make Aides to Worship

Real Worship does not depend on the External, but on the Internal

Real Worship does not depend on the Outward, but the Inward

It is not a Picture of God that leads me to Worship

It is the Person of God that inspires my Worship

We don’t need a statue or anything else to Worship God

But here is something you may not have thought about

We also shouldn’t need beautiful piano music, banners, rituals, a moving song, or a certain atmosphere for our Worship

If you need something to work up your Worship, you are not Worshipping (you are emotionalizing)

While it is true that God may use some things to draw our attention to Himself, none of these things are required to Worship God

God Himself is all we need to Worship

We often say - *“Man, we had a good service today. We had ourselves a time”*

I understand what people are saying, but you don’t even need a good service to Worship!

Worship has nothing to do with the tone or atmosphere of a service

It has to do with seeing God for who He is

Jesus said in **John 4 - *“God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth”***

We Worship God by the ***“Spirit”*** and because of ***“truth”***

We Worship when the Holy Spirit takes the truth of the Word of God and makes it real to our hearts

The Holy Spirit magnifies the Father and Son and the result is; our heart overflows with Praise and Worship

I don’t need an image, statue or relic (a peep rally)

All I need is the Spirit and Truth!

In fact, in the 2nd Commandment we see that God Condemns and Prohibits us from depending on things to aid in our worship

God wants us to look to Him and nothing else

He wants to be the One and Only reason for our worship

Secondly, we not only see …

**WHAT THE “REQUIREMENTS OF PERSONAL” WORSHIP ARE / ARE NOT**

But we also see …

**II. THE “REASON FOR PROPER” WORSHIP**

In **v. 5** we see the Reason why God prohibits Images and Likenesses in our worship

He says - ***“…for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God”***

The same thought is echoed in **Exodus 34:14** where we read –

***“For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God”***

The Bible says in **Deuteronomy 4:24** - ***“For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God”***

When we think of Jealously, we often associate it with something negative

Yet, we know that when God declares Himself to be a Jealous God, …

He certainly is not referring to something negative

What does the Bible mean when it speaks of God as a Jealous God?

First, let me suggest that it speaks of …

**A. The ‘Love God Shows’**

A husband can be Jealous of his wife and vice-a-versa

Such Jealousy at times can be bad

But there is a sense in which Jealousy is a testimony of the love one has for another

Jealousy in a good sense speaks of the love one has for someone else and how they do not want anyone or …

… anything to hurt or hinder the relationship they share with that person

It’s an expression of a deep desire to Protect that relationship

When the Bible says that God is a Jealous God, it is telling us that He loves us so much that He does not want anyone or anything to come between us and Him

We are His people / He is Jealous of that relationship

He wants to Protect that relationship

He is Jealous of anything or anyone that could hurt the relationship He has with us

His Jealousy reveals the great love God has for us!

Furthermore, God’s Jealousy indicates …

**B. The ‘Loyalty God Seeks’**

When it comes to Images and Likenesses, God is saying,

*“I don’t want you worshipping something that reminds you of Me. I don’t want you worshipping something that represents Me. I want you to worship Me!”*

Every evening my wife makes a great meal for me

When I’m finished I don’t walk over and start kissing the stove

When I get up in the morning and put on a clean shirt,

I don’t throw my arms around the washer and start whispering sweet nothing through the door of the dryer. No!

I go to my wife and start saying to her … (Well it’s none of your business what I say to her!)

God doesn’t want to share us with anything or anyone else

He desires our undivided attention

He doesn’t want us loving some Image or Likeness of Him

He wants us loving Him!

He doesn’t want us worshipping something that reminds you of Him

He wants us worshipping Him!

All that we have are gifts from God

However, He does not want us loving the things he has given us more than Him

The material things in life we enjoy, God has blessed us with

Even though they remind me of how good God has been, He doesn’t want me loving them at His expense

He wants me to love Him!

When you talk about worship you are talking about giving God what He deserves

The word *“worship”* comes from the two words

*“worth”* is ascribing *value* to God

*“ship”* denotes the *condition, character, or skill*

The Lord is the master!

He alone is worthy of our worship

He is a Jealous God

He loves us and He deserves to be loved and worshipped in return

**THE “REQUIREMENTS OF PERSONAL” WORSHIP**

**THE “REASON FOR PROPER” WORSHIP**

Then lastly, let’s think of …

**III. THE “RESULTS TO PERVERTED” WORSHIP**

After stating that He is a Jealous God,

The Lord then makes an interesting statement –

He says in **vs. 5b, 6** - ***“…visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My Commandments”***

God is talking about Worshipping Him and Now He makes this statement

It almost seems out of place

Yet, God is still talking about Worship

In particular, He is talking about Perverted Worship

Worship that is *not normal or right*

Notice carefully what God says

First, in God’s Words we see …

**A. The ‘Condemnation’ of Perverted Worship**

He speaks of ***“the iniquity of the fathers”*** in **v. 5**

God calls Perverted worship ***“iniquity”***

The word ***“iniquity”*** means *injustice or immorality*

It speaks of *a grossly immoral act*

When we do not worship Properly, God calls it sin

In fact, God takes our worship so seriously,

He tells us He Hates idolatry in any form

**Deuteronomy 6:14, 15 *– “Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you;” …***

***“(For the LORD thy God is a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth”***

So what does that mean?

First off …

- He is the One, True God

- He Demands our Allegiance

- He Deserves our Loyalty

To give Him anything less is Sin

We will reap the consequences of mistreating Him!

We mistreat God and He walks away, takes His hand off of us

We will Not enjoy the protections that we once had

Furthermore, we not only see **God’s Condemnation** **of Perverted Worship,**

But also …

**B. The ‘Consequences’ of Perverted Worship**

We read that God not only Hates Perverted worship

But that Perverted Worship and its Consequence will be visited onto the coming generations

***“visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me;”***

Is the Bible telling us that God will punish the children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and even the great-great grandchildren because of the sin of a father?

The answer is No!

What God is saying is that what we are, is reproduced in future generations

Our children learn from us and often become what we teach them

They, in return pass the same traits on to their children, and so on

What God is saying is that if we do not worship God properly,

The chances are our children will not worship God properly, and their children, and so on

They in return will be accountable to God for their behavior and reap the same consequences for their sins that the fathers did

If a parent will not honor God in their life (Now), there is a good chance the children will not honor God (later)

If a parent will not go to Church, children will probably do the same

If parents will not worship God properly, the children who learn from their parents, most likely will not worship God properly

The result will be the same for them that it was their parents

If there is a reason to love God and worship God properly, it is because we often reap what we sow in our children

You want your children to love God and grow up to be a good Christian, (go to heaven)

You need to love God and be a good Christian

Notice carefully that God says He will visit the iniquity of the father unto the third and fourth generation,

But also,

He says in **v. 6** that He shows ***“…mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments”***

You love God, put Him first in your life, and worship Him properly, and the Consequences will be reaped by the generations to come

I read about a preacher who started following his family tree

What he found was that he came from a family with preachers, especially on his father’s side

One of them was a special blessing to him

It was his great-great grandfather, he found out that …

He was a circuit riding preacher in the mountains where he grew up, having pastored several Churches at the same time

Riding his horse to one each weekend, holding services on Saturday night and Sunday morning

One day he was talking with his great Aunt who was around when his great-great grandfather lived

They were talking about his great-great grandfather

and she shared some things she remembered about him, how he preached, where he preached, etc.

She looked at her nephew and said, *“You know that Grandpa often prayed for you, don’t you?”*

*“Prayed for me? How could he have prayed for me?”*

*“He died years before I was even born!”*

*“Oh, yes he prayed for you,”* she said

*“Grandpa often prayed that God would bless his family and let there be a preacher preaching the gospel in every generation until Jesus returned”*

*“No, he never knew you, but he often prayed for you”*

I want to do the same!

I want my life to have a positive effect on my children and grandchildren and my great grandchildren!

How about you?

**CONCLUSION**

The 2nd Commandment gives us Guidelines for how we are and are Not to Worship God

If we will Worship God Correctly there is a Blessing

If we do not, there is a Curse

I guess it’s up to you

**INVITATION**

The sin of idolatry is ultimately a sin of the heart

An idol is anything we depend upon to meet the deep needs of the heart—love, security, worth, or significance

When we seek to find identity and security in something besides God, we have made it an idol

We often search for peace or identity through relationships, substances, money, or entertainment

Addictions are forms of idolatry, as are a host of other worldly enticements that cannot ultimately satisfy

When we give ourselves to the pursuit of manmade gods, we are breaking the 2nd Commandment

Even good things can become idols if we are not careful

Ministry, hobbies, charity work, or family can usurp the rightful place only God should hold in our lives

When we emotionally rely on anything other than our relationship with Him to validate us, we are breaking the 2nd Commandment

God has promised to Bless or Curse

Be careful, for a lot of souls are dependent on YOUR Worship of God

**THE “REQUIREMENTS OF PERSONAL” WORSHIP**

**THE “REASON FOR PROPER” WORSHIP**

**THE “RESULTS TO PERVERTED” WORSHIP**