

"GOD IN FRONT"

THE BIG IDEA: It is a good and rewarding thing to meditate constantly on God's law. It is his distinction between good and evil and his insistence that we live according to this distinction. One of the ways it is good and rewarding we looked at last Sunday in Psalm 1.

Psalm 1 Blessed is the man Liberty (from wickedness...) ... but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, Productivity (fruit in its season) and its leaf does not wither Vitality (leaf does not wither). In all that he does, he prospers. Prosperity (in all that he does)

So we should determine to be people who reflect upon the Law of God a lot: *all the time!* There are all sorts of details that you wouldn't likely notice if you didn't really think about them... e.g. Notice the symmetry:

Regarding God → thought (1-2), word (3), deed (4)

Regarding people → deed (5,6,7,8) word (9), thought (10)

THIS WEEK: *The first of the Ten* Exodus 20:1-3 And God spoke all these words, saying, "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."

NOTES:

1. Other gods are forbidden because God is the LORD

Exodus 20:2 "I am the Lord your God" So a certain knowledge, a certain degree of clarity about God, is required. And where to we go to get this sort of clarity? The Bible, the Word of God. We must have more than what we can learn from the world around us: that God must exist since the world does. With a telescope, that he must be great because the Universe is so vast. With a microscope, that he must be intelligent because the life we see all around us is so complex. That he must be loving and joyful since there is so much of both all around us... We must go on to learn what the Bible has been given to us to teach us... and if we are inclined to conclude that we think we understand some things about God because we have invented him in our own image, we are corrected by the Bible to see that we can understand some things about God because he invented us in his own image.

2. Other gods are forbidden because God has freed us from slavery

Exodus 20:2 "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery" Which is to say that if you have not received personally, from Jesus Christ, your deliverance from slavery to sin: you need to do so. **Titus 3:3-7** For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Perhaps you need to specifically call upon God for his **goodness and loving kindness**, to save you "by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit" by "pouring out" his Holy Spirit upon you. These commandments are a summary of how to live the life ... but first you need to have received that life!

3. Other gods are forbidden in order to free us from danger

1 John 5:21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. What silly little children we can be, that we have to be warned about keeping away from statues that we might otherwise be inclined to worship. God says, "No other gods" and we think, "Oh no. Really? Not even a few of my favorites?" We can be like silly children locked up in a prison who are told, "Don't drink from those bottles. They are poisons!" And we say, "Awwww! Not even the Liquid Drains? Not even the Javex Bleach? Not even the Rat Poison?"

And it's not just statues of other gods that we must keep ourselves from.

Colossians 3:5 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. (too! These other "earthly things" can also be our objects of worship.)

We must be careful to avoid at all costs the downward spiral of divided worship **Romans 1:18-25** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. Other gods are forbidden because everything we place before God then comes between God and us.

4. Other gods are forbidden in order to protect our relationship with the one true God

Exodus 20:20 Moses said to the people, "Do not fear, for God has come to test you, **that the fear of him may be before you**, that you may not sin."

Psalm 19:9 ... the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever...

Mark 12:28-30 And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'

ACTION: Name your other gods and then place them all behind you.

They are before God.
They are between you and God.
You can't place them behind God.
So place them behind you.

Thomas Watson, the Puritan pastor is helpful on this point, in his book The Ten Commandments.
<http://www.biblebb.com/files/TW/tw-commandments.htm>

What is it to have other gods besides the true God?

I fear upon search, we have more idolaters among us than we are aware of.

(2) To love any thing more than God, is to make it a god.

If we love our estate more than God, we make it a god.

If we love our pleasure more than God, we make a god of it.

If we love our belly more than God, we make a god of it.

If we love a child more than God, we make a god of it.

Matthew 10:37 Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

Luke 14:33 So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

Then only God is in front of you. The more we let things take the place of the Maker of all things, the more those things distract us from our relationship to God ... and we suffer great loss to increasing degrees.

Psalm 19 ... the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. ... by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

Psalm 1 Liberty, productivity, vitality, prosperity

NEXT COMMANDMENT: (January 17) **Exodus 20:4-6** "GOD IN TRUTH"