

FAMILY WORSHIP HELPS

WEEK 44

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

QUESTION 45: *Which is the first commandment?*

ANSWER: The first commandment is, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

QUESTION 46: *What is required in the first commandment?*

ANSWER: The first commandment requireth us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God; and to worship and glorify him accordingly.



MONDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 89B

Scripture: Read Exodus 20:1-3

Key Thought: *The 1st commandment is the foundation of all others.*

Questions:

- ⌘ How does the preface to the Ten Commandments naturally lead into the 1st commandment?
- ⌘ How does the 1st commandment set the stage, or lay the foundation for, the other nine?
- ⌘ How is every act of sin a transgression of the 1st commandment?
- ⌘ Have you broken this commandment today? What should you do?

Prayer

Notes: This week we begin our examination of the commandments themselves, beginning of course with the 1st commandment. In *The Shorter Catechism for Study Classes, Vol. II*, G. I. Williamson writes, "Since God is supreme, and since our supreme duty is to know and acknowledge Him in the whole of life, the other nine commandments could be thought of as aspects of this commandment. The other nine commandments, in other words, teach us how we can worship and glorify the true God as we should. It is when we receive these commandments as the commandments of the true and living God that we honor Him." The fact of the matter is that every act of sin involves placing the object of our desire, and therefore ultimately ourselves, before God. It is our heart's attitude toward God Himself that controls how we respond to His laws. Hatred, murder, lust, covetousness, theft, disrespect for parents, Sabbath-breaking, and lying are all symptoms of a heart that has exalted itself over God.



TUESDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 89B

Scripture: Read I Corinthians 8:1-6

Key Thought: *The 1st commandment teaches us the only true object of worship.*

Questions:

- ☞ What does it mean for someone or something to be the object of worship?
- ☞ How many gods are there in the world? Can you name some?
- ☞ Can there be more than one true God? Why not?
- ☞ If all idols are really nothing, who is the true object of worship for those who bow down to them?
- ☞ Who or what has been the object of your adoration today?

Prayer

Notes: It has been said that while the 2nd commandment deals with the proper manner of worship, the 1st commandment fixes our attention on the only proper object of worship. An object of worship is the person or thing that receives a person's highest adoration, praise, and service. The world is literally filled with gods of various shapes and sorts who receive worship from men and women every day. Some of these are literal idols—statues carved out of wood, metal or stone. Others are less obvious, but are no less objects of worship—like success, wealth, or fame. Yet although there are, as Paul says, “many gods and many lords,” there is—and indeed can be—only one true God. The very definition of “God” is that He is the ultimate Being. To be God is to be all-powerful, all-knowing, everywhere-present, and totally independent of anyone or anything else. If there were two or more gods who each possessed some power or some knowledge, then none would truly be God. Each would be limited at some point by the power or knowledge or jurisdiction of the other. In the Scriptures and in the world God reveals the foolishness of those who serve empty idols as if they were gods. Behind this folly is man's desire to have himself as the object of worship by creating a god in his own image—an exact reversal of God's creation of man in His likeness. This desire is so deeply rooted in our fallen hearts that we must examine ourselves every single day in order to identify and repent of placing other “gods”—and ultimately ourselves—before the one true God.



WEDNESDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 89B

Scripture: Read Isaiah 45:1-25

Key Thought: *The 1st commandment requires us to know and acknowledge the true God.*

Questions:

- ☪ What is the main emphasis in Isaiah 45?
- ☪ In what ways does God make Himself known?
- ☪ What is wrong with the popular view that different religions are merely different ways of knowing one and the same God?
- ☪ What does it mean to acknowledge God as the only true God?

Prayer

Notes: The *Catechism* points out that the 1st commandment requires us “to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God.” This requirement involves knowledge and assent. The clear emphasis of Isaiah 45 is the revelation of God as the only true God (“I am God, and there is no other”). He makes Himself known through His Word and His works so that all may acknowledge and glorify Him. Among the ways the Lord reveals Himself, in addition to His Word, are His works of creation and providence. In all of these things, His nature, attributes, and character are clearly seen. The strong emphasis in Isaiah 45 upon God’s desire to be specifically acknowledged as the only God and Savior flies in the face of the popular notion that an individual’s idea of God makes no real difference as long as he is sincere. The Bible knows nothing of the concept that all religions are merely different ways to serve the same God. If He is God, He must be acknowledged as God—which means not only receiving the knowledge that He reveals concerning Himself, but also accepting the conclusions of that knowledge: “If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him” (1 Kings 18:21). Knowledge of God divorced from obedience is rebellion.

THURSDAY

Praise: Sing Psalm 89 B

Scripture: Read Isaiah 25:1-9

Key Thought: *The 1st commandment requires us to acknowledge the true God as our God.*

Questions:

- ☪ How does God make Himself known in Isaiah 25?
- ☪ What is the difference between acknowledging God to be “the only true God,” and acknowledging Him to be “our God”?
- ☪ Can a person know God and obey Him but still love himself more than God?

Prayer

Notes: In yesterday’s lesson we noted that the 1st commandment requires knowledge of God and assent to Him as the only true God. We noted that one can have knowledge of God without assent, since “even the demons believe—and shudder!” (Jas. 2:19). We therefore concluded that knowledge of God without assenting to obey Him is rebellion. Yet it is also true that one can have true

knowledge of God and assent to obey Him as God yet still fall short of obeying the 1st commandment. This is because the 1st commandment, like the rest of God's law, is not chiefly concerned with outward, but inward response. Because a person can obey God for the wrong reasons, thus giving a mere appearance that he knows God and acknowledges Him as the only true God, the writers of the *Catechism* add the words "and our God" to the requirement of the 1st commandment. Thus, to knowledge and assent is added the third essential element of true faith, which is personal trust from a heart filled with true love for God.



FRIDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 89B

Scripture: Read Psalm 95:1-11; 1 John 2:15; Job 31:24-28

Key Thought: *The 1st commandment requires us to give our one true God the worship and glory He alone deserves.*

Questions:

- ☪ What does it mean to give God the worship and glory He alone deserves?
- ☪ How would the failure to keep the requirements of the 1st commandment be seen in a person's life?
- ☪ How would obedience to the requirements of the 1st commandment be seen in a person's life?

Prayer

Notes: John Flavel has written, "That supreme love, fear, and trust of the soul, is God's peculiar right and due. Whosoever places them on any other besides God, is guilty of a very heinous and great sin against Him" (*Exposition of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism*). Yet we have seen that the 1st commandment is necessary because man's sinful heart is inclined to make himself, rather than the only true God, the object of worship and adoration. This commandment reminds us that God alone is deserving of worship and glory, since He is the omnipotent Creator and everyone and everything else was created by Him. Furthermore, He is worthy of all worship because of the excellency of His perfect nature, for He is altogether beautiful in Himself and deserving of infinite praise. The evidence of obedience or disobedience to the 1st commandment may be seen by examining the daily priorities of a person's life.



Note: Only five lessons per week are included. You are encouraged to lead your family in worship seven days a week. On weekends, you may want to review or build upon the lessons from the previous week, discuss the sermon from Sunday morning, or work on questions from the Catechism or memory verses. These lesson suggestions are intended to provide a simple framework for parents to build upon. You are not limited to this content. The habit of morning and evening family worship is the biblical ideal. We hope you can use these lessons as a starting point for the development of a blessed practice of family worship in your home.