

FAMILY WORSHIP HELPS

WEEK 45

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

QUESTION 47: *What is forbidden in the first commandment?*

ANSWER: The first commandment forbiddeth the denying, or not worshiping and glorifying the true God as God, and our God; and the giving of that worship and glory to any other, which is due to him alone.



MONDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 40C

Scripture: Read Psalm 14:1-7

Key Thought: *The 1st commandment forbids atheism.*

Questions:

- ☞ What is an atheist?
- ☞ How does David describe the atheist in Psalm 14?
- ☞ Why is it foolish to deny the existence of God?
- ☞ Why does the atheist really wish that God did not exist?
- ☞ What "god" does the atheist place before the true God?
- ☞ What will become of the atheist?

Prayer

Notes: Last week we considered the positive requirements of the 1st commandment. This week we will turn our attention to the prohibitions of the 1st commandment, or those things that are forbidden by the words, "You shall have no other gods before Me." We begin by noting that the 1st commandment forbids atheism, which is the denial that God exists. David candidly observes that the one who says in his heart, "There is no God," is a fool. To deny the existence of God is to ignore, distort, and deny the clear and undeniable testimony of both the outward world and the inward thoughts of men. To deny God's existence is to remove any rational explanation for the existence of the universe and its complex systems and inhabitants. Further, to deny God's existence in favor of random natural processes is to remove any sense of purpose or meaning for man's life. The fact of the matter is that, however the atheist may insist that his denial of God is the result of intelligent consideration, he is really "suppressing the truth in unrighteousness" because to admit that God exists would be to acknowledge that he is responsible to his Creator for his actions. He breaks the 1st commandment by placing himself before the true God, but he can never

truly escape the nagging fear that in the end he will meet face-to-face with the One he has denied, nor can he ignore the evidence around him that God manifests Himself for the sake of those who trust in Him. The fact of the matter is that God does not believe in atheists.



TUESDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 40C

Scripture: Read Romans 1:18-32

Key Thought: *The 1st commandment forbids idolatry.*

Questions:

- ☞ What is idolatry?
- ☞ Why do people who deny the true God worship idols instead?
- ☞ Where can idol worship be seen in the world today?
- ☞ Can a person be guilty of idolatry without physically bowing to an idol?
What are some of the more common forms of idolatry?

Prayer

Notes: Another sin forbidden by the 1st commandment is idolatry, or the giving of worship and adoration to any other, which is due to God alone. It is interesting to observe that the practice of idol worship testifies to the fact that all men recognize that there are forces in the world bigger than themselves and that man is naturally inclined to worship something larger than himself. This inclination in the heart of man is distorted by his sin, however, and twisted into an excuse to create a god according to his own imagination. Thus Paul speaks of those who “exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator.” We tend to think of idols as statues of wood or stone, such as we find among Hindus, Buddhists, and even Roman Catholics. There are, however, more subtle forms of idolatry that continually test the loyalties of every one of us. Our common enemies—the world, the flesh, and the devil—are also our most common idols. When we seek the things of the world more than the things of God, when we cherish our flesh more than our spirit, and when we heed the devil’s subtle temptations, we have made these things higher than God in our esteem and fallen into idolatry.



WEDNESDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 40C

Scripture: Read Daniel 5:1-31

Key Thought: *The 1st commandment forbids misdirected praise.*

Questions:

- ☞ Who should rightfully receive all praise and honor for every good thing?

- ☞ How do men sometimes praise “chance” instead of God?
- ☞ How do men sometimes praise themselves? (see Deut. 8:17)
- ☞ What other ways can praise be misdirected?
- ☞ Is it dishonoring to God when we give the praise that He deserves to someone or something else?

Prayer

Notes: In elaborating upon the sins forbidden by the 1st commandment, the *Westminster Larger Catechism* includes, “ascribing the praise of any good we either are, have, or can do, to fortune, idols, ourselves, or any other creature.” We are reminded by this commandment that it is God alone who deserves all praise and honor—not only for who He is in Himself, but for who we are and what we have as well—since we are the work of His hands and our lives are dependent upon His providence and power. When our praise is deflected away from God and given to another—to “chance” or to self or to some other creature, whether man or angel—we have placed another god before the true and living God. Our hearts are prone to boast in our achievements, and are therefore easily given to this subtle way of dishonoring God by robbing Him of the honor and praise He alone deserves. “I am the LORD, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to carved images.” (Isa. 42:8)

THURSDAY

Praise: Sing Psalm 40C

Scripture: Read Isaiah 31:1-9

Key Thought: *The 1st commandment forbids misdirected trust.*

Questions:

- ☞ Why was God angry with Israel according to Isaiah 31?
- ☞ How had the people of Israel broken the 1st commandment?
- ☞ What are some of the things that people tend to trust instead of God?
- ☞ Where do you find yourself most likely to misdirect your trust?

Prayer

Notes: The 1st commandment, as we have seen, forbids outright atheism and idolatry, but also the more subtle ways in which the true God is robbed of the glory that He alone deserves. Another example of the depth of this commandment can be seen as we consider the fact that God alone is worthy of our trust. Another word for trust is “faith.” When our trust is placed in some other object—whether it be our own strength or wealth, a strong government, or even friends and family—instead of God, we have misdirected our faith and ascribed glory to someone or something other than God. We face many temptations to misplace our trust on a daily basis. When God sends or threatens judgments, it

is to direct His people to place their trust in Him. The *Larger Catechism* mentions “insensibleness under judgments” among the sins forbidden in the 1st commandment because failing to be humbled when God takes away our peace and security may reveal that we were not trusting in Him for these things in the first place.



FRIDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 40C

Scripture: Read 1 John 2:15-17; 2 Peter 3:10-14

Key Thought: *The 1st commandment forbids worldliness.*

Questions:

- ⌘ How would you define worldliness?
- ⌘ How is worldliness seen among unbelievers?
- ⌘ Can worldliness creep into the church? How?
- ⌘ How should the brevity of life keep us from love of the world?
- ⌘ How should knowing that this world is passing away keep us from idolizing it?
- ⌘ How should the example of Christ keep us from loving this world?

Prayer

Notes: Our last consideration is that the 1st commandment forbids worldliness, or placing this world and its concerns above God in our esteem. It is not difficult to see how those who deny the true God busy themselves in worldly pursuits, seeking to build their own personal kingdoms and heap up wealth and prestige for themselves. Yet worldliness is also rampant within the church, sometimes more and sometimes less over the course of history. Our own age is one of considerable worldliness among the professed people of God. Scripture provides several considerations to keep us from worldliness. Among these are: the brevity of this life compared with eternity; the final end of the world, which will be burned up and destroyed; and the example of Christ Himself, who surrendered all that the world could offer and suffered reproach for the sake of a heavenly reward. Not this sin-sick world, but its glorious Creator, is to be the object of our affection and desire. To understand this truth from the heart is to walk in the light of the 1st commandment.



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.