

The Ten Commandments

Commandment #2: Thou shalt not make any carved image..."

1. An important distinction
 - a. Some folks see the obvious overlap between this commandment and the first commandment and think that they are entirely repetitive
 - b. While it is true that mankind often commits idolatry by creating or "fashioning" false gods from physical materials, it is not the case that every image that is fashioned must depict a false god
 - c. This commandment prohibits forming ANY image that is meant to be utilized as an item of worship
2. A biblical application
 - a. Romans 1:25 teaches us that man is predisposed to exchanging the truth about God for a lie and that lie is often manifest in physical images
 - i. These "lies" are sometimes obvious
 1. For instance, many men have taken the truth about God in Creation and fashioned something that is grotesque and obviously inaccurate
 2. Other men have worshipped other entities that are obviously not divine in any respect
 - b. While these things are obviously sinful, there is a more subtle, and therefore sinister, temptation for those who desire to honor the God of the Bible
 - c. We must come to realize that man can sometimes take that which is holy and/or good and make it idolatrous
 - i. Over the course of history, the church has violated this commandment in many ways
 1. Churches have worshipped:
 - a. Relics
 - b. Images of Christ
 - c. Mary
 - d. Saints
 2. In many instances, these physical images and/or historic persons were not intrinsically evil but because of the evil of our hearts, what could be considered holy and righteous in actuality is twisted into an object of worship that takes away from the right adoration and worship of the One True God alone
 - d. Perhaps some of you are wondering why this is sinful... the answer is at least twofold
 - i. First, there is simply no way that we can make any image that would even closely replicate the glory of God
 - ii. Second, any tangible item that we create is an item that we control

1. If we are able to make our items of worship, it stands to reason that man will be tempted to dictate to the object of his creation!
3. A wonderful condescension
 - a. Some people might conclude that this makes worship more difficult
 - b. After all, God is not seen! Wouldn't it be difficult to worship a God we cannot behold?
 - c. While this does not justify disobedience, the good news is that God has come in the flesh
 - i. He has lived so that we can see and savor Him within this physical world!
 - d. The Word of God "took on flesh" (John 1) and, in Him, we can see and worship the glory of God
 - e. When we are tempted to exalt something that is meant to denote or depict God, we need to remember that God has exalted One who already accomplishes this feat
 - i. Furthermore, He has given us four Gospels full of stories about God that assist us in contemplating and adoring the greatness of our God
 - ii. Our identity and our hope is meant to be anchored in this God-man and His coming is enough for us to enjoy