

GOD'S GUIDE TO A GREAT LIFE  
Sermon Series on the Ten Commandments

## Sermon 2: How To Avoid Living Like an Unbeliever

Exodus 20:4-6

As we already know the Ten Commandments were given by God to His people Israel. All Ten Commandments were given by God as a manifestation of who God was. The commandments manifested the character of God. And the commandments were given for the obedience of the people of Israel to show by their behavior what kind of God they believed in and how distinct they were as a people from the nations surrounding them.

The First Commandment elevates God to a solitary place in the life and worship of the nation of Israel: There must be no other gods before Me, God commands. The Second Commandment distinguishes the nation of Israel by the manner of worship that God did not desire; for it was a manner of worship that the pagan, heathen or unbelieving nations all practiced. Because the heathen nations practiced idolatry, God wanted His people to avoid it. Hence our title today.

What does the study of the Second Commandment yield for us GCFers today? We Christians can fall into idolatry without realizing it; therefore, we must fully understand it and commit to stamping it out and replacing it with lives of proper worship.

### I. GOD PROHIBITS THE PRACTICE OF IDOLATRY V.4-5A

<sup>4</sup>You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. <sup>5</sup>You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God. . . .”

- A. Commandment #2 was not a strict command against the creation of images from nature per se.
- B. Commandment #2 is about God commanding that no images be created for the purpose of bowing down to them and serving them.

**A god is what a person worships and serves. An idol is the representation of that god. And the act of worshiping and serving that god or idol is idolatry.**

C. God is rightly a jealous God because of the exclusiveness of His relationship with His people and because of His being the Creator of everything.

Implication: Anything can become an object of worship and to worship that creation is tantamount to idolatry.

## **II. GOD PUNISHES THOSE WHO PRACTICE IDOLATRY V.5B**

“...for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me...”

A. God's first and foremost reaction to idolatry is righteous anger because idolatry challenges His person and his love for His people.

B. God punishes the idolatry of fathers on the children who practice the same.

Implication: The tendency to repeat the mistakes of history is especially strong in an idolatrous culture.

## **II. GOD PROMISES TO SHOW STEADFAST LOVE TO THOSE WHO LOVE HIM: V.6**

“<sup>6</sup> but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love Me and keep My commandments.”

A. The steadfast love of the LORD is an expression of His nature.

B. Those that are commanded by God to love Him and keep His commandments are those that have an existing covenant relationship with God.

Implication: To love God and obey His commands frees us from all forms of idolatry.

May our study of the Second Commandment make us vigilant and desire to reassess our lives to determine what have become or are becoming idols in our lives. Then we should break down all these idols.