



“I shall always be ready to remind you of these things...”
2 Peter 1:21

You Shall Have No Other Gods Before Me

By Alex Hale

As we read the Ten Commandments (Ex 20), we see that God is forming a covenant relationship with His people. It is much like the relationship between a husband and wife. Marriage vows often include the phrase “forsaking all others,” because such vows are a pledge to a lifetime of faithfulness – a lifetime of *exclusiveness*. God calls His people to have an exclusive relationship with Him. Later in the text, God calls Himself a “*jealous*” God. This is because He refuses to share us with anyone or anything else. We were created to have an intimate walk with God and God alone. Life will not work unless we get this first commandment right. It is like buttoning a shirt: if you get the top button off, the rest of the buttons will be off as well.

It was important for the Hebrew people to get this right because this principle conflicted with different views of deity held by the world of their day.

- One popular view was *polytheism*, the belief in many gods. The Egyptians, for instance, believed in a god of the sun, moon, sea, etc. In their worldview, these gods and goddesses competed for the gifts and worship of people.
- Another view was *henotheism*, the view that one group would accept one god and worship no other, but that other nations had other gods. In other words, a god was “god” only in one territory, but if you went to another area, that was another “god’s” turf. Even as Christians, we can be henotheistic. We say that we worship God and claim that He is Lord of all. However, if we are honest, we have to admit that there may be “territories” of our life over which we do not give Him control.

God is leading His people past these false views to *monotheism*, the realization that there is not simply one god for each nation, but that there is only one God for all the earth (Psa 139).

This command may be the toughest to keep. More than likely, we will not be asked to give our lives because of our commitment to following this command. However, we still struggle to obey this command. It is so easy to put other things first. Ron Mehl has written, “Our number one task as believers is to make sure that nothing – no ‘god,’ person, object, task, duty, or pleasure – comes before God in our priorities, in our plans, and in our affection.” This struggle is nothing new. Christians have always had difficulty in this area (Rev 2:4). However, we must put Him first in all our ways (Prov 3:5-6).

This command demands trust. If we believe that God is in control, it will be easier to follow Him (Psa 56:3). God asks us to make Him first in our lives *because we are first in His!* Obeying this commandment gives us a lot less to worry about in life (Matt 6:25-34). One has said that worry is a “red light” which shows us that we are not putting God first. If we find ourselves worrying, we should recognize that we have taken a piece of our lives back from God’s control. We must take those things to Him (1 Pet 5:7).

It is foolish not to obey this command. Psalm 14:1 reads, “*The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’*” As New Testament Christians, we have a Redeemer who shed His blood to wash away our sins. God saw our hopeless situation (Rom 6:23) and provided a way for us to be rescued. Why should I ever want to put anyone or anything in front of Him? Why would anyone want to tolerate other false gods in his or her life? Why serve lesser things? Why not put God first? Would you do that even today?



CABOT WESTSIDE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1017 S. 2nd St. (Old Hwy. 367)
Cabot, AR 72023
cabotwestsidechurchofchrist.com
facebook.com/cabotwestside

When We Meet

Sunday

Bible Classes – 9:00 am
Worship – 10:00 am, 5:00 pm

Wednesday

Bible Classes – 7:00 pm

Our Elders

R.D. Hopper
Norman Kemper

Our Deacons

Troy Hunter
Kelly Kendall
Tony Ramick

Our Preacher

Alex Hale