

JULY 28th
WORSHIPING THE RIGHT GOD, IN THE RIGHT WAY

“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. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.” **EXODUS 20:4-6**

Ever thought about God being jealous? What comes into your mind when someone says that God is a jealous God? These claims are not made up out of thin air. Instead, God describes Himself as jealous fourteen times in the Bible. People often wonder about God being jealous. Rob Schenck defines it well when he writes, “Godly jealousy is not the insecure, insane, and possessive human jealousy that we often interpret this word to mean. Rather, it is an intensely caring devotion to the objects of His love, like a mother’s jealous protection of her children, a father’s jealous guarding of his home.” We run straight into trouble when we project our idea of jealousy onto our holy God. God is clear that He will not be compared with anything else “in heaven above, or the earth beneath, or the water under the earth.” What does this mean for the Israelites, and what does it mean for us today?

There are a few key examples of God not compromising His glory. The first comes from an obscure place that is often skipped over: Leviticus 10. The sons of Aaron come to offer God a sacrifice. Except there’s one problem...it isn’t authorized by God. It is a strange fire. While experts have different opinions of what that fire was about, we don’t have to wonder about what God says about it...because He tells us. “This is what the Lord has said: ‘Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified.’” God won’t compromise His glory. God’s glory must be honored above all things. A second situation makes us even more uncomfortable...the command to annihilate the Canaanites, women and children included. Why would a loving God command an entire destruction of a people group? Kent Hughes answers this question by stating, “God’s glory is greater than human life.” The statement sounds so cold and unnerving, but when you think about it, is he wrong? God has given this second command because He will not share His identity with anyone or anything because God is above everything. He has always been separate from His creation as the Creator.

Men, what does this mean for us today? After we understand that the reason for the second commandment is the jealousy of God, how can we ensure that we follow it well? It’s not as if any of you are going out in the yard and making a sculpture and then bowing before that sculpture. So, it seems pretty cut and dry that we don’t struggle with it. Or do we? Maybe our issue isn’t creating something physically...perhaps it’s creating something in our minds about who our God is. Think about that for a moment. Why do so many believers struggle with disappointment with God? It’s because we expect God to do exactly what we want, because we’ve put in the work. God becomes our cosmic vending machine that spits out for us whatever we want. Most of us have been there. It’s time for us to bow before our King and worship Him as He has revealed Himself in His Word. We must throw off our worldly expectations of God and approach the throne humbly as we come to Him. How will you approach your God today?

Spend some time thinking about ways that you have pictured God. Can you line each one of those up with Scripture? Ask the Lord to help you worship Him for who He is, according to His Word.

For Further Reading: Deuteronomy 4:15-24