

WRITTEN WRITTEN IN STONE IN STONE

Eliminate the Competition | Written in Stone

Exodus 20:1-2, 4-6

What is the SECOND commandment and why does it matter?

God has set us free so we can live free. If we have prioritized God in our life, we will be able to filter everything after that to determine whether or not it serves us to serve Him. Next up? Our worship! The problem here is that we are inundated by cultural influences. God's desire for relationship cannot co-exist with compromise. Our hearts must be pure. But our hearts have competing desires. Don't they? While we may not bow our knees to wooden or stone idols, we still need to eliminate the desires of our hearts that do not point our "image" to our Creator God. If we do, generations will thank us.

Text Prep: God had set the Israelite FREE...so they could live free. And enjoy the peace, prosperity and blessing of living in a covenant relationship with Him. Again, the 10 Commandments don't save us...but they do reveal our deep need for Jesus...who perfectly fulfills his summary of all the laws to love God and to love people.

Exodus 20:1-2, 4-6: *Then God gave the people all these instructions:*

2 *"I am the Lord your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery.*

4 *"You must not make for yourself an **idol of any kind** or an **image of anything** in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. 5 You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a **jealous God** who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods.*

I lay the sins of the parents upon their children; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations of those who reject me. 6 But I lavish unending love for a thousand generations on those who love me and obey my commands.

We must not make idols. → Idols?! = An idol is something we turn to when invisible God doesn't "show up" as expected.

- Idol / Graven image = Egypt to Canaan
 - **Golden Calf:** Why? Aaron created a softer more approachable version of the Israelites famously created a golden calf and worshiped it while Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments (Exodus 32).
 - **Apis Bull/Ptah:** a worshipped bull representing the god of creation/craftsmanship.
 - **Baal:** Baal was a widely worshipped god of fertility and rain. He was represented by a bull.
 - **Asherah:** was Baal's "wife." Asherah worship included rituals related to fertility and prosperity, and it was common for sacred poles or trees ("Asherah poles") to be erected as symbols of her worship.
 - **Molech:** Molech was associated with fire and child sacrifice. Worshipers believed that offering their children as burnt sacrifices to Molech would ensure blessings and protection.
 - **Cultures created idols in hopes that the god would fill that statue with their power and presence.**
 - **God doesn't need us to make Him an image.** → Why? → We are His image (Gen. 1:26-27). → Live like Jesus: Col. 1:15-20 / Gen. 1:26-27 → Gen. 2:7 / Acts 1:8
 - **VISION:** Come to the Table...and grow in your relationship with Jesus. → Prayer: Lord, lead us to YOUR way.
- We must not make idols because God already has images! But we want to do things OUR way.

We make idols when we allow our image to be directed at anything other than God. → Infinite! → Calvin Quote

- Israel's context for idol creation: impatience, Egypt's influence, lack of faith, crowd pressure, fun!
- **Our hearts have competing desires:** A desire is not wrong. But has that desire been submitted to Christ?!
- Cultural Idols: Wealth, sex, beauty & power. = **ME!** → **We struggle to submit our desires to God, don't we?!**
 - In my teens & 20's i had desires...and sometimes they became idols.
 - Adventure: I naturally seek new, novel, adventure. If a desire is AN END... → Panama
 - Marriage: I saw an amazing marriage in my parents. I wanted that. → Jane Eyre quote
 - NOW: I have other desires...
 - Comfort: The furniture in my house...is all COMFORTABLE.
 - Control: I get impatient bc i expect something should go a certain way in a certain timeline.
- **Eliminate the competition!** → We point our desires at Jesus! → Cut off your hand?! - Mt. 5:30
 - ELIMINATE competing desires by saying NO...sometimes. → AA

- ELIMINATE competing desires by directing that desire to Jesus...ALWAYS.
 - VISION: A church family has people with different backgrounds...that is why we are careful with our freedoms.
- We stop making idols by eliminating competing desires...by saying no or POINTING that desire to Jesus.

Every person in the room today can impact their family line for a thousand generations!→We become like Jesus...

- Sin impacts 4 generations? = RELATIONSHIP!→4 generations = great grandparents!→Harold vs. Sigfred.
 - Love for God and I? = RELATIONSHIP!→The legacy of a thousand generations... FOREVER LEGACY.
 - VISION: Why does the church exist...to change the DESTINIES of families.→Prayer: Lord, LEAD US!
- When we eliminate the competition and point our desires to Christ...becoming like Him.

→We eliminate the competition so a thousand generations can experience God's lavish love!

TALK ABOUT IT - Questions to GROW through with family, friends, & myself.

1. How have your ancestors impacted your faith? How will your relationship with God impact coming generations?
2. Are there any specific cultural idols or influences that you find particularly challenging to resist? How can you point the underlying desires to Jesus?
3. Think about the desires you've had throughout different stages of your life. Have any of these desires become idols at certain times? How did you navigate the competing desires in your different life stages?
4. Reflect on the importance of relationships and community within the church family. How can the church play a role in helping individuals eliminate competing desires and grow in their relationship with Jesus?
5. **PRAYER:** "Father, we desire every desire point back to YOU. Help us eliminate the competition!"

TEACHING NUGGETS:

Why commandments? What is the purpose of the Law?

1. **Revealing God's Holiness:** Exodus 20:7-8 (NLT) - "You must not misuse the name of the Lord your God. The Lord will not let you go unpunished if you misuse his name. Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy."
2. **Establishing God's Covenant:** Exodus 34:28 (NLT) - "Moses remained there on the mountain with the Lord forty days and forty nights. In all that time, he ate no bread and drank no water. And the Lord wrote the terms of the covenant—the Ten Commandments—on the stone tablets."
3. **Guiding Moral and Ethical Behavior:** Exodus 20:12 (NLT) - "Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the Lord your God is giving you."
4. **Maintaining Social Order:** Exodus 21:23-25 (NLT) - "But if there is further injury, the punishment must match the injury: a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot."
5. **Revealing God's Will:** Psalm 119:105 (NLT) - "Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path."
6. **Teaching Love and Compassion:** Leviticus 19:18 (NLT) - "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against a fellow Israelite, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord."
7. **Revealing Humanity's Sinfulness:** Romans 3:20 (NLT) - "For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are."
8. **Pointing to Christ:** Galatians 3:24 (NLT) - "Let me put it another way. The law was our guardian until Christ came; it protected us until we could be made right with God through faith."

VIDEOS:



QUOTES / SONGS:

- "Approximately **43% of the Bible is made up of narrative**, from historical narrative to parables. Roughly **33% of the Bible is poetry**, including songs, reflective poetry, and the passionate, politically resistant poetry of the prophets. The remaining **24% of the Bible is prose discourse**, including laws, sermons, letters, and even one essay." - [The Bible Project](#)
- *The process of spiritual formation in Christ is one of progressively replacing . . . destructive images and ideas with the images and ideas that filled the mind of Jesus himself.* - [Dallas Willard](#)
- *To get overprotective about particular readings of the Bible is always in danger of idolatry.* - [N. T. Wright](#)
- *Man's nature, so to speak, is a perpetual factory of idols.* - [John Calvin](#)
- *The heart clings to collected treasure. Stored-up possessions get between me and God. Where my treasure is, there is my trust, my security, my comfort, my God. Treasure means idolatry.* - [Dietrich Bonhoeffer](#)
- *"My future husband was becoming to me my whole world; and more than the world: almost my hope of heaven. He stood between me and every thought of religion, as an eclipse intervenes between man and the broad sun. I could not, in those days, see God for His creature: of whom I had made an idol."* - [Charlotte Brontë](#), *Jane Eyre*, 1847.

ARTICLES / BOOKS:

- ["Ten Words to Live By: Delighting in and Doing What God Commands"](#): but Jen Wilkin

SCRIPTURES: New Living Translation unless otherwise noted.

- [Psalm 1:1](#) - *Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers.*
- [Psalm 1:2](#) - *But they delight in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night.*
- [Psalm 1:3](#) - *3 They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do.*
- [Galatians 5:1](#) - *So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law.*

- **John 10:10** - The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.
- **John 14:15** - "If you love me, obey my commandments.
- **Mark 12:29-31** - 29 Jesus replied, "The most important commandment is this: 'Listen, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only Lord. 30 And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' 31 The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these."
- **Matthew 5:17** - "Don't misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose.
- **Matthew 5:30** - 30 And if your hand—even your stronger hand—causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.
- **Genesis 1:26** - Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground."
- **Genesis 1:27** - So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.
- **Genesis 2:7** Then the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living person.
- **Colossians 1:15-20** - 15 Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, 16 for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see - such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him. 17 He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together. 18 Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything. 19 For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, 20 and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross.
- **Joshua 24:15** - 15 But if you refuse to serve the Lord, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord."
- **Leviticus 18:21** - "Do not permit any of your children to be offered as a sacrifice to Molech, for you must not bring shame on the name of your God. I am the LORD."
- **Exodus 20:1-17** - Then God gave the people all these instructions:
 2 "I am the Lord your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery.
 3 "You must not have any other god but me.
 4 "You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea.
 5 You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations of those who reject me. 6 But I lavish unfailing love for a thousand generations on those who love me and obey my commands.
 7 "You must not misuse the name of the Lord your God. The Lord will not let you go unpunished if you misuse his name.
 8 "Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 You have six days each week for your ordinary work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the Lord your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your livestock, and any foreigners living among you. 11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.
 12 "Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the Lord your God is giving you.
 13 "You must not murder.
 14 "You must not commit adultery.
 15 "You must not steal.
 16 "You must not testify falsely against your neighbor.
 17 "You must not covet your neighbor's house. You must not covet your neighbor's wife, male or female servant, ox or donkey, or anything else that belongs to your neighbor."

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