

“The Ten Commandments (Part 3 – No Idols)”

The Second of The Ten Commandments is found in Exodus 20:4-6, where the Lord says: “***You shall not make for yourself a carved image***—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; ⁵you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, ⁶but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.” The First Commandment deals with *Whom* we worship, the Second with *how* we worship. The idea is that we are not to make for ourselves an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea which we portray as representing God. This Command does not forbid religious works of art, as long as the symbol does not become a substitute for the real thing.

Don’t deceive yourself into thinking that this Command is easy to keep in modern times, since we don’t really have statues/idols on a corner altar. The truth is, today our idols are more inside ourselves than on our shelves. We must not worship anything that is man-made. We must not worship anything God has made (i.e. sun, stars, “mother earth,” etc.); we must worship only Him. At its core, the Second Commandment is ***a prohibition against creating something with your hands or your heart that either reduces or replaces God***. Aaron’s attempt to capture the “uncapturable God” by fashioning a golden calf failed terribly because it *reduced* the majesty of God. Jeroboam (son of Nebat) *replaced* God’s system of worship with one he had come up with on his own. Both broke this Second Commandment. Don’t break the Second Commandment by: concealing any of the truth about God’s nature and character, trying to create God in your own image, or by attempting to control God.

The fact that God is “*a jealous God*” means that He has a burning, passionate love for His people, and does not want to see us bail on Him or fall into disbelief. He is fully committed to us, and He expects us to be fully committed to Him. Don’t commit spiritual adultery by being unfaithful to the Lord. Idolatry is the most punished sin in the entire Bible. Don’t open yourself up to punishment by breaking this Command, and don’t expose your descendants to punishment by passing along unholiness rather than Godliness. When we keep this Second Command, we confer the promise of blessings for thousands of generations upon our lineage! This is the kind of new spiritual, family tree we should want to establish, one with a Godly spiritual heritage.

Discussion Guide/Action Steps

1. Have you created anything with your hands or heart that *reduces* the majesty of God?
2. Have you created anything with your hands or heart that attempts to *replace* God?
3. Always remember that *only Jesus can satisfy your soul*.
4. Eradicate all idols from your life.