

YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME

“WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE FIRST COMMANDMENT”

EXODUS 20:1-3

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Scripture:

Exodus 20: 1-3

20 ¹And God spoke all these words: ²“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

³“You shall have no other gods before me.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE FIRST COMMANDMENT, "YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME"?

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT REMINDS US THAT EVERYTHING IN THE TORAH FLOWS FROM THE LOVE WE HAVE FOR GOD, WHICH IN TURN IS A RESPONSE TO THE LOVE HE HAS FOR US. THIS LOVE WAS DEMONSTRATED BY GOD'S DELIVERANCE OF ISRAEL "OUT OF THE HOUSE OF SLAVERY" IN EGYPT

I WANTED TO GET AN HONEST PROSPECTIVE ON THIS SUBJECT SO I ASKED A FEW YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT THEIR THOUGHTS ON THIS AND YOU WOULD BE SURPRISED AT THE RESPONSES.

"IT MEANS TO ONLY HAVE ONE GOD, WHICH IS GOD. WHEN WE FIND SOMETHING, WE DON'T GO GAGA OVER IT. WE STILL PRAY TO GOD AND NOT TO THE NEW THING," AN ELEVEN YEAR OLD GIRL SAID.

FOR A FULLER UNDERSTANDING OF "GAGA," LET'S GO TO AN 11 YEAR OLD BOY WHO SAID: "WHEN THE COMMANDMENT SAYS TO HAVE NO OTHER GODS 'BEFORE ME,' IT MEANS NOT TO LOVE SOMETHING MORE THAN GOD."

AN EIGHT YEAR OLD, GETS SPECIFIC: "YOU SHOULD NOT WORSHIP GOD INSTEAD OF YOUR BIKE, YOUR NINTENDO, YOUR COMPUTER OR YOUR PHONE. YOU SHOULD READ THE BIBLE MORE."

THE AVERAGE PERSON TODAY SOENDS MORE THAN SIX HOURS OF A DAY ON THEIR PHONE. INTERESTING ISN'T IT? DO YOU MEAN I SHOULDN'T VEG OUT IN FRONT OF THE PHONE FOR MORE THAN 42 HOURS A WEEK? AFTER ALL, WE DON'T ACTUALLY WORSHIP TV? WE DO SPEND AT LEAST TWO HOURS A WEEK IN CHURCH ON SUNDAY. DOES GOD WANT MORE?

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT IS STARTING TO GET TOO PERSONAL. WHEN A NINE YEAR OLD, ILLUSTRATES: "IT MEANS LIKE NOT TO SAY, 'I AM, SORRY, JESUS. MY FRIENDS ARE COMING OVER IN ABOUT 10 MINUTES YOU GOTTA GO NOW!'"

EVEN IN A FAST-PACED WORLD, WE ALWAYS SEEM TO MAKE TIME FOR IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIPS. FOR EXAMPLE, PEOPLE WHO HAVE GOOD MARRIAGES ORDER THEIR LIVES SO THAT THEY SPEND TIME WITH EACH OTHER. TO PUT IT SIMPLY, GOD WANTS TO BE OUR FIRST LOVE.

"GOD IS KIND OF JEALOUS AND ALSO THE ONE AND ONLY TRUE GOD," SAYS AMBER, 12. WHEN GOD IS JEALOUS, IT'S A GOOD KIND OF JEALOUSY. WE USUALLY THINK OF JEALOUSY AS BEING SMALL AND PETTY.

GOD'S JEALOUSY IS BIG AND BENEVOLENT. HE WANTS OUR WHOLE HEART BECAUSE ONLY HIS LOVE CAN BRING US INTO A DEEPER, LARGER PLACE WHERE HE IS OUR ALL IN ALL.

"IT MEANS DON'T WORSHIP MONEY AND THE THINGS THAT CAN TAKE OVER YOUR LIFE," SAYS ANOTHER NINE YEAR OLD. IT'S THE LOVE OF MONEY THAT IS THE ROOT OF MANY KINDS OF EVIL, THE APOSTLE PAUL WROTE.

THERE'S NOTHING INHERENTLY EVIL ABOUT MONEY, BUT LOVING IT WILL LEAD YOU INTO MANY FORMS OF EVIL. WHEN THE LOVE OF IT TAKES OVER, EVERYTHING IS SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF MONEY.

TONY CARNES HAS WRITTEN A BOOK ON IDOLATRY. HE'S AN ACCOMPLISHED AUTHOR AND SCHOLAR. HE SAYS "AN IDOL IS ANYTHING OR ANYONE OTHER THAN GOD THAT WE ALLOW TO DRIVE OUR LIVES. TAKE THAT POPULAR IDOLATRY, MONEY OR WEALTH."

"GOD CHERISHES EVERY HUMAN BEING, BUT WHEN YOU PUT MAKING MONEY BEFORE GOD, YOU REDEVISE YOUR WORLD SO THAT SOME PEOPLE GET PUSHED ASIDE. YOU GRAVITATE TOWARD FRIENDSHIPS WITH PEOPLE WHO HAVE MONEY AND AVOID 'THE LOSERS' — THE WORKING CLASS, THE POOR AND THE UNEMPLOYED."

"KIDS KNOW QUICKLY WHEN AN IDOL IS CONTROLLING YOU. PARENTS AND RELATIVES ARE THE SUNSHINE OF THEIR LIVES. WHEN YOUR IDOL DIRECTS YOUR LIFE'S LIGHT AWAY FROM THEM, THEY IMMEDIATELY NOTICE AND START TO WILT." AND I BELIEVE THAT IS WHY WE HAVE SO MANY YOUNG PEOPLE WHO TURN TO GANGS, DRUGS, AND LIFE IN THE STREETS. CHURCH IS NO LONGER THE SUNSHINE IN THEIR LIVES.

IDOLS, ANCIENT OR MODERN, ALWAYS RESULT IN FRUSTRATION, DISSOLUTION AND ULTIMATELY DESPAIR. PEOPLE AND THINGS CAN NEVER FILL THE LONGING GOD PUT IN OUR HEART FOR AN INTIMATE LOVE RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM AND TRUE COMMUNITY WITH HIS PEOPLE AS THEY GATHER UNDER HIS HEADSHIP.

THINK ABOUT THIS: IF GOD ISN'T OUR FIRST LOVE, LIFE WILL BECOME AN ENDLESS SCRAMBLE TO FILL THE EMPTINESS WE SENSE. MEMORIZE THIS TRUTH: "YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME" (DEUTERONOMY 5:7).

ASK THIS QUESTION: IS THERE ANYTHING OR ANYONE IN YOUR LIFE WHOM YOU LOVE MORE THAN GOD? IS IT YOUR JOB? IS IT YOUR CHILDREN? IS IT YOUR HOUSE, SPOUSE OR BLOUSE? GOD DESERVES TO BE FIRST IN OUR LIVES IN EVERYTHING WE DO! EVEN A CHILD KNOWS THAT...

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