

Discovering what a "god" is and what God has to say about them

**Exodus 20:3**

I wanted to start off this study here, looking at what God has been saying since the beginning. The use of the word "before" in this context actually means "in the presence of" (think of the phrase "standing before the throne"). God is not saying, "oh yeah, other gods are fine as long as I'm the top one!" He says instead to get all of these other gods out of his presence! Some of the Ten Commandments were long and explained over many verses, but this one he put very simply, because to God this issue is very black and white. 'No other gods' means exactly what it sounds like.

**Matthew 11:28**

What a comforting scripture! We love to look to this scripture for comfort during tough times, and certainly Jesus is inviting the weary and burdened to come to him for rest. Unfortunately, Jesus is not the only source saying "come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." As comforting as this scripture could be, if I really followed it, it is much easier to go to those other sources that are right in my face screaming "hey, come to me!" What things are fighting for your attention right now?

The world is full of wannabe idols, and Satan would love for us to stop when we feel comforted, mistaking those gods for the one true God. What are you bowing down to? A huge thing for me right now is just the god of entertainment. I know we all have increased screen time right now, and that's not an awful thing, but it can quickly become one when we let it take our eyes off of who matters. The act of bowing is a very sacred sign of respect, much more reverent than the modern-day high five or handshake. Truly, what are you compromising in and bowing down to in the sight and presence of God?

The God of Self – **Psalm 10:4**

There are many different gods that we bow down to, but I want to take a moment to focus on a common one, and one that can admittedly be a really tough one to overcome for me, and that is the god of self. This scripture (and many other scriptures about "the proud" and "the wicked" mostly in Psalms and Proverbs) terrifies me. While this psalm in particular has no mention of the punishment, it clearly describes the crime of thinking about yourself all day. How easy is it to do that? Our society encourages the "treat-yo-self" mentality, which surely has its purposes, but this is no way to live. Now more than ever we live in a world of self, especially since many of us are by ourselves for much of the day. If someone were to write down every thought you had today, would they find God in them? Fast forward a few hours from now, is he still in your thoughts? Let's be a community of God-loving brothers and sisters, not just people who acknowledge that he exists.

I hope we can all grow in our love for God and desire to stand righteously in his presence. To my current knowledge, this is the last devo for you all, so I want to challenge you to pick something new to focus on, maybe something you learned over these past few weeks, and take it upon yourself to grow and learn in this area! I hereby pass the torch to you to study out and "write" the next one (whether you decide to send it out or not). Much love for you all,