

THE FIRST AND SECOND COMMANDMENTS

LESSON 7

The next six lessons will deal with the ten commandments. One or two commandments will be discussed in each lesson. The ten commandments were given to Moses on Mt. Sinai. The first three commandments deal with our relationship with God and the remaining seven deal with our relationship with our fellow man.

The First Commandment

The first commandment is YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME.

Look up Matthew 22:36-38. What is the most important commandment (and therefore the most important thing in our life)?

love the Lord with all your heart and soul and mind

Look on page 56 of *Luther's Small Catechism*. What does the first commandment forbid?

worshipping other gods

Read Matthew 4:10. We are to worship and serve only whom? God

Define a "false god." anything that is loved & worshipped more than the one true Go

Why are false gods false? They cannot save us from our sin. or give us eternal life

Name some false gods you see people worshipping.

1. _____ 2. _____

3. _____ 4. _____

False gods get in the way of people realizing the wonderful love of God. Putting God first in one's life leads to a maturity of faith that cannot otherwise exist.

The Bible contains a story of what happened to a man who worshipped wealth and pleasure. Read this story in Luke 12:16-21.

How is the man described? rich

What is the problem he has (verse 17)? no place to put all his crops

What is the solution? build bigger barns

What is his philosophy of life? eat, drink, and be merry (MTV)

Is God pleased with this lifestyle? no

Is this lifestyle selfish? yes

What were the man's false gods? 1. wealth 2. pleasure

It is important to do some self-examining on this issue. So often money or good grade or popularity or sports get in the way of our relationship with the Lord. When all of our time and attention are given to things other than the Lord, that is an indication that perhaps we have some false gods that we need to topple from their positions in our lives. In the space below, write down an area of your life that takes your attention away from the Lord.

answers will vary

When studying the first commandment, we should also look at what the commandment requires of us. There are three things God requires in the keeping of this commandment.

Read Psalm 33:8. What is all the earth to do? fear the Lord

Now read Matthew 22:37. What are we to do? love the Lord

Finally, read Proverbs 3:5. What are we to do? trust in the Lord

Open *Luther's Small Catechism* to page 58 and find the summary of the three things God requires.

God wants us to fear, love, and trust Him.

Now look at page 59 in *Luther's Small Catechism*. Read section 23.

Can we keep the first commandment or any commandment perfectly? no

Who makes us right before God? Jesus

Should we try to keep the commandments? yes

The Second Commandment

The second commandment is: YOU SHALL NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD

YOUR GOD IN VAIN.

What does "vain" mean? useless, worthless

Read the following explanation given by Luther for the first commandment.

"We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things."

According to this explanation of the first commandment, how are we to treat God?

with fear, love, trust, honor, respect

When we take the Lord's name in vain, we dishonor God. To dishonor our parents or others in authority is wrong. To dishonor God is very serious indeed.

Why do you think people take the Lord's name in vain?

1. not thinking - ignorant - to show power

2. do not believe in God

3. do not think God cares or will notice

Look up the explanation to the second commandment on page 60 in *Luther's Small Catechism*. What are the four ways we are not to use God's name?

1. curse

2. swear

3. witchcraft

4. lie and deceive

Read James 3:9,10 and Romans 12:14. What should we not do? curse

Read Leviticus 19:12. What are we not to do? swear falsely by God's name

If you ever say, "I swear to God that I'm telling the truth," and then proceed to lie, you have broken the second commandment.

Sometimes we are called upon to swear before God that what we say is true.

Read Romans 13:1. To whom must we submit? government

This has application in the court system in this country. The reason for requiring

witnesses to swear to tell the truth is in Hebrews 6:16. Read this passage.

What does the oath do? confirms what is said and puts an end to argument

Failure to tell the truth after swearing to do so is legally called “perjury.” In addition to being guilty of a crime against society, if a person did this, he would also be guilty of breaking the second commandment. He would have lied in the name of God.

Another way God’s name can be wrongfully used is to work magic as in witchcraft. Those who would do this try to use the name of God to harm people. Clearly this is not what God desires.

Read Leviticus 19:31. Whom are we to trust? the Lord

Read Deuteronomy 18:10-12. People who do these things are described in what way?

detestable to the Lord

The last way of taking the Lord’s name in vain is to attribute false teachings to God or to claim to be a Christian when one has an unbelieving heart. This is lying and deceiving.

Read Matthew 7:21 and Matthew 15:8. What do these warn against?

lip service only without a believing heart

Now read Jeremiah 23:31 and Matthew 15:9. What is the problem?

people are representing their own words as having come from God

Think of religious groups who do this.

1. Jehovah’s Witness, Mormons 2. Ba’hi, Unification Church, Unitarians

There is another aspect of this commandment that needs to be explored. Read Galatians 6:7.

What is meant by “mocked”? laughed at

What wrong usage of God’s name could result in God being mocked?

1. jokes which hold God up to ridicule

2. derogatory comments which hold God up to ridicule

What we must never forget is that we live our lives in the presence of God. We are not

just in His presence in church or in Sunday school or in confirmation class or when we pray. God Himself, through the Holy Spirit, actually lives inside of us. He knows what we say and think. We cannot “slip anything by Him.”

At this point we will look at the ways in which we **are** to use the name of God.

The explanation for the second commandment is as follows:

"We should fear and love God that we may not curse, swear, use witchcraft, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks."

Underline the four ways we are to use God's name.

Write these four ways below and match them with the appropriate Bible verse.

- | | | |
|----------|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| <u>D</u> | 1. <u>call on in time of trouble.</u> | A. Psalm 103:1 |
| <u>B</u> | 2. <u>prayer</u> | B. John 16:23 |
| <u>A</u> | 3. <u>praise</u> | C. Psalm 118:1 |
| <u>C</u> | 4. <u>thanksgiving</u> | D. Psalm 50:15 |

Prayer, praise, and thanksgiving are terms of worship. So when we do these, we bring honor to God. We show our respect and love.