

Loving God

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)?

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

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

Define a "false god." _____

Why are false gods false? _____

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? _____

What is the problem he has (verse 17)? _____

What is the solution? _____

What is his philosophy of life? _____

Is God pleased with this lifestyle? _____

Is this lifestyle selfish? _____

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

It is important to do some self-examining on this issue. So often money or good grades 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.

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? _____

Now read Matthew 22:37. What are we to do? _____

Finally, read Proverbs 3:5. What are we to do? _____

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

God wants us to _____, _____, and _____ Him.

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

Can we keep the first commandment or any commandment perfectly? _____

Who makes us right before God? _____

Should we try to keep the commandments? _____

The Second Commandment

The second commandment is: YOU SHALL NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD
YOUR GOD IN VAIN.

What does "vain" mean? _____

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?

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. _____

2. _____

3. _____

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. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____ and _____

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

Read Leviticus 19:12. What are we not to do? _____

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? _____

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? _____

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? _____

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

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?

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

Think of religious groups who do this.

1. _____ 2. _____

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

What is meant by “mocked”? _____

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

1. _____

2. _____

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 His 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.

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| _____ 1. _____ | A. Psalm 103:1 |
| _____ 2. _____ | B. John 16:23 |
| _____ 3. _____ | C. Psalm 118:1 |
| _____ 4. _____ | 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.

