

The TENDER Commandments
Love for God Must Be Spiritual

INTRODUCTION:

In relationships, there is consensus of expert counseling and common sense that one of the worst problems is when one person wants to believe the other party is a particular way, instead of listening to what the other party says or actually

EX: what if after a few months of marriage, a husband took his wife's photo and photo shopped out aspects he didn't like and added in traits he wanted to see? The day they got married she was perfect and she looked perfect, but since then he's seen her before she's put on the makeup and done the hair and she's just not the same. So he photo shops a picture, and then puts it on social media and says, "I love this woman" or shows this pic to friends as a representation of who she is. He takes how she actually is, then twists things to make her as he'd like her to be. How would she feel?

That brings us to the next topic in our series on the Ten Commandments.

If you're new or visiting I want you to know that our **Our mission, as a local community of believers, is to meet people where they are and help them become maturing and equipped followers of Jesus. The Ten Commandments may be new to you, and that's OK. I hope you'll have a better understanding of them as you come each week and hear the series.**

As we continue, my prayer is that in this series, we'll all understand that **The Ten Commandments ARE NOT ABOUT WHAT God WANTS FROM US, BUT WHAT HE WANTS FOR US.**

Remember that THE Ten Commandments ARE SOMEONE WE MEET BEFORE THEY ARE SOMETHING WE OBEY.

The context of the Ten Commandments is to be understood as a Covenant commitment ceremony,

Stipulations Relating To Loving

LOVE FOR God IS SINGULAR – EXCLUSIVE

Love for God is SPIRITUAL

The first commandment focused on worshipping God alone.

"Do I delight that I do not take the names of pagan gods on my lips, but fail to see the veritable collection of them in my heart—some bearing brand names?" Johnny LONG

Now added to that is the importance of worshipping the one true God correctly. If we are devoted to God alone, but are mistaken about who he is then we are in trouble.

Then God spoke all these words, saying, 2) " I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 3) You shall have no other gods before Me. " Ex 20:1-3

4 "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or 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. 5 You shall not bow

down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, 6 but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

EX: Old comedies where there is a mistaken identity between a man and a woman, or Cyrano de Bergerac – Roxanne falls in love with Cyrano, but his true identity isn't revealed. This causes problems.

EX: Tootsie, Yentl, Some Like It Hot all follow this theme

The 2nd commandment is actually saying you mustn't worship the true God and imagine Him to be what you prefer him to be, but you must worship Him as He reveals Himself to be. In a sense the first one is against idolatry, the second one is against doctrinal distortions, heresies, trying to make God into what we want Him to be.

LOVE FOR God MUST BE SPIRITUAL, not centered on some visible object made with human hands.

#1 It is absolutely forbidden, for you or for me, to make a visible representation of the Invisible God.

It is absolutely forbidden for us to create images on our own of what we want Him to be.

#2 God has made Himself visible, knowing that we need an image, but he has given us an image in Jesus. The reason we can't make our own images, is because God has given us the right image that will not destroy our lives. So, there are the two points.

#1 IT IS ABSOLUTELY FORBIDDEN FOR YOU OR FOR ME TO MAKE THE INVISIBLE GOD VISIBLE.

It is absolutely forbidden for us to create images on our own of what we want Him to be.

This command is post-modern man's worst nightmare – An objective truth; a fixed reality that can't be twisted and shaped according to our desire and orientation.

God IS NOT LIKE A PICTURE AT AN ART GALLERY where people walk up and say, "this is what it means to me" or "I think the artist meant"

Why not worship physical representations?

When you make an image of God you can never capture the whole reality of who He is.

Any physical picture that you use to represent God will always conceal more than it will reveal. It will reveal, perhaps, but it will always conceal more than it will reveal, and it will hijack your heart when you are trying to worship/

EX Aaron made the golden calf. And they worshipped God through the image of the golden calf...Now the golden calf can give you a picture of the strength of God, the power of God...but it can't show you the purity of God. The calf immediately can't give you a reference to the purity of God, a calf has nothing to do with purity...not only that it can't show you the personality of God. Any picture that you try to bow down to will conceal more than it reveals. If you are going to depict God is He going to be smiling or frowning...well it's got to be one or the other.

LOW< if God is smiling, that conceals the fact that He's got wrath against evil. But if you show a picture of Him with thunderbolts in his hands, that conceals his tenderness. No matter what you see....anything that you try to depict will conceal more than it reveals.

Thomas Vincent:

QUESTION 4: Why may we not make use of images for a help in our worship of God?

ANSWER: 1. Because God has absolutely forbidden it. 2. Because images are not a real help, but a hindrance of devotion tending to lessen God in our esteem, who, being the living God, and superlatively excellent, and infinitely removed above all his creatures, cannot, without great reflection of dishonor upon him, be represented by a dead image.

But that's not the main problem. God says here "You shall not imagine me". The word imagine and the word image are the same word. Physical only? No, physical images are based on mental images. And God says, "You must not imagine me to be whatever you want me to be, but you must let your imagination be regulated by the truth. You must not say, "I like to think of God" ...

Jl Packer, "The 2nd commandment means that any statement that begins 'I like to think of God as' should never be trusted."

Or, put it another way. How dare you treat God in a way that you would never want to be treated yourself.

What do you say in relationships? You say, "I'm a person, I'm not a canvas on which you can draw at will. I'm not a book for you to edit, I'm a person! You can't draw me, you can't shape me, I'm a person! You must be receptive to me!" BTW, this doesn't always work in relationships because human beings are often mistaken about who they are. But when it comes to god there is no mistake.

In the 2nd C God comes and says, I am God. I am not safe. I am not tame. I am not a god on a leash. In a box. In your pocket. And if you imagine me to be a god other than the one that I really am, you are on a collision course with reality. How dare you treat me in a way that you would not want to be treated yourself.

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Martin Luther, "People want to say, 'I like to think of God this way' 'I believe that what I am doing will glorify God' But God will not have you tell Him how he would be served, he tells you in His word how He must be served."

Now. That's the problem. What's the solution?

God told the people not to make any images, but He didn't say would there would NEVER be an image.

God has made Himself visible. One of the reasons we imagined him to be a certain way, is because of our God complex. But there is another reason why we want to create images...because we want to relate to Him personally.

And God knew that and He revealed Himself...Col1:15 – grk. **Jesus is the icon of the invisible God.** He is the representation. Col 3:10 – we have been remade, in the new man, in his "image" of Him who created us.

God doesn't just give commandments or an air tight argument; he sent an air tight Son. He is the visible image of the invisible God.

Hebrews 1:3 – the "character" of his nature

How is Jesus Christ the antidote to our problem of trying to manipulate God?

Jesus gives us such a vivid picture of who God is. This is what I suggest you do. Three things:

- 1. Find the places in your life where you are having the most havoc. Where are you struggling the most? Where are you having the most problems?**

2. You will find that underneath those problems there is always a distorted image of God. A false image of God.
3. Put Jesus in there.

Find the havoc, check out the distortion that is underneath it, and put Jesus in there.

2. examples:

1. Worry – that assumes that you are wiser than God. You are assuming at some level, I know better what should happen in my life more than God does...I am wiser than God, I am smarter than God.

You say, “Oh, I don’t believe that!” Yes you do or you wouldn’t be worried, think about it!

Under the havoc, under the fear and anxiety, is a false image of God or you wouldn’t be worried. What do you do? Go to Jesus in the garden. Look at Jesus, the only person who ever suffered completely unjustly, the only person who didn’t really deserve the thing that he got.

Look at Him saying, “Father, isn’t there another way we can do this? Can’t this cup pass from me?” Nevertheless, you are the Father, I trust you, give myself to you., your will be done.” That’s personal. Look underneath the havoc of your heart, and look at Jesus, trusting, giving himself to the wisdom and the goodness of the father

2. Temptations – there are some things that I am doing that I know are destructive to me and to others and I can’t seem to stop. Now, this is a big subject, and here I am going to deal with it in 90 seconds, but this is how this bears on your problem.

I heard of a man a long time ago, and here is what he told a counselor. His wife went to visit her mother on the weekends, and he had his mistress in on the weekends. And he says one of the things that he always had to do, I had to put down any picture of my wife face down, because they were always pictures of her beaming up toward me, and her face was filled with beaming love toward me. And he says you know the only way that I could do what I did was I had to remember all the places and the times that she said unfair things about me, I had to create an image in my mind of her being a shrew, of her being a very unfeeling and thoughtless person.

Those pictures regulated his imagination back to reality, that she loved him, she adored him, so every one of those pictures had to go face down.

In order to sin against someone, we must first get an image of that person deserving what we are about to do; we get an image of ourselves as being a victim or in some way superior and the other person in need of this as payback.

The gospel is a self-righting principle for our hearts (like a kayak) as it reminds us of our need, of our sin and how we’ve sinned against God and others; then it fills our hearts with the love of God. The heart content in Christ will not be attracted to the deeds of the flesh - **Galatians 5:19-21** which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, ²¹ envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Our hearts are like leaky radiators and the gospel is the STOP LEAK – pour it in and you can be filled. The deeds of the flesh mentioned in Galatians 5 indicate that we’re leaking. The answer isn’t to scold our hearts by saying, “stop that; I’m so stupid, I can’t believe it did that”. We need to fill our hearts with the worship of the TRUE God; be amazed by his grace.

An image or a statue can't save you and it can't die for you; it can't love you. We need a real God who loves and saves real sinners.

EX: When Linda and I were dating, and engaged I had her picture(S) in my room, on my desk, etc. but a picture can't compare with the real thing. A picture can't support, encourage and give me a hug. When it came time for marriage I didn't take vows with a picture.

God doesn't want us making statues, idols, or images because He is personal and he has come in the flesh; the invisible has become visible.

Christian – we are prone to live off old capital, a verse or sermon we heard years ago. We need a fresh direct contact with Jesus, over and over – THE TABLE. See Him by faith in His Word and feed on Him by faith through the sacraments.

Get to know him through the word, the sacraments and His people and one day in heaven, when you meet Him you'll say, "We've already met."

1 Pet 1:8 – though you have not seen Him, you love Him. And though you do not see him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory.

If you've been religious, or even in church, but you can't wait to get to heaven to meet Jesus, then it may mean you won't be getting to heaven. If you haven't met him here by faith, through the Word, the sacrament, and His people, then don't expect to be with him in Heaven.

If heaven is this first place where you'd first see Him and love Him, then you may not really know Him.

If you think you may want to know God, then don't side-step Jesus. It wasn't until I really looked into Jesus that God made any sense. He is the visible image of the invisible God.

Second COMMANDMENT AND ROOTS, BRANCHES, FRUIT

The 10c show us the Nature of God, so we can sink our ROOTS INTO HIM

God is a Spirit and we must connect with Him through the Holy Spirit by faith.

They show how we are to RELATE TO THE OTHER BRANCHES

We are a spiritual body being built together by xr

They show what the fruit of Loving God and Others looks like.

The fruit of the Spirit

ABC'S OF COMING TO FAITH

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