

The Ten Commandments (part 2)

Purpose: to help the listeners to understand what idolatry is and to encourage change through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The children of Israel have finally arrived at Mt. Sinai and God has begun to speak to them in dramatic fashion. The people can hear God speaking to Moses. Let's consider the first two of the Ten Commandments:

#1 – Idolatry

[Exo 20:3](#) "You shall have no other gods before Me.

What is idolatry?

- The worship of a physical object as a god.

Let's break it down a bit more:

- Worship – honour given to a superior creature
- Idol – an image or representation of a god used as an object of worship.
- (synonyms: icon, god, image, likeness, fetish, totem, statue, figurine, doll, carving, graven image, false god, effigy).
- Therefore, idolatry is any "divine" worship to anyone or anything other than God

Some forms of idolatry include:

- **Fetishism** - the worship of an inanimate object for its supposed magical powers or because it is considered to be inhabited by a spirit. This includes juju (plaything, objects), talisman (inscribed ring, stone), charms, amulets (good luck charms), totem (natural objects, polls), icons (representations, pictures, symbols, portraits, drawings), images, effigy (sculpture), dolls, statues and figurines.
- **Nature Worship** – the worship of God's creation (sun, moon, stars, planet, rivers, hills, trees, etc.). This includes Paganism, Wicca, Earth religion, etc.
- **Hero Worship** – raising a person to the level of deity. This includes ancestor worship, athletes, personalities, celebrities and even persons of moral character.

The truth is, anything that is placed higher than God is an idol!

[Mat 6:24](#) "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

[Mat 10:37](#) He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

Idolatry will darken your heart...

[Rom 1:21](#) because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Idolatry will mess-up your mind...

[Rom 1:28](#) And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;

[Rom 1:29](#) being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; *they are* whisperers,

[Rom 1:30](#) backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

[Rom 1:31](#) undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful;

This is why idolatry is first of the Ten Commandments

#2 - Graven Images

[Exo 20:4](#) *"You shall not make for yourself a carved image—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;*

[Exo 20:5](#) *you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me,*

[Exo 20:6](#) *but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.*

What is the difference between idolatry and graven images?

- A graven image is something that is made – we are forbidden to make anything in worship
- A graven image is often something *used* to worship the true God. This includes:
- Resemblance of something in heaven (angels, dead people, etc.)
- Resemblance of something on earth (animals, altars, etc.)
- Resemblance of something in the water (fish, etc.)

New Testament:

[1Co 10:14](#) Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

[Col 3:5](#) Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

[1Jn 5:21](#) Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

How do we overcome idolatry?

[Rom 6:16](#) Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living.

[Rom 6:17](#) Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin, but now you wholeheartedly obey this teaching we have given you.

[Rom 6:18](#) Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living.

[Rom 6:19](#) Because of the weakness of your human nature, I am using the illustration of slavery to help you understand all this. Previously, you let yourselves be slaves to

impurity and lawlessness, which led ever deeper into sin. Now you must give yourselves to be slaves to righteous living so that you will become holy.

[Rom 6:20](#) When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the obligation to do right.

[Rom 6:21](#) And what was the result? You are now ashamed of the things you used to do, things that end in eternal doom.

[Rom 6:22](#) But now you are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God. Now you do those things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life.

[Rom 6:23](#) For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

NLT

It is very easy to make an idol of anything. When Jesus dwells in us, He doesn't just forgive us of our sins, but He makes it possible to **overcome its power**, through the power of the Holy Spirit, who lives in us.

Here is what you can do right now:

- Ask God to make you aware of areas in your life that are idols
- Ask God to give you the desire to change
- Ask God to give you the power to change