

First Century Fellowship Ministry

A Biblical Church of God

The First Commandment

(Exodus 20:2-3; Deuteronomy 5:6-7)

I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of
the land of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.
You shall have no other gods before Me.

When a builder plans to erect a building or a structure the first thing he does is establish a sturdy and sufficient foundation to support all that follows. Our Creator God did the same thing. We know He is the Creator because He started off His book, the Bible, by stating, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Gen 1:1). God Created. He is the Creator. The Creator God, the God of Israel and the God of the Bible.

The First Commandment is this foundation. It is the most important and it lays the foundation for all that follow it. If we have other things or gods before our Creator God, nothing else we do matters.

Do we, in our present society, afford God the same respect and adoration we give entertainers, sports figures, other celebrities or mother earth? Do we worship our children, parents, spouses, money or possessions more than we do God? If we worship our Creator God correctly, as He instructs us, this will become our foundation for what we are becoming.

When asked by the lawyer which was the greatest commandment in the Law, Jesus said to him, "*You shall love the*

Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the great and foremost commandment."

(Matthew 22:37-38; Jesus referenced Deut 6:5). Here he gives us the meaning and the spiritual intent of the first four commandments. By keeping them as God instructs we show our love for Him. The first commandment tells us nothing, no other gods shall be before Him. That means the worship or adoration of anything or anyone else shall not be before Him, in place of Him or placed on the same level as Him. We must worship the Creator, not the created. We are to love, respect and honor God with all of our heart, soul and mind if we wish to have a living relationship with Him.

Lucifer, Satan was the first to break this commandment, (Ezekiel 28:14-19; Isaiah 14:12-14). He tried to set himself above the Creator God. Lucifer worshipped himself more than the true God. In Isaiah 44:6 the Lord spoke to Jacob stating, "...I am the first, and I am the last; and besides Me there is no God."

So what did Lucifer think he was doing? The same thing that brought Lucifer down is the very same ailment we have, pride, an exaggerated view and opinion of self. An unchecked ego. Lucifer did not think he was equal to God. He felt he was better and would exalt his throne above God's.

Is pride a bad thing? If we allow it to overcome or control our morality or system of values, yes it is. 1 John 2:15-17 states, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

What does this system of values consist of? Lust of the flesh, we pursue anything that satisfies us. Cars, boats, houses, money, food. This leads to idolatry. All more important to us than God.

Lust of the eyes, we are captivated by things that please our sight. Basically, covetousness. (Another commandment as we will see). This is idolatry.

Pride, the glory that comes from our individual possessions, our self and our accomplishments. Pride causes us to focus on and be devoted to ourselves. We become the object of our devotion, not God. This is the most common form of idolatry now. An elevated sense of self-worth to the exclusion of all else.

Where do our values and morals originate? Is it in accordance with the spiritual laws of the Creator God or have we substituted something, or someone else. "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:26).

"That base, or body of beliefs from which you operate, is your system of morality and ethics." Herbert Armstrong, 1983.

Who and what you are is defined by your system of morals and ethics. Where is your base? What is your foundation? Is it in God's law or governed by the world? Do not forget who the god of this world is. He is the author of the "other" system, Satan.

Think about it. He is the source of much of what we believed before we were called. Satan has done a good job at downplaying the commandments. Hey, they were nailed to the cross. You don't have to go to church on the seventh day, Sunday is the new day of worship. We celebrate Christmas and Easter now. We don't pay attention to those Jewish festivals. We cannot Judaize things. That's how real Christians worship the Lord!

If we let the ways of the world influence our values and our morality, if we are or become "of the world" the love of the Father is not in us.

The world, and its god Satan, have a tremendous pull on us to conform to the world. Satan is very good at his job. He will include parts of God's system to give legitimacy to his system. He will make it god like but not truly God like in an attempt to make it righteous. The most appealing part, it pulls at our pride. It tells us what we want to hear. He makes it so appealing and easy for us, we feel it must be the right thing. Satan made eating the forbidden fruit and the knowledge of good and evil appealing enough that Adam and Eve gave up Eden for it. As hard as we try we are constantly pressured by friends, family and peers to go along to get along. By remaining in the world we put the Father out of our world. He becomes less important. These other things become the idols we worship.

You are a slave to whom you obey. But, therein lies the solution. "Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves to sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slave to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification." Romans 6:16-19.

We cannot properly worship our Creator God if we are enslaved or captivated by anything else. Cars, Boats, money, ourselves, flesh, lust or pride. It is not possible to have divided

loyalty. “No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to the one and hate the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.” (Luke 16:13). (Also read, Galatians 6:10; 1 Thessalonians 2:4)

To change we must start by making our foundation strong. We need to make the commandments, the spiritual law of God that foundation. We must realign our value system so that every decision we make at work, at home, regarding our children and grandchildren, with our friends reflects God’s laws. “And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him and keep not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” (1 John 2:3-4).

Jesus has instructed us, “...it is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.” (Luke 4:4; Matthew 4:4). God’s written Word is the Bible, both Old and New Testament. Throughout the New Testament we see the apostle’s speaking of scripture. That scripture is what we now call the Old Testament. This is our instruction manual, our guide book of life, our foundation.

We have been called to be “first fruits”, the small first harvest at Christ’s second coming. “Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow. In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.” (James 1:17-19).

When we worship God it must be in spirit and in truth. “But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” (John 4:23-24).

If we fail to completely give ourselves to God no matter what else we do we are worshiping in vain. "...This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men." (Mark 7:6-7; Matthew 15:8-9. Jesus was referencing Isaiah 29:13). How are you worshiping? Are you falsely worshiping according to the traditions of men or are you worshiping God as He instructs, with your whole heart and soul and mind. Do not allow your time to be wasted by false traditions. Follow the true God as He instructs us. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33).

The pull and influence of this world, led by its lord Satan, is constantly trying to pull us away from the greatness and glory of the true God. We are called to be first fruits, the small flock. We need to resist the world and its power and rely on our Creator God. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." (1 John 3:1-3).

Strive to follow the example set forth by Jesus. Surrender fully and completely to the Father. We can do nothing apart from Him. Anything we do will end up being in vain if we try to do it on our own. Even when under terrible duress Jesus said to the Father, "...nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." (Luke 22:42).

The reward is great. The discomfort, short and temporary.