

D-LIFE BOOT CAMP

Training for a lifestyle
of discipleship.



Keeping it Real

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Pastor Dale L. Crawley Sr.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20

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PROTECTING GOD'S HONOR CHRISTIAN ETHICS "NO OTHER GODS"

When God spoke the 10 commandments from Mount Sinai, he began by identifying himself and what he had done:

Exodus 20:1-3 NKJV

And 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 bondage.**

³ **"You shall have no other gods before Me.**

A. THE MEANING OF THE COMMANDMENT

In the Hebrew text, the word **you** is a singular pronoun, indicating that God is addressing the people of Israel as individuals who are accountable to him personally.

"Before me" does *not* mean "You should have no other gods who rank higher than me", for then it would allow us to have some little "gods" that we could partially worship, obey, and trust, as in pagan polytheism. That is not the sense intended. We should understand the verse to mean "You shall have no other gods in my presence" or "before my face." This commandment is a reminder that we are always and everywhere in the presence of God, and that he will tolerate no other small gods at any place or any time in our lives.

The first commandment therefore reminds us that God deserves and requires our absolute reverence, trust, obedience, and love. This idea gains fuller expression in this very familiar passage:

Deut 6:4-5

4 "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

NKJV

God is the supreme, omnipotent, most holy Creator and Ruler of the universe, and he rightly demands that we honor him as such:

Isa 42:8

8 I am the Lord, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images. NKJV

Isa 48:9-11

9 "For My name's sake I will defer My anger, And for My praise I will restrain it from you, So that I do not cut you off.

10 Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.

11 For My own sake, for My own sake, I will do it; For how should My name be profaned? And I will not give My glory to another. NKJV

B. WHY IS THIS THE FIRST COMMANDMENT?

1. A Right Relationship with God Is Necessary for a Right Understanding of Ethics and Right Ethical Living.

This commandment searches our hearts. It is concerned with the kind of relationship with God that we have in our hearts, a relationship that only God can see. This commandment comes first because it reminds us that the rest of the commands to follow are not mere opinions invented by human imagination, but are commandments that issue from our creator himself.

That is why God's word says elsewhere:

Ps 111:10

10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever. NKJV

Prov 15:3

3 The eyes of the Lord are in every place, Keeping watch on the evil and the good. NKJV

2 Chron 16:9

For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.

NKJV

1 Sam 16:7

But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.

NKJV

2. When Societies Ignore the First Commandment, Much Evil Follows.

Whenever a society forsakes the idea that we live in the presence of God and that we are accountable to him for our actions, evil deeds multiply.

When Paul writes of the sinfulness of the entire world, he strings together several quotations from the Old Testament with the conclusion "*there is No Fear of God before their eyes.*" Here is the full passage:

Rom 3:10-18

10 As it is written:

"There is none righteous, no, not one;

11 There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.

12 They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable;

There is none who does good, no, not one."

13 "Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit";

"The poison of asps is under their lips";

14 "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness."

15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood;

16 Destruction and misery are in their ways;

17 And the way of peace they have not known."

18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes." NKJV

3. The Concept of Doing Ethics "before God" Is Lacking in Secular Ethics Today.

Although most secular universities and graduate schools now offer courses in topics such as business ethics, legal ethics, or medical ethics, these courses generally lack the idea of **accountability to God** or the idea that there are

absolute ethical standards based on the moral character of our Creator (or the idea that we can know what these ethical standards are).

4. Jesus Demands the Same Loyalty.

The first commandment teaches us that only God himself has the right to demand our absolute love, trust, and obedience . But then we see in the New Testament that Jesus requires that we love him more than anyone or anything else, even our families or our lives:

Matt 10:37-39

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. 38 And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39 He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it. NKJV

This is evidence of Jesus claim to be God, because he demands the same loyalty that only God himself is worthy to receive.

C. APPLICATION TO LIFE: OTHER GODS TODAY

1. Polytheistic Religions

One evident violation of the first commandment would be any polytheistic religion, such as modern Hinduism, which is so prevalent in India. Hindu temples can have hundreds or even thousands of idols representing various Hindu deities.

2. All False Religions

All religions that worship deities other than the one true God of the Bible are violating the first commandment. In ancient Babylon, three faithful young Jewish men refused to violate this commandment and worship a golden image of a Babylonian deity as the king commanded. The king was told:

Dan 3:12

There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up." NKJV

3. Atheism

Although atheism claims to believe in no deity at all, in actuality those who profess atheism are also violating the first commandment because they have put their own ideas about religion and a place of higher priority than worship and obedience to the one true God, who created both them and entire universe.

4. Things That We Do Not Call “Gods” but That We Value, Love, Serve, and Trust More Than God Himself.

- a. **Money:** Jesus warns us against putting money before God. (Matt. 6:24)
- b. **Material Things That We Covet:** Paul can say that covetousness is “idolatry” because it means that we seek joy, contentment, and security in things that we long to have rather than seeking these things in and from God, who has promised to care for our needs. (Col. 3:5)
- c. **Food and Physical Pleasure:** Paul speaks of people whose “god is their belly”, by which he may be referring to people who put eating and satisfying their physical appetites above all other concerns.(Phil. 3:19)
- d. **Approval of Other People:** It is a common temptation for Christians to seek the approval of other people, popularity, and even fame, and then to start treating those things as more important than serving god or Christ. (Gal. 1:10; Gal. 2:12-14; 1 Sam. 15:24)
- e. **Praise That Belongs Only to God:** It is dangerous for a famous or popular person to accept too much praise from other human beings and to delight in it, as Herod Agrippa I found to his own destruction: (Acts 12:21-23)
- f. **Semireligious or “Spiritual” Practices:** When we realize that the first commandment requires us to trust in God above all else, this calls into question small superstitions that can easily become part of a person’s life. (luck, Karma, horoscopes, fortune-tellers, psychics, Ouija boards, placing confidence in lucky numbers, days or codes;)
- g. **Power:** Sometimes in human experience, having power over other people becomes intoxicating, and the person who has gained that power longs for more and more.
- h. **Self:** For many people, the greatest idol of all is self. They spend their days working above all for themselves rather than for God’s glory and his Kingdom, and the primary focus of their thought is always “What’s best for me?”
- i. **Other Things That We Trust More Than God:** When we realize that in this commandment God demands our complete loyalty and trust, it makes us realize that too often in life we trust other things more than him.