

“Who is your God?”

Exodus 20:1-3

October 2, 2005

Dr. Jerry Nelson

Exodus 19:1-6 “In the third month after the Israelites left Egypt--on the very day--they came to the Desert of Sinai. ² After they set out from Rephidim, they entered the Desert of Sinai, and Israel camped there in the desert in front of the mountain.

^{EX 19:3} Then Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, "This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: ⁴ 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. ⁵ Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, ⁶ you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites."

Exodus 20:1-3 “And God spoke all these words:

^{EX 20:2} "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. ^{EX 20:3} "You shall have no other gods before me.”

May God add his blessing to the reading of his Word.

PRAY

15 years, or so, ago there was a man regularly attending our church that was married and had two young daughters.

The youngest daughter, then about four years of age, developed a fatal cancer.

For over two years that father prayed and cried and even bargained with God for the life of his child.

The struggle in his soul was intense as he wavered between helpless begging of God and angry denial of the very existence of God.

The child died and the father abandoned even any pretence of faith in God. He left the church and left his family.

I was very sympathetic to the pain that father experienced but I was quite judgmental of his conclusions and his actions.

Oh, to be sure, his conclusions and his abandonment of God and family were wrong but what I didn't see then was the much larger underlying issue of who his god was.

1800 years ago, one of the early church fathers wrote, "What each one honors before all else, what before all (other) things he admires and loves, this for him is God." (Origen cited in Ryken 564).

The young father I have been describing had a greater loyalty and love for his daughter than for God.

Oh, he said he believed in God but when the chips were down it became apparent where his greater loyalty lay.

Now as I said, I was quite judgmental of his actions and his conclusions at the time.

Why could he not simply trust God?

Much more recently, as I have reported to you at other times, when, from my perspective, my own son's life was threatened I found myself where that young father had been years earlier.

My love and loyalty to my son were testing my love and loyalty to God.

Who did I value most?

- Could I trust God? Would I trust God?
- Would my love for God hold even if he took from me my precious son?
- Where was my greatest allegiance? Which was truly my God?

Who or what is your God?

Maybe the question is better asked, "Who are our many gods?"

Polytheism, the trust in many gods, has been the inclination of humans for millennia.

Ancient peoples, and even some in parts of the world today, believed in a god of love, a god of fertility, a god of healing, a god of war, a god of prosperity – a veritable pantheon of gods for each and every situation of life.

Have we done the same not by carving little stone statues but in our minds?

We have a god of our religious life and he is in mind when we gather for worship.

But we may also have made a god of someone we love and/or our family – we have a higher allegiance to those relationships than to our relationship with God.

And we may have made a god of our occupation, with greater loyalty to acquisition and position than to God.

And we may have made a god of our recreation or pleasure – trusting in sports or sex or something else to meet our demands.

We take greater pleasure in those things than in God.

Of sex, one author noted, “Openmouthed, the impressionable young drink it in, and proclaim that in love is their salvation. He who is not continually fizzing like champagne with sexual excitement is considered a failure in life. (In their thinking,) nothing, no outmoded morality (Bible) or promise (marriage) or sense of obligation must come between the worshiper (them) and his/her supreme goal – (sexual satisfaction)” (Davidman, *Smoke on the Mountain*, 26)

We are tempted to have a different god for each area of life.

We think we give the religious god his due in church but then we serve a different god in business, in recreation, in pleasure, and even in family.

But God comes and says **I will be number one** in all of life!

Exodus 20:2-3 “I am the LORD your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me.

It is called the first commandment; as well it should be, because it declares the foundation of all the others.

For the last two weeks I have asserted that the 10 Commandments reveal much of the character of God to us – they describe God.

And so God begins by declaring, “I am the LORD.”

This self-revelation of God comes from the simple four letter Hebrew word we transliterate as Yahweh.

A simple word but it carries the most profound and most fundamental description of God.

That word “Yahweh”/“LORD” is the most reverent way of referring to God in the entire Bible.

Here we see the essential nature of God – who he is.

Back in Exodus 3:14 “God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.”

I am the One who always is.

God is saying that he is not a concept or some abstract principle; he is the living, active God.

It is inappropriate to speak of God only as “was” or only as “will be” because he always is or simply “Am.”

In the name, “LORD” (Yahweh) God reveals who he is – the sovereign One.

And it designates the legitimacy of his authority – he is before all things, he created and controls all things and he will dispose of all things according to his will.

He has the authority to give commands to his creatures.

It is monstrous that we should attempt to remove ourselves from his authority or pretend it doesn’t exist.

Romans 11:36 “For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

You say you believe in God? What God? The creator, the sovereign one?

Psalm 14:1 “The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.”

But there are just as many, maybe more, who say ‘I believe in God but so what?’

Don’t you see it? If God is the God he says he is, self-preservation alone would say we must know and bow to his will.

As many have pointed out, “No, Lord,” is a foolhardy oxymoron.

Joy Davidman the wife of C.S. Lewis, wrote, “The man who says, ‘One God,’ and does not care, is an atheist in his heart. The man who speaks of God (but) will not recognize the presence of God burning in his mind as Moses recognized him in the burning bush - that man is an atheist, though he speak with the tongues of men and angels and appear in his seat every Sunday, and make large contributions to the church.” (Davidman, Smoke on the Mountain, 23)

If God is who he says he is, nothing, absolutely nothing could be more important than knowing and responding to him.

Common sense alone would say we must hold allegiance only to him.

We must be rid of any other gods in our lives.

God alone Yahweh - the ever-existing sovereign Lord.

But he not only says he is the LORD but he is “your God.”

Added to his unquestionable sovereignty, as LORD, is his grace as “your God.”

- He calls us into loving relationship with himself.
- Exodus 19:4 “You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.
- He compares himself to an eagle carrying her young to safety.
- He invites us elsewhere to call him “Father.”
- Still lsewhere He compares himself to a mother tenderly caring for her children.
- And still elsewhere, as a Shepherd protecting, providing, and leading.
- He’s the prodigal’s father with tears streaming down his face, running to embrace his returning son.
- He’s the husband who takes his adulterous wife back into his arms.

Jeremiah 31:3 “I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness.”

John 3:16 “For God so loved...”

We are in relationship with that God - the God who loves us.
The Ten Commandments are set in the context of that love relationship, God and us.

He is not a genie in a lamp as in Aladdin whose only role was to be asked and then left alone.

God calls us to live in on-going relationship with him and the commandments give us insight into that relationship.

J.I. Packer wrote, "The Pharisees lovelessly served the law, depersonalized all relationships and dehumanized themselves and Jesus damned them for it. Loving relations with God, and with others for his sake, are what his service, as set forth in the Decalogue (Ten Words/Commandments), is really all about. Love responding to his love, as he declares 'I am...you shall...,' is the real secret..." (Packer, "I and You" in *The 10 Commandments* no page numbers)

De Chardin said, "To those who only know it outwardly, Christianity seems desperately intricate. In reality, taken in its main lines, it contains an extremely simple and astonishingly bold solution to the world. In the center, so glaring as to be disconcerting, is the uncompromising affirmation of a personal God: God as providence, directing the universe with loving, watchful care; and God the revealer, communicating himself to (us)..." (Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man* 292 cited in Palmer, 48)

Not only does he **declare** himself to be the sovereign One – the LORD and not only does he **declare** himself to be OUR God who loves us **but he also demonstrates** that sovereignty and love.

Exodus 20:2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery."

God says, I brought you out of Egypt with its myriad gods – gods you couldn't possibly please because to please one was to offend another.

Oh how true today –

I pursue the god of acquisition and lose my family.

I pursue the god of pleasure and lose my job.

And I grow weary trying to appease them all.

And, God says, I brought you out of slavery.

- To each of those gods you owed more than you could pay.
- You were slaves to each one – living under the fear of not measuring up and losing out.
- Each god sucking you dry, with no lasting joy found in any one of them.

What was Israel's future in Egypt?

Enslavement and death!

What was your future without Christ?

In **this** life you were subject to the whims of "fate," or left to your own abilities and to the charity of others AND **after this life** death - with no reasonable hope of anything beyond except nothingness or worse yet, hell.

What would your life be today without Christ?

Where would you be tomorrow without Christ?

Colossians 1:3 "He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

Does that mean something to you?

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders ¹⁰ nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified; you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

What is our future now?

We are people of true hope, reasonable hope, hope based on the promises of an unfailing God.

That God, the sovereign (Yahweh), loving (“your God”), redeeming (brought you out of slavery) God is the one who says, “You shall have no other gods before me.”

Is that just a threat?

No! God is not a teenager who pouts and retaliates if his girlfriend talks to another boy.

This is the loving God who knows that all other allegiances lead ultimately to our dissatisfaction and death and that only in him is life – life as it was meant to be lived.

This command is not merely a threat, it is the way of life!

Other gods are cul-de-sacs of death.

Jesus said, John 17:3 “Now this is life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

Only in relationship with the God is there life, now and forever.

We have been freed **from** in order to be free **to**...

Romans 6:18 “You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

Obedience then is an outgrowth of this relationship.

Never should we think like the rich young ruler that we have kept the law and are therefore okay having done the required.

Rather obedience is simply practical love;

When I obey, I’m not measuring, I’m loving – living in relationship.

And God shows us in part what that living relationship looks like.

As I have said in the preceding two weeks – law and love are not opposites.

One commentator wrote, “The (commandments of God) do not lose their particularity in the command to love; they simply opens up those particularities to limitless possibilities. Love always means going beyond whatever laws may be articulated, but it needs their particularity for instruction purposes, charting something of what love may entail in specific situations.” Fretheim Exodus, 223

That fits with Jesus' interpretation of the Ten Commandments when he said, "You have heard it said (the law)...But I say to you...(the even deeper meaning of the law)"

And so what does having no other gods before the true God mean?

I have read that the best way to detect counterfeit money is to know the real thing.

The best way to detect idolatry, allegiance to other gods in our lives, is to know what true allegiance to one God really is.

When Jesus was asked in Matthew 22:36-38 "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment.

Jesus explains the negative "you shall have no other gods before me" in a positive "Love the Lord your God with all your heart soul and mind."

So what does "no other gods before me" look like?

First of all, "before me" doesn't mean that we can have other gods as long as we claim God is number one.

"Before me" means we must have no other gods in God's presence.

We can't pretend God is our God if we bring other gods into our lives.

John Calvin said it is like a man bringing the woman of his adulterous affair right into his home in front of his wife. (Calvin 2:8:16)

God will allow only one primary allegiance – He is either our **only** God or he is not our God at all.

Jesus said, "No man can serve two masters"

So who is the object of our affections?

Who do we think about in our free time?

Who are we trying to impress?

Who are we living for?

Martin Luther said, “A god is that to which we look for good and in which we find refuge in time of need... That to which our heart clings and entrusts itself is, I say, really your god.” Idolatry “neither cares for (the real) God nor expects good things from him sufficiently to trust that he wants to help nor does it believe that whatever good it receives comes from God.” “Do you have the kind of heart that expects from God nothing but good, especially in distress and want, and renounces and forsakes all that is not God? Then you have the one true God. On the contrary, does your heart cling to something else, from which it hopes to receive more good and help than from God, and does (your heart) flee not to God but from him when things go wrong?” Then you have an idol, another God.”

(Luther Book of Concord 1580 p365-368 cited in “No Other Gods” by Thomas Oden in [I am the Lord Your God](#), 42)

Nearly 400 years ago Thomas Watson explained what it means to love God with no other gods before Him.

Our desire will be for God – He is why we live.

We will not seek or find true contentment in anything else but him.

We will hate anything that would separate us from God – namely sin.

We will grieve at what grieves God.

We will labor to show others how lovely God is.

We will weep bitterly when our sin clouds his presence.

We will be willing to obey and even suffer for him.

Thomas Watson [The Ten Commandments](#) 8ff

And in that same era the Westminster theologians captured it with this answer to the question: “What are the duties required in the first commandment?”

A 104 The duties required in the first commandment are, the knowing and acknowledging of God to be the only true God, and our God; and to worship and glorify him accordingly, by thinking, meditating, remembering, highly esteeming, honoring, adoring, choosing, loving, desiring, fearing of him; believing him; trusting, hoping, delighting, rejoicing in him; being zealous for him; calling upon him, giving all praise and thanks, and yielding all obedience and submission to him with (our whole heart); being careful in all things to please him, and sorrowful when in anything he is offended; and walking humbly with him.”

What god do you love, trust and obey like that?

“Oh,” you say, “I want to love the only true God like that!
“I want God alone to be my God.”

What can make us love God this way?

Only grace can make our cold hearts melt in love.

“Omnipotent grace ONLY can make a stony heart melt in love.” Watson, 10

That is why God reveals himself to us as the sovereign,
loving, redeeming God he is.

“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of
slavery.”

That is why Jesus came.

Romans 5:8 “But God demonstrates his own love
for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died
for us.”

Who is **your** God, your **only** God?

The late Clarence and Genevieve DeVries of our church provided a
home for Clarence’s elderly and unbelieving father.

Genevieve witnessed to him constantly and sometimes she
even talked to him about trusting Jesus.

It became a special concern to Genevieve as the old man
became fatally ill.

Grandpa DeVries, as she referred to him, finally said that he would
trust Jesus but when he began to plan his funeral he said he wanted
a funeral arranged by the Masonic Order.

Genevieve was wise enough to know that her father-in-law thought
his good works as part of his Masonic membership were how God
would judge him worthy of heaven.

When he said he trusted in Jesus, the old man was merely
saying that he would add Jesus to his other god – his Masonic-
style god - in whom he trusted more.

Genevieve told him in no uncertain terms that he could not have two gods – either he must accept Jesus as his only God and be buried in a Christian funeral or accept the false god of his Masonic relationship and have his Masonic funeral.

As death approached the old man finally said he would have both a Masonic funeral and a Christian funeral.

But Genevieve held out – “You shall have no other gods before me or in my presence.”

A day before his death with Genevieve still pleading with him, the man finally said he would place his faith in Jesus alone and he abandoned the Masonic funeral.

My purpose is not to denigrate the good work that some Masons do, but to demonstrate in only one of many ways how prone we all are to create other gods and truly trust them more than the one true God.

40 years later than our story at Mt. Sinai, Joshua who had come out of Egypt with its many gods and was about to lead the Israelites into another country teeming with still other gods to lure the people away said:

Joshua 24:14-15 “Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. ¹⁵ But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are now living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”

The great, eternal, sovereign, loving, redeeming God is Jesus.
Emmanuel, God with us.

Using the same name by which God identified himself to Moses, Jesus said, “Before Abraham was, I AM.”

The question before you today is “Who is your God?”

Is it Jesus? Will you put away all other gods and follow him alone today?

Will you trust him alone in job, family, health, sickness, pleasure, pain, life and death?

Matthew 11:28-30 “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened (by your many gods), and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Maybe you have served many gods for too long and today you are ready to declare, “as for me and my house we will serve the LORD!”

If that is your decision, then mark the day well, drive a stake in the ground, and declare that commitment.

Jesus said, “Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven.” (Matthew 10:32)

Tell someone today!

Our prayer chapel is open for you to go and tell someone and let them pray with you.

Or stop a friend and declare that from this day forward you are a “one God man.”

May God empower you and keep you!

Other notes:

The Hebrew Bible of the Jews, the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Reformers (Calvin and others) find ten commandments by listing verse 3 as the first and verses 4-6 as the second and so on through verse 17.

Catholics and Lutherans list verses 3-6 as the first commandment and divide verse 17 into commandments 9 and 10.

I love the subtitle of a good book on the Ten Commandments “The Reciprocity of Faithfulness.” “Humans are formed by attachments and allegiances to objects of desire and devotion (our loves), by objects of trust and confidence (our faiths), and by our anticipations and aspirations (our hopes). These objects may be called our ‘loyalties.’”

(Paul Capetz in The Ten Commandments – Reciprocity of Faithfulness, William Brown, editor, 2004 187-8)

What is your ultimate object of loyalty to which all other loyalties are subservient?

Do not have more than a single ultimate allegiance.

The sin of the first commandment is “giving the glory and honor to any creature which are due to God only. Pride makes a god of self, covetousness makes a god of the belly; **whatever is esteemed or loved, feared or served, delighted in or depended on, more than God, that (whatever it is) we do in effect make a god.**” (Matthew Henry

Commentary, Vol. 1)

We must not transfer to another what belongs to God alone.

- Adoration – reverence and worship, which logically includes obedience because obedience is homage.
- Trust – secure dependence on him in the knowledge of his perfect omniscience, omnipotence and benevolence.
- Invocation – Resorting to him in his faithfulness and ability first and most in all circumstances of life.
- Thanksgiving – Gratitude conceived and expressed in all things.

Calvin 2:8:16

Jesus as supreme example of one who obeys the first commandment:

John 6:38 “For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.

John 17:4 “I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.

Matthew 26:42 ““My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.”

Luke 23:46 “Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” When he had said this, he breathed his last.”

What other gods might we serve?

“Sex, Shekels, and Stomach” or “Pleasure, Possessions and Position” or “Football, the Firm, Freemasonry and the Family” – the list is endless... Anything that anyone allows to run his life becomes his god.” (Packer, “Who Comes First” in his Ten Commandments)

“How weak the gods of this world are, and weaker yet their worship made me.” (Elizabeth Barrett Browning cited in Ryken, pre-published commentary on Exodus, 563)

Who or what is my god?

The “love test” – “What each one honors before all else, what before all things he admires and love, this for him is God.” (Origen cited in Ryken 564).

The “trust test” – To trust in anything more than God, is to make it god.” (Watson cited in Ryken, 564)

This “no other gods” is not payback for God’s deliverance but is a matter of recognizing the worth of God. (Enns 413)

They are to have one God only and it is to be Yahweh. Again the issue is not monotheism but allegiance.

“It is a deeply engaged centering of the self upon God as Lord.” Fretheim 216

“It is to keep God himself, and loyalty and allegiance to this God, as the focus of their attention in” life. Fretheim 216

“The nature of love consists in delighting in an object. ‘The lover’s delight is in his beloved’ (Aquinas) This is loving God, to take delight in him.” Watson, 7

“To have your Maker and Savior as your God in preference to any other object of devotion (which is the point of ‘before’) means that you live for him as his person in faithful and loyal obedience.” (Packer, “Who Comes First”)

God desires our love not because he needs our hearts but he wants to make them better. (Watson, 10)

Joy Davidman in Smoke on the Mountain...

Some of us treat God like a life preserver. When we are in drowning we grab hold of him as did many in the recent hurricanes. But as Davidman wrote, “You can’t drown all the time. Sooner or later you have to start merely living again; you reach shore, splutter the water out of your lungs – and then what? Throw away the life preserver? If your interest in God is based on fear rather than love, very likely. In such a case you will be willing to pay a very high price for that preserver as you go down for the third time; you will offer for it all your worldly treasures, your lusts and greeds and vanities and hates. But once safely on shore, you may be minded to throw it away and snatch your treasures back.” Davidman, 14

“‘Thou shalt not enjoy life’ was never Christ’s teaching.” Davidman, 15

Some look at the commandments and “try to be negatively good and make a virtue out of misery; plume ourselves on the rejection of delights for which we are too weak (or) measure our piety by the number of pleasures we prohibit.” Davidman 15

“The idea of one God instead of the many of the ancient world was unique to be sure. But except for astrologers, numerologists and psychics nobody believes in many gods any longer. With many of us, the question is not One against many, but one against none... We modern pagans have to choose between a divine order and the gray, dead, irresponsible, chaotic universe of atheism . And the tragedy is

that we may make that choice without knowing it – not by clear conviction but by vague drifting, not by denying God, but by losing interest in him.” (Davidman, 22-23)

We live in an age of lost faith and lost hope and empty hearts. Today the Commandment, ‘Thou shalt have no other gods before me,’ must include, ‘Thou shalt have me.’” Davidman 23

“A man with nothing to worship is a man in a vacuum, and the false gods will rush in. They are not idols nowadays – not the Dagon of the Philistines or the brutish gods of the Nile. They are worse. The ancient image worshipers were at least worshiping something not themselves... The modern monotheist is frequently adoring his own image in the mirror.” Davidman 23-24

We live in an age of lost faith and lost hope and empty hearts. Today the Commandment, ‘Thou shalt have no other gods before me,’ must include, ‘Thou shalt have me.’” Davidman 23

“A man with nothing to worship is a man in a vacuum, and the false gods will rush in. They are not idols nowadays – not the Dagon of the Philistines or the brutish gods of the Nile. They are worse. The ancient image worshipers were at least worshiping something not themselves... The modern monotheist is frequently adoring his own image in the mirror.” Davidman 23-24

But we are more sophisticated than to worship ourselves outright. We disguise it as giving ourselves to some worthy cause.

“A man trying to serve two masters is always halfhearted.”
(Davidman, 25)

“A curse of contemporary Christendom has been the replacement of traditional theology with a new system which we may call the Twentieth-century Sentimental Theology. Sentimental theology has invented a god: it insists that he is a God of love, and implies that it is therefore his eternal concern that a thumping good time should be had by all. Are we in the dumps? Pray to this god and, at a word, he restores us to self-confident buoyancy...Five minutes of prayer to this

many-sided God, and we shall be able to rejoice indiscriminately with sinner and saint; we shall be able to spread the family spirit of Christian charity like a blanket over every disloyalty and infidelity conceived in Hell and planted in men's hearts... We must live in agreement with all men, smiling indulgently upon every vanity and betrayal. Because this god is a god of love, we must never differentiate between good and evil, for judgment partakes of uncharity and presumption." Harry Blamires cited in Horton, Ten Commandments 54

"To love oneself is the beginning of a life-long romance." (Oscar Wilde)

"To Love yourself is to be truly religious." "Self-love is, or should be, the basic will in human life." (Robert Schuller, Self-Love, 24)

"The imperative 'to feel good about oneself' has become a national and personal priority. It has become a patriotic, even religious duty." (Gary Wills, Reagan's America, 235)

"Pop-psychology assists in giving modern people the sense that everything, God included, exists for (his or her) own personal happiness and fulfillment. We divorce when our spouse does not fulfill every craving of our heart (which we dub 'needs') and we move from self-help program to religion and back again with the ease of a shopper sampling for the best product. It is not truth, but happiness, we seek most. But, alas, when we worship happiness, the things and people which whom we entrusted this commission eventually let us down and the worship of happiness turns into a nightmare of disillusionment, fatigue and depression." Horton.

Westminster Larger Catechism

Q 104 What are the duties required in the first commandment?

A 104 The duties required in the first commandment are, the knowing and acknowledging of God to be the only true God, and our God; and to worship and glorify him accordingly, by thinking, meditating, remembering, highly esteeming, honoring, adoring, choosing, loving, desiring, fearing of him; believing him; trusting, hoping delighting, rejoicing in him; being zealous for him; calling upon him, giving all praise and thanks, and yielding all obedience and submission to him with the whole man; being careful in all things to please him, and sorrowful when in anything he is offended; and walking humbly with him."

Q105 What are the sins forbidden in the first commandment?

A 105 The sins forbidden in the first commandment are, atheism, in denying or not having a God; idolatry, in having or worshipping more gods than one, or any with or instead of the true God; the not having and avouching him for God, and our God; the omission or neglect of anything due to him, required in this commandment; ignorance, forgetfulness, misapprehensions, false opinions, unworthy, wicked thoughts of him; bold and curious searching into his secrets; all profaneness, hatred of God; self-love, self-seeking, and all other inordinate and immoderate setting of our mind, will, or affections upon other things, and taking them off from him in whole or in part; vain credulity, unbelief, heresy, misbelief, distrust, despair, incorrigibleness, and insensibleness under judgments, hardness of heart, pride, presumption, carnal security, tempting of God; using unlawful means and trusting in unlawful means; carnal delights and joys; corrupt, blind and indiscreet zeal; lukewarmness, and deadness in the things of God; estranging ourselves, and apostatizing from God; praying, or giving any religious worship to saints, angels or any other creatures; all compacts and consulting with the devil, and hearkening to his suggestions; making men the lords of our faith and conscience; slighting and despising God and his commands; resisting and grieving of his Spirit, discontent and impatience at his dispensations, and charging him foolishly for the evils he inflicts on us; and ascribing the praise of any good we either are, have, or can do to fortune, idols ourselves or any other creature.