

“How to Make Godly Decisions, Part 3”
(Lord’s Day School, 6-17-01)

This morning, we want to continue our look at the Ten Commandments with the special goal in mind of understanding how they can help us make godly choices. Last week, the main principle we saw in the first commandment is that we should always make choices that won’t interfere with our relationship with God. There are so many things in this world that can capture our hearts, that can literally make us their slaves. But the Lord wants us to love Him most of all and worship Him alone. We need to make sure that we make the kinds of decisions that will draw us closer to God and keep us further away from the world. We also need to make sure that we never love anything or anyone more than God. If we have to compromise our relationship with the Lord in order to hold onto something, it’s wrong.

III. Let’s move on now and look next at the second commandment. What is the second commandment? In Exodus 20:4-6, we read, “You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.”

A. Now what is God telling us in this commandment?

1. Is He telling us that we should worship no other god besides Him? Certainly it tells us that. But so did the first commandment.
2. Does it tell us anything more than the first commandment?
 - a. Yes. It tells us that we must not only worship the true God alone, but that we must also worship Him in the way He wants us to worship, both in public and in private.
 - b. How does God want us to worship Him? In the way He commands us. We are not to offer anything to God as worship except what He tells us He will accept. Now I’m not intending to go into a full explanation of how He wants us to worship. We’ve done that recently.
 - c. But I would like to ask whether or not you think the church is in danger of not worshipping Him as He wants us to. Yes. All churches are, more now in the present time than at any other time in history. There is such a strong push now to change the worship service to make the people who come feel more comfortable and less alienated. Churches want their services to be more “seeker sensitive.” But in the process, they are in danger of losing sight of the worship that the Lord has instituted, that which He commands.
 - d. Is worship something that we are free to change? No. What makes us think that God will approve of whatever we would like to do? The Scripture shows us that it is just the opposite.
 - e. But perhaps when people see their churches becoming full, they believe that they have God’s blessing. But do they necessarily? No. Look at how large the Roman Church is and the Mormon Church. I understand that the UP

Church is one of the fastest growing churches in Modesto, and yet they deny the Trinity. We really can't tell by looking at the numbers whether their worship is pleasing to God or not.

- f. Can we tell by looking at the quality of the spirituality of the members? No. We can't tell by that either. Sometimes true Christians can thrive in spite of non-biblical worship. The only way we can tell is by comparing what we do with what God tells us He wants, to know whether or not our worship, at least in form, is pleasing to Him. The other thing we need to consider is our hearts. If we have the right form, but don't have true love in our hearts for God, then we are just going through the motions like the Pharisees.
3. But there is something else this commandment tells us, and it has to do with the two senses in which we should think of worship. One of them we have already seen: worshipping God in the worship services on Sunday, as well as our worship of Him in our homes. But is there any other way in which we worship God?
 - a. Yes. We also worship Him with our lives. Our lives are to be a continual sacrifice of praise to Him.
 - b. Paul writes in Romans 12:1-2, "I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."
 - c. What do you think Paul means here by worship? He is talking about the things we do everyday, all our actions, our whole lives.
- B. Now how will the second commandment help us make choices?
1. Certainly, like the first commandment, it will affect our choice of a church.
 - a. We will choose the church to worship at and become a member of that has the most biblical form of worship we can find.
 - b. If you're convinced of the Reformed view of what is called the regulative principle -- which means that only what God commands is to be done in worship -- then you won't feel comfortable worshipping in a Lutheran or Anglican church, because of their images of God and Christ, or in many modern churches, because they include things like drama, interpretive dance, and other gimmicks to entertain people rather than worship God.
 - c. Now does this mean that these aren't true churches? It's not that these aren't true churches, but they are not as pure as they could be.
 - d. Does this mean you should never attend one? If there was nothing else around, you might possibly become a member of one. But you'll never feel perfectly comfortable there because they do things which you believe are wrong.
 2. Second, this should also affect any choice you have to make which could affect the worship of the church.
 - a. You would want to do all you could in your particular position, as a member, or an officer, to make sure that God's worship remains pure.

- b. You would keep away from any decisions that would threaten that.
3. How would this affect your family worship? In the same way, you wouldn't want to offer to God in you families anything that He does not want.
 4. How would this affect your personal worship? Again, you will make sure that it is biblical, and that you are not following any traditions or adding any superstitious practices.
 5. But now if all of life is to be worship to God, how will this commandment affect our choices in other areas?
 - a. We will want to make sure again that in whatever we do, we are doing it for the glory of God.
 - b. Anything we do, if we do it for ourselves and merely for our own pleasure, is wrong. Paul writes, "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).
 - c. Does this mean that we can never watch any movies or play any games or compete in any sports? No. We must certainly avoid the things which are sinful in themselves. But even if they aren't, they can become sinful. If we do anything merely for our own pleasure, it's wrong. If we do anything for our own glory, that's wrong. When you play sports, do you play so that people will recognize how good you are? That's prideful and sinful. But if you play for the glory of God, because He has given you those gifts, or because they help you relax and recreate, so that you can better serve Him, is that wrong? No. We need to take seriously what Paul tells us. We must have God's glory in view for all that we do, otherwise, we shouldn't do it.
 - d. Now God's Word doesn't address everything we could possibly do in life, so how can we know whether in our work or in our play, we are glorifying God?
 - (i) The Bible tells us what is sinful. We need to avoid those things at all times. You should never watch a movie that is wholly immoral and has nothing good about it. You should never play a game which is morally wrong. You should never work at a job that only exists to promote evil.
 - (ii) But in everything else, it tells us how to do what we do in the right way, with the right motive, so that it will glorify God. What about being an auto mechanic? Can you work on cars to the glory of God? Yes. It is a good thing to fix someone's car. But how can you do it so that God is glorified? You can do the best you can, out of love for your neighbor, love for God, and a desire to glorify Him. You can also be sure that you charge a fair rate. The same goes for just about every other kind of employment. It must be something that is good in itself. It must be done with the right motive, and when it involves money, you must charge a fair price.
 - (iii) Certainly, if we take this commandment seriously, and teach our children to take it seriously as well, we will bring blessing on our households. But if we don't, we will just as quickly bring God's curse. God says, "For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments" (Ex. 20:5-

6).

IV. Now let's look quickly at the third commandment. What is the third commandment? The third commandment is, "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain" (Ex. 20:7).

A. What does this commandment mean?

1. It means that we must use God's name reverently.
2. It also means that we must use everything else by which God reveals Himself in a holy way.
 - a. What are some of those ways?
 - b. His names, titles, attributes, ordinances, Word, and sacraments.

B. How does this commandment help us to make godly choices?

1. What's the most obvious thing it teaches us?
 - a. It teaches us never to choose to use God's name as a curse word.
 - b. Certainly, we should also avoid hearing His name used in a blasphemous way, whether in movies, television programs, or in the company we hang around with. This will help us when we make choices in this area.
2. What else does it teach us?
 - a. It teaches us that when we make promises, we should keep them. God sees and hears all that we do. When we say that we are going to do something, we must do it. If we say we are speaking the truth, we must speak it. This will help us choose the right words to speak.
 - b. This is especially true when we make a vow or take an oath. A vow is something we promise God. An oath is a declaration that what we are saying is true, and we call God to bear witness to it. When we make a vow or take an oath, we must keep it, unless we vowed to do something sinful, then we must not keep it. (Example of the couple that couldn't join a church because of a vow not to drink wine). This will help us choose which vows or oaths we will take.
 - c. We should never choose to believe or say anything about God which isn't true. We need to make sure that what we believe about Him is true.
 - d. And we must never misrepresent His Word. We need to make sure that when we say God's Word says something, it really does. We must certainly never choose to change it's meaning to justify something we would like to do or have done which is sinful. God will punish those who do these things. He says, "For the Lord will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain."
 - e. If we have done any of these things, we need to confess that sin, repent of it, and make restitution wherever necessary.