

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



**Advanced Bible Correspondence Course**  
**Lesson 34B: The Law of God – First Commandment**

**Q.94. WHAT DOES GOD ENJOIN IN THE FIRST COMMANDMENT?**

**ANSWER:** THAT I, AS SINCERELY AS I DESIRE THE SALVATION OF MY OWN SOUL, AVOID AND FLEE FROM ALL IDOLATRY (A), SORCERY, SOOTHSAYING, SUPERSTITION (B), INVOCATION OF SAINTS, OR ANY OTHER CREATURES (C); AND LEARN RIGHTLY TO KNOW THE ONLY TRUE GOD (D); TRUST IN HIM ALONE (E); WITH HUMILITY (F) AND PATIENCE SUBMIT TO HIM (G); EXPECT ALL GOOD THINGS FROM HIM ONLY (H); LOVE (I), FEAR (K), AND GLORIFY (L) HIM WITH MY WHOLE HEART; SO THAT I RENOUNCE AND FORSAKE ALL CREATURES, RATHER THAN COMMIT EVEN THE LEAST THING CONTRARY TO HIS WILL (M).

(A) I JOHN 5:21, I COR. 6:10, 10:7&14; (B) LEV. 19:31, DEUT. 18:9-10;  
(C) MATTHEW 4:10, REV. 19:10, 22:8&9; (D) JOHN 17:3; (E) JEREMIAH 17:5&7;  
(F) I PETER 5:5; (G) HEB. 10:36, COL. 1:11, ROM. 5:3&4, I COR. 10:10, PHIL. 2:14;  
(H) PSALM 104:27, ISAIAH 45:7, JAMES 1:17; (I) DEUT. 6:5, MATTHEW 22:37;  
(K) DEUT. 6:2, PSALM 111:10, ECCLESIASTES 1:7, 9:10, MATTHEW 10:28;  
(L) MATTHEW 4:10, DEUT. 10:20; (M) MATTHEW 5:29, 10:37, ACTS 5:29

**God's Honour**

If my salvation, the perfect, eternal happiness of my soul, is my greatest concern, I must know God in a proper way, which is the loving knowledge of God and trust in God by faith. Otherwise I will be eternally wretched. This is what the first commandment teaches us.

In addition, God requires of us to acknowledge Him alone as God and trust in Him alone. We must love, fear, and honour Him with our whole heart. To fear Him does not mean to be afraid of Him, but it means to obey Him with reverence and love. The fear of the Lord is in us if we revere and love God and all of His commandments.

We must submit ourselves in humility (which is the opposite of pride) and patience, that is, persevering forbearance, to the way He leads us, even when troubles, crosses and persecutions come upon us in this way. For our heavenly Father knows what is good for us. We must and may also ask for and expect all that is necessary for our life only from Him.

### **Not serving other gods**

The commandment not to serve other gods means that we may not pay divine honour to other powers, people, animals, or objects. If we do so, we commit idolatry. This can be done in many ways.

The worship of all so-called gods, next to the only true God and Creator of heaven and earth, is condemned by this commandment. Also calling on spiritual powers, personal gods, evil spirits, is in fact asking the blessing of the devil. Ancestor worship is sinful: God alone rules everything. All spiritualistic dealings, as seeking contact with dead persons, is in reality having communion with the devil. Also, superstitious beliefs like “knocking on wood keeps away harm, invoked by our words” are forbidden.

Ascribing power and giving honour to magic objects is giving honour to the creature instead of to the Creator. We should not hang amulets around our bodies in order to protect us, or hang a charm in our cars or homes. No sorcery, in whatever form, is permitted, for then we place our trust in the occult, satanic powers, and not in God. We should not consult fortune tellers, for they use occult powers. We must not believe in horoscopes, because then we believe that the position of the stars, instead of God, determines the course of our life.

### **No worshipping of saints**

We may not even worship any person, no matter how holy they are (or have been), in a form of religious adoration in which we ask for their help or intercession. They are or were all sinful people, who of themselves cannot help us. The prophet Isaiah, in praying to God for help and grace for himself and his people, said: *“Doubtless Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer; Thy Name is from everlasting”* (Isaiah 63:16). At the marriage in Cana of Galilee (John 2:1-12) the Lord Jesus even rejected the intercession of His mother Mary, who wanted to put in a good word for the bridal couple who had no more wine.

Of course, we may ask for intercession of fellow Christians who are still alive. Paul wrote: *“Brethren, pray for us”* (I Thessalonians 5:25). However, we then ask for this intercession of others because they belong with us to that *one* body of Christ, His Church. It is said of that body: *“Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it”* (I Corinthians 12:26). Therefore they also pray for one another. We do *not* ask for this intercession because others should be more acceptable to God, on account of their godliness or whatever. Then because of this we would expect something from God. The only ground of our expectation may alone be that one perfect sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ: only because of Him can God grant our prayers and the intercessions by others for us.

## **A jealous God**

God wants us to only worship *Him* and only ask *Him* for help. He is jealous with regard to His honour, because the honour which is due unto Him is an expression of love toward Him. And He does not want to share this honour with others, just like a girl does not want to share the love of her boyfriend, nor a woman the love of her husband with others, nor the other way around. God says by Isaiah: *“I am the LORD: that is My Name: and My glory will I not give to another”* (Isaiah 42:8).

### **Q.95. WHAT IS IDOLATRY?**

**ANSWER: IDOLATRY IS, INSTEAD OF, OR BESIDES THAT ONE TRUE GOD WHO HAS MANIFESTED HIMSELF IN HIS WORD, TO CONTRIVE, OR HAVE ANY OTHER OBJECT, IN WHICH MEN PLACE THEIR TRUST (A).**

**(A)EPHESIANS 5:5, I CHRONICLES 16:26, PHILIPPIANS 3:19, GALATIANS 4:8, EPHESIANS 2:12, I JOHN 2:23, 2 JOHN 9, JOHN 5:23**

## **Idolatry**

An idol is anything that removes God from His rightful place. Idols are persons or powers (sometimes even animals or objects) to whom divine honour is shown, because one expects help from them, whereas they of themselves cannot help us, for they are powerless of themselves. Literally, an ‘idol’ is a ‘non-god’. God revealed the powerlessness of idols when the priests of Baal on Mount Carmel prayed to their god in vain (I Kings 18).

The heathens often worship their idols in the form of images, animals, or objects. In our modern world mention is made worshipping occult powers in various forms. Behind all these idols and powers lurks the power of Satan, the greatest idol.

## **Present day idols**

But there are also other idols. An idol is also somebody or something from whom or from which we expect everything that engages us in such a way that we put God in the second place or even forget most of the time. This can be sports, drugs, alcohol, sex, going out and having fun, our work, our beautiful home, nice clothing, money, honour, fame, or whatever. Heroes in the world of sports, movies and music are also idols to many fans. We can even commit idolatry with certain views, for instance, if we elevate our own people and race above others.

The idol which is served and honoured most - and is recognized least of all as an idol - is self: when we pride ourselves on our own expertise and knowledge, trust our own opinion, and live according to our own mind and will. This idol can even cloak itself in religious attire.

Paul said of such people: *“Whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things”*; but also: *“Whose end is destruction”* (Philippians 3:19).

## Human traditions

Everything that we place beside or instead of God and His Word and render divine honour, is idolatry. Therefore it is also idolatry if we ascribe as much value to human and ecclesiastical traditions as to God's Word. God desires to be served only in and through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, as Peter said at Pentecost" *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other Name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12).

### Questions:

1. *State in one sentence what God requires of us in the first commandment.*

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2. *What is idolatry?*

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3. *Give four examples of present day idolatry.*

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Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

### Meditation:

As bats hate the light, and fly against it, so unconverted men hate the pure light of God's law, and fly against it.

*Taken from: Gems of Robert Murray McChesney*