

**(8.15.21) ACCEPT NO SUBSTITUTES**  
*Ten Values That STILL...Build Strong Families - Part 2*  
Jeremiah 10:6-16, **Romans 1:18-32** (gospel)

Last week we started a new series that we're calling the **Ten Values to Build Strong Families** and in it, we're taking a look at the Ten Commandments. Today we're going to look at the 2nd commandment and how it will build our families and make them stronger. Exodus 20:4-5 *"You shall not make any idols, you must never bow to an image or worship it in any way."* In other words, the second commandment says two things: don't idolize anything and worship God only. Let's take a look at that...

**I. DON'T IDOLIZE ANYTHING:** What is an idol? An idol is anything that takes the focus off God and puts it on something else. In other words, when anything is first in my life that is not God it's an idol in my life... even if it's good. What does it mean to idolize? In this sense it means to value something more than God. Some people park their idols in their garage. Some people dock their idols at Saguaro Lake. Some people put their idols in their safe deposit box. But even today... we have to deal with idols. In fact, it's really kind of interesting... archaeologists tell us that in every culture throughout history there have been idols. Statues, little gods, goddesses -- things like this. There is the desire of man, for some reason, to turn objects or people or things into objects of worship. God says don't do that.

In Bible times there were three primary idols. There was Baal who was the god of sex. There was Mammon who was the god of money. And there was Molech who was the god of violence. We don't have those metal idols today... instead we just pay billions of dollars today to go to movies to watch sex, violence and money. It's the same things. In fact, the biggest shrine or idol that you can find in just about every home in America today is the little box that you plug in called the TV. And if not the tv... then it's the computer or the smart phone. Every day, when we turn these on... we see our idols. So the reality today is that... ok... we don't worship objects... as much as we worship images, images of success, images of wealth, images of status, images of sensuality. And... to be fair, it's very difficult to raise your kids in an environment where the society is saying, these are the most important things in life... and you're trying to say, no there are other values that are more important. So know to combat this... you have to teach your kids the disadvantages of idols.

In Deut. 4 *"For your own good don't sin by making an idol in any form at all."* Note the words, **"for your own good"**. He says for your own good don't make an idol. Today we wear our idols on T-shirts. People proudly proclaim what they're committed to. For some it could be something as crazy as a college football team or whatever. But God says for your own good don't idolize anything or anyone. Why? **1. Idols will disappoint you.** Your team will get NCAA sanctions and go through an endless season of mediocrity... But idols... They always promise more than they can deliver. Jeremiah 10:14 *"Those who make idols are disillusioned because the gods they made are false and lifeless."* On TV it says Wear our label and you'll be popular, buy our product and you'll be successful, drink our beer and it doesn't get any better than this, buy our toothpaste and you'll have sex appeal. They always promise more than they can deliver. Think about it... Have you ever ordered something on the internet and when you got it you were disappointed with what you got? Anytime you put any person, any thing, any product in the place of God, anytime you expect any one to solve all your problems or guarantee all your happiness you're going to be disappointed. Idols will always disappoint you.

**2. Idols will dominate you.** If you don't watch out for it... they end up controlling your life. Paul said, *"Before you knew Christ you were controlled by dead idols, who always led you astray."* Look at the words **"controlled"** and **"always led astray"**. It says there are two inevitable effects when you love something more than God: 1) **The thing you love more than God will begin to control you. In fact,** the word we use today for idols is the word "addiction". You can be addicted to your work, to sex, to sports, to numerous things besides alcohol or drugs. But eventually it runs your life... when you love something more than you love God. People say *"I can give it up at any time."* Then the question is... why don't you? 2) **You will be led astray**, when you lose your perspective... this is when something takes the number one place in your life... that ought to be where God is. How many people... by the lure of a promotion were led to neglect their family at a crucial time in the kids lives? *Or for the promise of fame compromised their integrity?* Or for the profit motive they threw their convictions out the door. God says if you don't watch out, an idol, anything that you love more than God will distract you and you will lose your values. It will dominate your life.

**3. Idols will deform you.** They will change you. They'll warp you, you will lose your uniqueness that God gave you because you become like what you value most. Psalm 115:8 *"Those who make idols become like them and so will those who trust in them."* We shape an idol and it ends up shaping us. You will become like whatever is first place in your life. So you better reserve that spot for God or you're going to get deformed from being what God meant for you to be in the first place. *One time a rich young ruler came to Jesus. He said "What must I do to follow Christ? What must I do to have eternal life?" Jesus says to this young successful millennial, "Go, sell everything you've got and give it to the poor and come follow me."* It's interesting that not one other time in the Bible did Jesus say that to anybody. He only said it to him. Why? Because Jesus knew what was the idol in his life... and that was his bank account. He went straight to the heart of the issue and said, You've got another god in your life and if you really want to follow Me, give up what you've got and come, follow Me. Be willing to let go of anything for Me to be first in your life. It says that this young millennial counted the cost, decided it wasn't worth it and walked away... and did not follow Him.

What do you need to give up? What is it that you're holding on to that's keeping you from being all God wants you to be? *"I don't want to let go of this relationship; I know it's not right but I don't want to let go of it."* *"I know this career is not right but I'm going to hold on to it."* *"I know this habit isn't right, but I'm going to hold on to it."* It's an idol. If God tells you to give up something and you can't let

go of it, you don't own it, it owns you. Have you ever thought of how big a hundred dollar bill looks in church when you're giving an offering and how small it looks at the grocery store? Why does it look so big when I'm going to give it to God? (A family was going home from church and the father was complaining about the service: the sermon was too long, the music was too loud, the room was too hot. And he was griping and complaining when the son in the back seat said, "Dad, I didn't think it was such a bad show for a buck.")

Do you remember the 3rd in the Indiana Jones series, the Last Crusade? In the last scene they find the holy grail. Then there is an earthquake, the earth splits and the lady who's been trying to get the grail through the whole show, falls down into a crevice. She's either got to grab the grail or let go. They're saying, Save your life! But she reaches after the wrong thing and loses her life. She couldn't let go. Idols will distract you, dominate you, disappoint you, and will eventually destroy you if you don't watch out. So God says, *"For your own good don't let anything get first place in your life -- career, girlfriend, ideology, dream, not anything, keep Me first."*

**II. WORSHIP ONLY GOD!** Worship means giving God our highest love and devotion... our highest loyalty. And only God deserves that. Not any person, any career, not any thing, not any ideology or political affiliation, only God deserves that because He made me. Unfortunately, most people are like the people talked about in Romans 1 *"Many exchange the truth about God for a lie; they worship and serve what God has created... instead of the Creator himself."* Do you know anybody that does that? Sure, they're all out at the lake this week. Or the golf course, or camping... You know... Recreation. Millions of people are worshiping the creation rather than the creator. They're not in church. You know, It really blows my mind when I think about all the crazy things that people will worship -- intelligent rational human beings. They will worship nature -- *the radical environmentalists will worship trees and nature*. They will worship pyramids, good luck charms, stars, astrology, crystals (look to it for guidance and power). What in the world would make intelligent, rational human beings do such stupid things?

Well... There are actually two motives behind idols. And they are both sinful... and they are all equally as stupid. **1. It's an attempt to reduce God's power and size.** It's where we think... I'm going to whittle Him down to size. If I've got God in a statue, in a little box or an idea (God's only in the Bible) then it's less imposing, less threatening, He's not everywhere and He can't do everything. He's more convenient and more manageable. We have reversed Genesis 1:27 that says *"Let us make man in our image"* and now we're saying, Let us make God in our image. We want to make God like us. People say "My idea of God is..." I want to ask "What made you the authority?" Just because you think God is a certain way doesn't mean it's right. You better know the real facts. I could say I think God's a frog, that doesn't mean it's right. What you're doing is you're shaping God to your own standards. So why do we do it? Because It's a whole lot easier to change my image of God than it is to change me.

So if God says, "Don't commit adultery" But instead we say, oh I'll just change my image of God. I'll say, *"I don't think God cares about that and He kind of winks at immorality."* A lot of people change their theology because they can't justify their lifestyle any other way. We want to make God like us. God calls that idolatry. *The little girl was drawing a picture at school and she said, "I'm drawing a picture of God." The teacher said, "But nobody knows what God looks like." The girl said, "They will when I get through."* That's harmless for a kid but a lot of adults are doing that. I'll make God in my image so He justifies my lifestyle or my hatred or my ideology... and then I don't have to worry about it... you know the contradiction that I'm living in. We want God in our lives but we want Him in small, premeasured doses. We don't want this thing to get out of control, out of hand. I want just enough God to bless me... but I don't want Him to run my life. Really what I want is a genie. That's what most people want. Not a god but a genie.

**2. That's the second reason they have idols, they want to control God.** When you have an idol, the worshiper has more control than the person being worshiped. A lot of people want a god that they can manipulate. Like the little boy who wanted a new bicycle and told his mom. She said "Why don't you pray about it?" He decided he would write a letter to Jesus "Dear Jesus, I want a new bicycle and I've been perfect for the last year." He knew that wasn't right so he crumpled the page and threw it away. "Dear Jesus, I've been a good boy most of the time." He knew that wasn't right so he threw that away. "Dear Jesus, I want to be a good boy." He knew that wasn't right either, so he threw that away. He goes into the living room, grabs the statue of Mary, wraps it up in a towel and throws it under the bed. Then he writes, "If you ever want to see your mother again..." I know an awful lot of adults who try to do that in an adult way. They try to manipulate God. "God, You owe me this." "God, I demand this." But that's almost comical... Because You don't demand anything from God and we certainly can't manipulate God. That's not the way God works and it's also not the way he says we should come to Him. He says instead, We are to worship Him only.

It is not easy building a family on God's values when everything else in society is saying "These are the values you ought to idolize". But God's call to us again and again is to keep Him first. To trust Him. To remember his promises of forgiveness and life. To experience his love and his care as you walk through life. And To hear his call to you to follow. Realizing that as we do, we walk in the loving arms of God... and I promise you... that is where life starts becoming a whole lot better.

# ACCEPT NO SUBSTITUTES

Ten Values That Build Strong Families - Part 2 of 10  
Jeremiah 10:6-16, **Romans 1:18-32**

"You shall not make any idols ... you must never bow to an image or worship it in any way." Exodus 20:4-5 (LB)

## 2 Principles

### I. DON'T 'IDOLIZE' ANYTHING!

"Idolize" - to \_\_\_\_\_ something more than God.

"For your own good ... don't sin by making an idol in any form at all." Deuteronomy 4:15-16 (GN)

Why?

1. Idols will \_\_\_\_\_

"...those who make idols are disillusioned because the gods they make are false and lifeless." Jeremiah 10:14 (GN)

"What's the use of an idol? It's only something a man has made. What good does it do ... to trust it? Habakkuk 2:18 (GN)

2. Idols will \_\_\_\_\_

"... (before you knew Christ) you were controlled by dead idols, who always led you astray." I Corinthians 12:2 (GN)

3. Idols will \_\_\_\_\_

"Those who make idols will become like them, and so will those who trust in them." Psalm 115:8

"They worshiped worthless things and became worthless themselves." Jeremiah 2:5 (GN)

### II. WORSHIP ONLY GOD!

"Worship" -- to give my highest

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Two Motives behind idols.

1. It's an attempt to reduce God's

\_\_\_\_\_

2. They want to \_\_\_\_\_

"(Many) exchange the truth about God for a lie; they worship and serve what God has created instead of the Creator himself!" Romans 1:25 (GN)