Olive Drive Church

Lesson 30: Thursday, February 18, 2016

**TEACHING NOTES**

**Q45. Why does God give the first commandment: You shall have no other gods before me?**

So we will worship only God. He is the one true God.

Good evening everyone. It’s my pleasure to be teaching tonight’s catechism question. The depth that we have been diving into and our time here has born great fruit in you guys and I say that confidently because even our simple conversations are filled with truths of God far more than I recall in the past 12 years that I have been here. This is such a sweet thing to see my church family and myself growing in our knowledge and love of God. Let’s read our catechism question and answer and then I’ll open our time in prayer.

**Q45. Why does God give the first commandment: You shall have no other gods before me?**

So we will worship only God. He is the one true God.

Bow your heads with me, Father thank you for this night. Thank you Lord for your commandments, for your law. It is sweeter than honeycomb on our lips. Give us wisdom and discernment tonight as we dive into the first and most important commandment given to us. Thank you for this church family who’s diving in and chasing after you Lord. We hope and intend that this time tonight is fruitful for us and glorifying to you! In Jesus’s name, amen.

Open up your bibles to Exodus 20:2-3

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

Intro: You, you (insert names) shall have no other gods before me. The word “you” that is used here is in the second person singular. That means that God did not say you Israel shall have no other gods before Me. It’s not you people or you believers. This verse is singular you (insert names) shall have no other gods before me. This commandment is for the individual. You’re not safe because your mom had no other gods before Him. You must have NO OTHER gOD’S BEFORE ME.

The very first commandment bears a personal weight that should be known well. There is no way to fulfill the other commandments if you have not obeyed the first. Of course I am not talking about perfect obedience of this commandment, however if the one true God is not your God then all of these other commands will not be obeyed for the correct reason or in the correct way. Rob spoke last week of a world that loves the “do unto others as you’d have done unto you” command.

The sad part is the world cannot obey that command properly because if God is not their God, then they will never understand what this truly means (they can’t do it correctly) and they will never obey the commandment for God’s glory alone (they can’t do it for the right reason). They will not be able to obey it or obey it correctly. The argument has been made and I agree that the breaking of any commandment is a breaking of the first commandment. If you do not keep the Sabbath you are practically living as if God is not your God. If you covet, you are practically living as if God is not your God. If you make an image of God to worship, you are breaking the first commandment. You’re practically living as if God is not your God. Obviously this needs some more unpacking, but what I am aiming to do with this introduction is give you a reason to listen to what I’ll be sharing tonight. It’s far too easy to space out or think you understand what this commandment is speaking about because it is so familiar for most of you. If you’ve been in church for any extended season you’ve likely heard this commandment and if you were raised in church, you’ve likely memorized this commandment. So pay attention tonight as there is far more here than I understood in the past and my goal tonight is to unpack the depth of this commandment as much as possible in my allotted time. Each commandment given has positive and negative implications. Of the Ten Commandments, 2 are spoken in a positive form and 8 are spoken in negative (or restrictive) form, but each of these commandments have positive and negative law in them. What I want to do tonight is help you to understand well the positive and negative side of this commandment and then end with a practical way for us to live out the answer. So first I want to show you at least 5 things this commandment prohibits. Second I want to show you 3 things this commandment requires. Third I want to show you practically how we live this commandment out.

So let’s dig in.

Point 1- There are at least 5 things this commandment prohibits and I’ll lay them out here for you now. This commandment prohibits atheism, agnosticism, polytheism, pluralism, and idolatry.

Atheism

Starting with what this commandment has to do with the concept of atheism. Atheists believe that there is no god. The commandment we read disagrees, I am the Lord who brought you out of Egypt out of the house of slavery you (every individual) shall have no gods before Me”. The denial of God’s existence by atheists does not absolve the fact that He DOES exist!

Psalm 14:1 To the choirmaster. Of David. The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds, there is none who does good.

 If He must be your God and you cannot have any other gods, then clearly atheism is unacceptable according to this command.

 You see, this commandment implies that you MUST have a god and that God MUST be the God of the Holy Bible. Now, I’m sure this isn’t hard for most of you. In fact, you’re probably saying “Yeah, we know God exists. That’s why we’re here right? To learn more about God?” So, we clearly don’t hold to atheism. But let me say this; you and I have practiced and probably still do practice practical atheism. Maybe not the outright verbal claiming of “there is no god”, but we practically live this out every time we see creation and its beauty and are indifferent. Every time you receive a blessing and do not stop to thank God for it, you live practically as if there is no God. How about this- have you ever experienced a trial in your life? Did you thank God for it? I’m not talking about after the trial when you finally saw what God was doing. I’m talking about in the moment of gut wrenching pain and the sting of the hurt, did you acknowledge God? If not, then you’re acting as a practical atheist.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (ESV)

**16**Rejoice always, **17**pray without ceasing, **18**give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

See how we are to acknowledge the one true God in all things? James speaks to part of this as well:

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

Every good and perfect gift is from God. Even your morning cup of coffee deserves gratitude in your heart to God as a good gift He gives you. When you just drink it and don’t think of God or give Him praise for it, you live like a practical atheist. If we are honest, our lack of acknowledgement and patterns of just doing life would likely reveal that we live a lot of our lives as if there is no god.

Let’s look at the second prohibition agnosticism.

Agnostic

The Greek word for agnostic “agnosis” has two parts in the Greek- ‘a’ negates a word (no or not) and gnosis means knowledge – the literal translation is without knowledge or no knowledge. The Latin word that has the same definition is ignoramus. It means no knowledge. Our more common name or a word we use more often is ignorant. Ignorance does not necessarily imply stupidity. It actually means you simply don’t know about something. You have no knowledge of a particular thing. You can be ignorant and not dumb. My daughter is ignorant about chemistry. She is not dumb. She simply hasn’t learned about chemistry yet. Agnostics acknowledge that there might be a god, but say we have no real way of knowing him. There might be a god, but we can’t prove it. The idea of god is purely religious and we have no way of backing it up- no proof. You see, agnostics try to play a role of objective and neutral. The problem is that they are blind!

This is the same problem that all unbelievers have. God’s commandment for each of us personally to have Him as our God and to have nothing else in his presence implies an ability to know Him. Ignorance of the one true God will not be an acceptable plea when your judgment time comes. When God says I am the God you must have (you shall have no other gods before Me). You must have a god and it must be Me. This implies that you can know God. If you cannot know who God is, this commandment would make no sense. How would you know if you were placing other things as gods in your life if you were not able to know anything about this God? Now perhaps you can already begin to see where I’m going with this. The commandment given here is that you have the correct God as your God and no other gods at ALL. How can you know if the god you claim to live for is the one true God if you’re ignorant about God? The so-called Christian who says he loves God, but doesn’t need to study him doesn’t need to know theology (the word theology literally means study of God) is practicing practical agnosticism. Any Christian who is ignorant of what can be known about the one true God is practicing practical agnosticism. A few years ago, my stepdad was in Florida and received a ticket for driving over 25 in a school zone. The problem for my stepdad was that it was a Saturday and there were no kids around. When he explained to the officer that there weren’t any kids around and there was no school on Saturday the officer told him that in Florida any school zone is 25mph all the time- period. Then the officer said, “Ignorance of the law is no excuse” and handed my stepdad his ticket. If you love and give your life for a god who does not exist because you are ignorant and never do the work to know who this God of the Bible is, you will not be excused in the end. There are many people who claim to love Jesus, but the Jesus they love doesn’t actually exist. The Jesus they love would never condemn them. The Jesus they love exists to make them happy, but he never cared that they know who he is and what he commands of them. Except this Jesus doesn’t exist because the Jesus of the Bible said these words as his last commandment-

Matthew 28:19-20 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, (20) teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

To say you love God yet remain willingly ignorant of the one true God is dangerous and ultimately you are practicing practical agnosticism. Romans 1 tells what can be known about God is revealed through His creation leaving no one with an excuse, however people willingly trade the truth for a lie and become or remain ignorant. When we willingly remain ignorant about God, we are practicing a practical form of agnosticism. Just to clear something up that may be on your mind- you and I cannot fully 100% understand God. It is, however, our responsibility to know what God has revealed about himself in the Scriptures. The Bible is what God has given to us to know Him.

The Bible alone is sufficient and authoritative. If you do not study it, if you do not sit under sound teaching of it, if you are not discipled in it, if you do not grow in your knowledge of the one true God, you are practicing practical agnosticism. Take note, this process doesn’t happen alone. God has saved us into a family and put leaders and discipleship into place. I, personally, would have believed things about God that were not true if I never involved others in my studying. We need godly brothers and sisters who have also involved others to come to a right understanding of God, so don’t only ever study alone.

Let’s move to the third prohibition Polytheism:

Polytheism

Polytheism is the belief that there are many gods. You shall have no other gods before Me. This commandment does not imply that there are other gods. This would be a terrible error. When the commandment says “before Me,” God expects you to know the truth about Him being omnipresent and so in this commandment, He is saying you shall have nothing in your life that takes the role of god- the rightful role that I have. You shall not give anything my position, but more than that, a false god or an idol shall not be in my presence at all. My presence is everywhere and you shall place nothing in my presence before me that takes my rightful role. We know from many other versus all throughout scripture that there is only one God. If you understand this verse correctly you will see that there are no other gods and that when we place other gods (false gods and idols) in the position that only YHWH deserves, then we become practical polytheists. If you claim to believe in the one true God and at the same time you place other things in your life on God’s throne, then you are practicing practical polytheism. You’re living as if there is more than one god. If you claim to know, believe in, and trust God yet you do what you want when it is in direct violation of that one true God, then you’re taking the place of God yourself and practicing practical polytheism. You are living as if you are god even though you’re claiming there is only one God.

Our fourth prohibition from this commandment is Pluralism:

Pluralism

Pluralism is the belief that each religion in the world has some part of the truth and all religions will eventually lead us to the one truth. This is probably the most prevalent of beliefs in our day. They say: even though different religions have different names for god, some day we will see that they all are really the same one. This is also called syncretism. The belief that all religions are valid. They all have an aspect of truth. They are all pursuing the same thing though they use different names. It’s ultimately the same thing. But, they are NOT the same. The current Jewish god is NOT the God of the Bible. Jews do not worship the Christian God, Muslims do not worship the Christian God, and Mormons do not worship the Christian God. They do NOT.

The real push behind this line of thinking is our current world’s view of truth. They say: no one can have ultimate truth. That would be exclusive and arrogant. You can’t possibly think you have the absolute truth. Besides the fact that this statement itself would be a truth statement and would therefore contradict itself. God Himself has said very clearly that He is the only true God. He is the only God at all. There are no other gods. If pluralism were true, then anything we placed on God’s throne in our life would be ok because ultimately, in the end, it would just lead to the one true god. If the belief of pluralism were true then we couldn’t possibly have idols. All gods would be ok and therefore this command would be absolutely unnecessary. The mere fact that we are commanded to have no other gods before Me shows us that there is one God. That one God is the Me in this verse. The “Me” in this verse, the one true God, will allow us zero room to have anything in existence take His place. You shall have NO OTHER gods before or in my presence. If pluralism were acceptable, then God would have no need to give this commandment. This again is why it is so important to rightfully know the one true God. If you’re trusting in a god who is not the one true God or you tolerate that lie that other paths lead to God, then you’re in violation of the first and most important commandment.

When we place anything above God or even on the same level as God, we are breaking this first commandment. When we allow trial and tribulations to break our confidence in the sovereignty of God, then we allow these fears and anxieties to sit on God’s throne. Even worries and misplaced trust can become our god if we allow them.

Finally the 5th prohibition is idolatry:

Idolatry

Man was created to be a worshiper. If you’ve been here at ODC for long, you’ve probably heard the quote that our hearts are idol factories. We are constantly placing created things on the Creator’s throne. The things we idolize are not necessarily bad things, but they are ANY-anything that we place on God’s throne. Your friends, family, job, fill in the blank, are good things, but when you make them ultimate things you are having other false gods before the face of the one true God. You are therefore in violation of the first commandment. When Catholics pray to Mary, they assume things about her that are only true of God. They assume that she (though she’s dead) can hear them- not just the individual but all those who pray to her. So, she must be omnipresent (remember only God is omnipresent). They assume she can hear everyone’s prayers, so she must be omniscient (remember only God is omniscient). The practice of praying to Mary or any saint is a form of idolatry. God will not stand for this! The saints and Mary are created things not the Creator and prayer is a form of worship which is to be reserved for God alone.

We may not be guilty of worshiping a golden calf, but we certainly practice practical idolatry daily when we place things that are created on the throne reserved for the Creator alone. One of the easiest tests of idolatry is this: what do you worship?

John 4:24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

1 John 5:20-21 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. (21) Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

When you worship God but you do not do it in truth, you are worshiping an idol not God. Let me say it this way:

When you worship a god who is all love and no wrath- that is idolatry.

When you worship a god who is mother, not father- that is idolatry.

When you worship a god who is not triune in nature- that is idolatry.

When you worship a god who needs you- that is idolatry.

When you worship a god who wants you to be happy regardless of commandments he’s given against the very things you say will make you happy- that is idolatry.

When you worship a god who somehow gave up his sovereign power so you could have a totally free will to choose salvation- that is idolatry.

All of these things are blasphemy because they are not true. When you worship in ways that are untrue, you are not only blaspheming the one true God, but you are in effect worshiping a false god and guilty of idolatry. How you worship matters. We are to worship God in spirit and truth. A spiritually dead man, someone who has not been saved by God, cannot worship in spirit and therefore can only worship idols. If you worship God for anything the Scriptures do not reveal about Him, you’re worshiping an idol. The only way to avoid idol worship is to know and worship the God of the Bible. This, again, is another reason why theology is so important. This is why we care about what songs we sing in our worship set. God is not glorified when you worship him falsely. You must worship God in spirit and truth.

There is so much more to be said about idolatry, but we have certainly covered this topic in great depth through Josh’s sermons and our catechisms. So, again, I said there were at least 5 things this commandment prohibits and they are: 1. Atheism- the belief that there is no God,

2. Agnosticism- the belief that though there may be a god, we can’t know said god,

3. Pluralism- there are many gods,

4. Polytheism- all religions and gods are ultimately the same, and

5. Idolatry or simply making your own god out of something.

So, let me move on to the second point tonight which is the positive side of the commandment.

Point 2- Three things this commandment requires:

1. You must have a God, 2. That God must be Me, 3. That God must be Me alone.

So, you must have a God. We were created to worship, as I said earlier, and we must have an object to worship. The only object worthy of our worship is YHWH- our covenant God. I don’t have to spend much time here, but let me say this again- if you don’t have a god who you surrender your life to, then you’re saving your life for yourself and you are your own god. Jesus says in John 12:24-26:

John 12:24-26 Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. (25) Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. (26) If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

Jesus was, of course, telling his disciples about the hour that had come. It was his time to be crucified. Now look, the context and point of these verses could not be clearer. If you serve Christ, you will give your life for Him as He literally gave His life for you. Where He goes, you will follow. He went to the cross for your sake. You give your life for His name to be known. Whoever loves his life will lose it, whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. John uses this word hate again in John 14:25-35 when Jesus says if you don’t hate mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, yes, even your own life you can’t be His disciple. The use of the word hate here is meant to catch our attention and help us see the distance between our love for God in comparison to our love for anything else. You must have a God and…

that God MUST be ME! The second requirement is that YHWH must be the God you have.

The word Me has a lot in it. This Me is the Me as God has revealed Himself in the Scriptures. This is not just any Me we are talking about. We cannot define the Me here. We must worship God as He has revealed himself in Scripture. In some very real practical ways let’s just consider how dumb it is when we make other things god. For instance, you are your own worst enemy. No one has lied to you more than you. If you place yourself on the throne, it goes terribly wrong. Hear me tonight- if you place yourself on the throne for too long you’ll actually, because of your hardened heart, believe it’s going good. One way you can tell if this has happened is if multiple friends have attempted to gracefully confront you about something multiple times and you believe they are all wrong. You see, when you’re the only one who’s right, you’ve probably become your own god.

I have had this one happen to me and I’ve done this to others. If you can’t be taught by someone who’s younger than you, then there’s a good chance you’ve become your own god. If this is you tonight, repent. Grab your leader and let them know this is your struggle. This is a very real struggle for most of us, so your leader won’t be shocked to hear this. In fact, they probably, if not, definitely have struggled with this at some point themselves.

How about when we make our spouses our god. My wife is a sinner just like me. She was never created to handle the load of savior and she never will be able to. If you’ve been in my life for long, you certainly know you don’t want me as your god, right? You see, this commandment is for our good. God is the only one who can hold the throne, the only unchanging perfectly holy one and when we place other things on His throne, it goes bad for us. Look, anything you place on God’s throne will fail you! Hopefully you’ll see the failure by God’s grace and turn back to Him. The worst thing that could happen is that you believe the failed item and due to a hard heart you get handed over to your desires. Hey, your job can end tomorrow, your wife or parent or best friend could be gone tomorrow, your money could be gone tomorrow, your house, your strength, your mind, these would all be very poor gods because they have no strength because they are not God.

The bigger part of this point though is that the God you have must be Me and when God says this, He could add the real me. If your god is not the one described by the words of the Holy Bible, then it is not the “ME” this verse is referring to. The only way to know if the God you’re trusting in is the God of this Bible is to study it. Many people have invested their life into the studying of the Scriptures and yet they still fail to understand correctly who the God of the Bible truly is. This truth should not slow or deter you from studying, rather it should cause you to want to study it more diligently and to ask your leaders- those who God has entrusted you to- when you have questions. Don’t just talk to anyone or google search it. Be discerning in the people you ask, but ask. I can think of few things that would be worse than devoting your life to a god you thought was the God to only come to the end of your life and realize that you were wrong. So, you must first have a god and then that God must be the correct God of the Holy Bible. Remember the verse we had in previous catechism questions hitting on this point to understand him rightly and give yourself to this study is:

Jeremiah 9:24 NKJV)

**24**But let him who glories glory in this,
That he understands and knows Me,
That I *am* the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth.
For in these I delight,” says the Lord.

Finally, you must have this God alone!

When God says you shall have no other gods before me, he literally means before his face. When I taught on God’s omnipresence, I taught you that there is no place where God does not exist. He is not limited by special restrictions. Since this is true, then God has declared that you must not have anything as your Lord other than Him. We have often heard that for a Christian husband the hierarchy of focus is first God, second wife, third children, etc. The problem is God is in his own category. There’s no first God, second wife. It’s first God and then whatever category you put these other things in must be so far away from God that it’s clear that they are not even in the same category. God demands that you not only have a God, but that the God must be him (him truly) and must be Him alone. He will not allow you to have divided loyalties. God does not share his glory with anything!

Isaiah 42:8 I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.

God is not interested or satisfied or pleased with your half-heartedness. He demands nothing less than total undivided devotion.

Point 3-This brings me to the final part of our catechism on the first commandment:

How do we practically live this out? Our answer to the catechism question is: *So we will worship only God. He is the one true God.*

So, how do we practically worship only God? There are a lot of things I’ve touched on throughout this lecture, but I’ll try to do this in more detail here.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:31: So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

One of the very practical ways we obey this command is to be consciously aware that whatever we do, we should be doing it with the aim to glorify God. This sounds simple, but it is definitely a hard thing to do. Praise God you get the rest of your life, however long that may be, to practice it. This plays itself out practically in a number of ways. When you see creation and its beauty, acknowledge the God who created it! When you see destroyed creation because of man’s sin, acknowledge the wretchedness of sin and thank God for His forgiveness. I tell my daughter this one all the time- when you wrote that sentence or drew that picture did you do your best because you’re thankful God made you and gave you the ability to draw and write and think or did you just do it to get it done? How about you? When you’re working, do you tackle some task you’re given with desire to show God how thankful you are that He gave you a mind and a body and the very job you’re working or do you do just enough to look good and keep your job? Do you work as if God were there with you while you you’re working? How about how you eat? This is certainly an area of struggle for me.

I don’t fail to acknowledge God creating amazing flavors and tastes that I enjoy, but when I eat it, I eat like I may never get to eat it again. Well, that is not glorifying to God. What really happens in that circumstance is food has become my Lord and I’m serving it. So, very practically, when it comes to eating, I can enjoy any and all the flavors that God has made for me to have and enjoy, but I must do it in moderation proving that I love God more than the flavors He created. This is something I’m making war with. Repentance in action.

Living in light of the first commandment is a life with a continuous, consistent, and constant focus on the things of God. When you wake up, are you in awe that the God of the universe, who is largely disrespected and blasphemed by the majority of the world, allowed another sunrise? It should blow our minds that God has been so gracious towards us and that He patiently awaits the salvation of all of his beloved elect before He destroys sin and eternally punishes man. When you wake up are you likely mad that the alarm is going off and wish you could have more sleep? Do you look toward your day with the hopes of opportunities to glorify God in the way you live your life or are you just going through the motions of your ordinary life? Have you ever asked yourself with the true desire to follow through how you might give up your life in this day for God? The day isn’t over guys. That can still happen. We really struggle to do these things because ultimately or, at least, very practically we live our lives as if we personally are the god of the first commandment. We are offended by our alarm clock because we selfishly want more sleep. Hey, if you wanted more sleep, why did you stay up so late the night before? When I lose sleep doing the work of God, I wake up tired for sure, but there is something so sweet about that tiredness. It causes me to trust in Gods strength and His energy.

Lamentations 3:22-23 The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; (23) they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

A life lived out for God’s glory remembers this verse for hope when things are hard. God’s mercies are never ending. They are new every morning. God’s steadfast love is unending. We will be given what we need to obey this command each day. Practice this week waking up and turning your mind to praise for another morning, another day to live and give your life to God. Start with prayer. This can be a practical way to turn your conscious focus to God from the moment you wake up. Before you roll from bed this week every morning, say a short prayer before your feet hit the ground. This doesn’t have to be long or filled with big words. Most of you who I know couldn’t use words bigger than a few syllables when you first wake up anyways. My whole point is, we practically live out the first commandment when we practice glorifying God in all that we do. Study the Bible daily. You don’t have to read an entire book. You could study the same passage every day this week and really work hard to know and understand this verse completely and perhaps even memorizing it. Remember to ask yourself in the middle of a very stressful work day who you are working for.

This is going to happen to you this week now. At some random point in your day you’ll remember this question and when you do, take the last hour that you worked into your mind and be honest with yourself and ask this question. If your answer is no, then refocus that God’s mercies are new continuously and spend the rest of your day glorifying God by the work you do. All of these things take practice. Some of us can start with seven new things. Some of us only one, but a life lived out for God’s glory in obedience of the first commandment takes practice.

Probably the most important and most practical way is to be in discipleship. If you have not taken up the leaders at your table on their offer to disciple you, you’re simply wasting one of the greatest and most practical tools you have. A little side note on discipleship that you heard from Josh’s sermon, but in case you missed it or need to hear it again: discipleship is you trusting the person disciplining you with every aspect of your life. You come to your discipler and say, “Here is my life- any area at all. What do I do? How do I be a Christian?” This is something you must want to do. You can’t come halfhearted or you’ll waste your time and theirs. Again, this has been spoken about more recently by Josh, so I won’t spend more time on it. Jesus gave as His parting commandment that we go and make disciples of all the nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey all that He has commanded us. You can’t be a discipler until you’ve been discipled and you can’t be a disciple if you’re not all in. So, if you’re not in either of these categories, you are in sin.

 Now lest this becomes a 7-ways-to-help-you-be-a-better-Christian lesson, please hear me out. The gospel is the only power we have to live our lives every day for God’s glory. If God hasn’t saved you, then you can do nothing of what I just talked about. If you’re doing these things thinking that they will save you, you do not understand the gospel. The gospel we believe in is one of grace from start to finish. God not only planned to save His people before He created any of them. He actually carried out everything necessary to pay for their sins and impute Jesus’ perfect record to them despite their sin and finally he causes them to believe in Him. Start to finish, God saves. This is amazing grace. We obey the first commandment because our Lord commands it and because He saved us so we can have Him as our Lord. For us believers, we have the ability to obey it because God has saved us. Who is the Lord of your life? Who do you devote your time, talents, and treasures to?

Closing- So, I told you that there were three main points for the night. The first one was the prohibitions this commandment implies. The second point was the three requirements it expressly states. The third was a practical living out of our answer that we would worship God alone. As always, my hope is that this was fruitful for you and a catalyst to your group time and your week ahead.

Let me close in prayer.