

Have No Other Gods

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To many Christians, the 10 Commandments are an onerous burden. They regard the Commandments as a set of rules that limits them. This article, however, sets out to show that the 10 Commandments were given that we have and live a more abundant life.

To live a happy and successful life, we must obey the 10 Commandments because the God who made us knows best. When God gave the 10 Commandments to the Israelites, He was giving them the means to enjoy the freedom of living apart from sinful pleasure of the world. He had just brought out the Jews out of 400 years of slavery in Egypt. For 400 years they were exposed to the pagan world and were bound to their practices and habits.

But now, they are free. But, for what? To do as they please? No, that was not God's plan. He had established a relationship with them and now led them out of Egypt. He wanted to assure them that they would enjoy a relationship with Him. He had to show them how to live and enjoy Him. He designed this through the 10 Commandment. (Exodus 20:3-17)

This was His Decalogue. The root word "deca" means ten as in decade and "logue" stands for "logos" which means the word. The words drew a boundary within which the Jews had to live. It was God's law of right living that clearly spelt out the responsibility involved in relating to God and to one another. Within this boundary they enjoyed the limitless freedom of living a life of fullness and where God was supreme. Outside of this life, they will live a miserable life because of sin.

The Commandments are divided into two groups. The first four define our relationship with God and the remaining six define our relationship with one another. In defining how we are to behave, God is putting the limits that will keep us from falling out of relationship with Him. The limitations protect us.

The limitations are God's proof of His love for us. He loves us and wants to draw us close to Him. Through His commandments, He keeps us within the boundary of His love. Hebrews 12:5-6 describes how His love for us is also demonstrated by His discipline of us. It states: "And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses to you as sons: 'My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines the one He love, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.' "

The commandment are thus God's strategy for releasing the believer to live the good life that comes only by obedience. Jesus Himself affirms this when He said in Matt 22: 37-38: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment."

By restating the commandments, Jesus showed what the father meant when He gave the 10 Commandments – that building a relationship with God was more important than mere obedience to rules. The first and foundational condition for the success of this relationship then is our love for Him. The command to love Him with all our heart, mind and soul is for our good. This how we can come to know our God. Upon that basis, He proves that He IS our God. There can be no other.

THE PREEMINENCE OF GOD

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

The first two commandments can be paraphrased as "I am the Lord your God; you shall have no other gods before me." They categorically state, firstly, that He is the Creator God and there is none like Him, and, secondly, that the other gods are not to be worshipped because they are God's of our creation.

God also declares His preeminent position above all other so-called gods. Therefore, we should worship none other. If we worship graven images, we are not worshipping the one and only true living Jehovah God; we are worshipping carved images of our own finite minds.

There are other Gods; God refers to them as the other "gods", but they cannot be substituted for Him. If we worship them, we offer Satan a chance to step in and keep us worshipping our own creation without us realising it. He succeeds because we are not really worshipping the true God. There is, therefore, no alternative to worshipping the Jehovah God. We must refuse any alternative. This commandment is a strong imperative. Have other gods and suffer the consequences.

The Commandment Are for Our Good

God created man. The Bible says: "So, God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27). As our Creator God, He must be preeminent in our lives. This is His rightful position.

As the God who loves us, His concerns are for our good. He has a plans for us and it is good. He reassures us in Jeremiah 29:11 : “ ‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’ ”

He must also be preeminent in our lives because He redeemed us. In 1 Corinthians 6:20, He says: “You were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.” God redeemed us with the blood of His precious Son. We belong to Him and He is worthy of that preeminent place in our lives.

By His commands and the work He did on the cross, God our Creator and Redeemer has set us free to enjoy all His blessings and these include living victoriously over our human nature. He is a jealous God, guarding over us protectively so that we do not go out of the boundary of His perfect will. He is not selfish in His motives of wanting to worship Him alone. He knows if we worship anything else, we open ourselves to Satan’s plans and that would ruin our whole life now and forever.

THE POTENTIAL TO LIVE VICTORIOUSLY OVER OUR SINFUL NATURE

Worshipping any other god will only hurt us. An image of our own creation can also be a god. Such an image is created according to our own tastes, desires, lust and finite mind. By worshipping images – other gods – we disobey God and allow Satan a foothold in our lives. Obedience to His commandments, however, free us from Satan’s clutches to worship the true and living Jehovah God. When we obey Him, we can enjoy the full liberty of worshipping Him. In worshipping Him, we receive and enjoy freedom and blessings of God that makes us victorious.

We must remember we become limited when we worship other gods. By worshipping them, we submit to their limitations which really are our own limitations. We become victims of our own sinful nature. Ephesians 2:1-2 says: “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this sinful world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.”

We can now obey Him because we are no longer dead in our sins and the work of “the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient” does not have a hold on us anymore.

We are no longer enslaved to the ruler of the kingdom of the air. We have been saved for an eternal purpose, therefore, we should walk with obedience to Christ, knowing that our lives are His and He will not short-change us. He is the faithful God who works for our good. By worshipping any other god, we deprive ourselves of the blessings of living a victorious Life.

Worship Him alone and let Him be God of your life. You will then experience the joy of living a more abundant life.

(All scriptures verses quoted are taken from the New International Version Bible)