

HC 96 – How to Worship: Don't be Innovative

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Looking at this law, it appears it only addresses the issue of not using images to worship God, **but that is just the letter of the law**. The scope of the law is much bigger.

Let me illustrate: If you **tell your child to “get dressed,”** you mean much more than he should put clothes on. You want him to shower, comb his hair, and brush his teeth also. You state the main point and he knows the full meaning of what you intend.

Such is God's law! So in the 2nd command God forbids all corrupt worship, and at the same time, commands by implication, that he is worshipped properly. This is what you will hear about today.

Our headings are:

Prescriptions of Law 2

Prohibitions of Law 2

Our goals are: That **you will worship God better, and you will work until the whole world worships Yahweh.**

96 Q. WHAT IS GOD'S WILL FOR US IN THE SECOND COMMANDMENT?

A. That we in no way make any neither image of God nor worship him in any other way than he has commanded in his Word.

Prescriptions of Law 2

1. Let's read Law 2.

Exodus 20: 4 "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; 5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

2. God requires you worship him in the way he commanded in his Word; you are not to worship him in any other way.

a. None of the elements of worship is left for your imagination – not ever.

b. The day of worship is not left to your imagination.

c. How worship is led and supervised is not left to your imagination. (Male leadership, for example, is required.)

d. God placed the severest judgment on those who perverted his worship.

3. So how does God want to be worshipped?

Worship with prayer, singing, reading and preaching, and the sacraments. So don't look to strange things...or they will pollute your mind- like looking at a prostitute can pollute your heart. God is not pleased when man introduces new elements in worship.

4. Proper worship must be done with *preparation* and with a *pure heart*.

Who goes to a job interview without preparation? And who would dare to go to the throne of heaven unprepared?

If you come to worship tired and exhausted from staying up too late to watch the Leafs lose, or playing computer games, or watching your favorite YouTube videos, is that pleasing to the Lord?

If you come to worship with grudge against your neighbor...or husband...or wife, will God hear your worship?

Matthew 5:23 "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 "leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First **be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.**

If you mind is overrun by work, can you worship properly? Fix everything that hinders your worship. Settle arguments.

5. Form a proper picture of God in your mind in order to properly worship him.

See God's majesty, glory, and holiness...not the fake picture of tall and handsome Caucasian. That is a sinful image that pollutes your homes and your heart. Take them off both walls!

John 4: 23 "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. 24 "God is Spirit, and **those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.**"

6. And search out your lives and see if there are images – literal or figurative- and destroy them.

Deuteronomy 7:5 But thus shall you deal with them: you shall **break down their altars**, and dash in pieces their pillars, and hew down their Asherim, and burn their graven images with fire.

God may remove any other gods you lift up before his face. Think what that may mean to you! What would you lose?

Prohibitions of Law 2

1. Do not bring inappropriate worship before God for they are displeasing and unacceptable.

Look how God rejected Cain's worship. Remember his punishment?

Genesis 4:3 And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. 4 Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, 5 **but He did not respect Cain and his offering.** And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.

Look how God rejected the sons of the High Priest's offering!

Leviticus 10:1 Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. 2 So fire went out from the **LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.**

Look how God rejected Korah's offering...and what God did to the rebels.

Numbers 16: 3 They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?" 35 And **a fire came out from the LORD and consumed the two hundred and fifty men** who were offering incense.

Look how Eli and his sons treated God's worship and what God did to that family!

1Samuel 2:29 'Why do you kick at My sacrifice and My offering which I have commanded in My dwelling place, and honor your sons more than Me, to make yourselves fat with the best of all the offerings of Israel My people?' 31 **'Behold, the days are coming that I will cut off your arm and the arm of your father's house,** so that there will not be an old man in your house.

Look at what King Saul did. He made himself into an idol and as a consequence he lost the kingdom.

1Samuel 15: 22 Then Samuel said: "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. **23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry...**

Look was God did to Ananias and Sapphira for corruption of worship: He killed them.

God even killed those who misused the Lord's Supper. 1Corinthians 11.

2. Now let's see the worse way you can corrupt God's worship: It is to make images of God!

a. The Christian say, "What does "make" mean? Doesn't the command only forbid things that are put together – like something formed with the hand?" The word **"make" means "to carve, chisel, mold, or shape" in any form.**

So **drawings are graven images – they are shaped forms.**

Pictures are merely 2 dimensional images.

b. There is another part of this command many miss: “You shall not make any “likeness” of God.” This includes anyone pretending to be Christ as in movies. The Gospel is not to be spread with movies, but with the lively preaching of God’s Word. **God prescribes the goals and the MEANS to those goals.**

c. Why are images bad? Images debase God to created materials. God must not be limited to his created materials! This is why you must avoid idolatrous paintings in your homes and in churches.

Deuteronomy 4:15 "Take careful heed to yourselves, **for you saw no form when the LORD** spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, 16 **"lest you act corruptly** and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of any figure: **the likeness of male or female,**

d. This was a challenge for Israel throughout Israel’s history and so God had to warn them.

Isaiah 40:18 To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare to Him? 19 **The workman molds an image, The**

goldsmith overspreads it with gold, And the silversmith casts silver chains.

3. Do not worship any images – of the true God or of false gods.

Most people recognize this so I will just make 1 note. **You should avoid joining in any ceremony** with those who are worshipping **idols, like Hindus**. But don't hate those who do. They don't know better!

4. Do not use images to “help” you worship the true God.

That is what the Israelites did when they worshipped the golden serpent which represented Christ.

2Kings 18: 3 And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father David had done. 4 He removed the high places and broke the sacred pillars, cut down the wooden image and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nehushtan.

The Jews never believed Nehushtan was God; they simply wanted to **use it to help them worship God.**

Some Roman Catholics claim they worship God with the heart, but they worship the image of Christ only with their bodies. Senseless. **God has ordained the goals and the means to those goals.**

Other Roman Catholics argue that they only use the image as medium, not as a god. But they are not told to do so.

To justify their idolatry, they make law 1&2 as one law then divide law 10.

5. Do not make or worship any image of any other gods.

This was a challenge for Gentiles. They corrupted worship by using idols.

Acts 17:29 "Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, **we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone**, something shaped **by art and man's devising**.

Romans 1:22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible **God into an image made like corruptible man**—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

6. Do not worship the true God in strange ways!

Don't use strange tongues, divination, pray to Mary, or use candles, or drama.
You are not to use flags. You are not to worship God in any corrupted way. The law is broader than "not worshipping idols."

Conclusion:

God is your Creator and Re-Creator. Only those who are recreated in Jesus are able to worship him.

Because God wants you to worship him properly, he tells you how you are to worship him.

And God will violently destroy those who don't worship him at all or those who pollute his worship or worship him alongside other gods.

He is a jealous God... God's name implies force.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

1. One man wrote: "Christians are prone to idol worship as dry wood is to fire." He was right. Man likes the easy way, and it is easy to worship idols. In India there are classes on how to make your own god. Those gods cost little and they are easy to control.

So watch out for the lure of easy worship!

2. In order to worship God in the way he requires, you must then stay close to God.
Just as a man who is close to his wife is less likely to commit adultery, so if you stay close to God you are less likely to commit spiritual adultery - idolatry.

So feed on his love letter.

Remind yourself of the bloody cross, the epitome of love.

Talk to him; talk to him regularly,

Praising him for provisions and making petitions for more.

Worship God the way he says, not how you want...even if what you want might seem better.

3. God will richly bless you if you do your duty and properly worship him.

Finally, if you are not a Christian, know you must **come to the knowledge of the only true God first** before you can worship him properly – something you are required to do. God is willing to be your God if you call upon him in sincerity, pleading Christ's death as your death. If you reject his offer, you will die and go to hell.