

This is What the Heart Looks Like // “Don’t Remake God in Your Image” // Exodus 20:5–6

Today, we’re going to look at the 2nd commandment.

- For the more astute among you... who realize that last week we did the 3rd commandment, the answer is “Yes, I can count,” and I know that 4 comes after 3... But we skipped #2, because originally I had planned on doing the 2nd commandment as a part of the 1st, so I assigned the campus pastors to preach on the 3rd when I was gone... but then I got into it and realize that the 2nd commandment needed it’s own week... which meant the campus pastors had to preach on 3 before I got to 2... So, it’s not that I can’t count, it’s that I’m not that organized... (I have to explain that...)

Take out Bibles... **Exodus 20:4–6** Or for those of you that are so cool that you have your Bible on your Iphone, take that out... I always feel lame... I feel like people assume I’m texting.. I know that you know that it is a sin to text. If you do use your phones to text while I preach... I pray God would smite your thumbs with carpel tunnel (sp) syndrome...

Commandment #2:

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 or 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 the fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶ but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

This is a command we tend not to pay much attention to, because we think, “Well, I don’t own any graven images... I mean, I had some Superman action figures or some Barbies when I was a kid, but I didn’t really worship them. So, not sure this one is that relevant.”

But when you really understand this one, you’ll see that this commandment is regularly broken by both people inside and outside the church... and, as verse 4 says, when you break it, it has devastating consequences for both you and your family.

We break this commandment whenever we define God in our heart as we want Him to be rather than believing what He reveals Himself to be. Do you ever hear the phrase... “I like to think of God as...”? (My favorite place for that is... **VIDEO**

The bottom line is this: It doesn’t matter how we “like to see God,” God is who He is, and He gets to define Himself to us. We have to conform our conceptions of God to His reality, and not *visa versa*. How we “like to see God” and how “we think God should be” is completely irrelevant. All that matter is what He is really like.

Now, does that seem narrow to you? Well, no more narrow than you are yourself...

- Suppose someone came up to you and said... I want to write a biography of you... In my biography of you, you are an **astronaut**; you’re really, really **bad at** relationships and so you live with **18 cats** because no one will date you. Uhhh... I’m **scared of heights**, I consider myself **pretty nice**, and I’m more of a **dog person**.” “*But this is how I prefer to see you...* You’re much more interesting this way.” You’d be offended. Same way with Jesus. We can’t just remake Him into what we want Him to be. God is who He is.

I would also tell you this... in order to *really* know someone, you have to let them define themselves.

- There is a common problem in marriage... A lot of times in relationships we try to make someone into what we want or need them to be rather than let them be who they are.
 - Psychologists say it is a desire for control... Your spouse says, “I really want or need you to be this in my life (I need you to like these things, I need you to behave like this...)”
 - So, what happens, when you are dating them, you imagine them to be all these things... you only get to know them a little, and then you fill in everything about them in your mind with what you want them to be... but then you get married, and they start to reveal that they are not everything you imagined them to be... and so there’s this conflict as you insist they act like you want them to act... but they, of course, don’t want to become somebody they are not just to cater to your expectations of what you think you want...
- In order really to know someone, you have to let them be who they are... and love them for that. And if you can’t love them that way, don’t marry them.

A lot of times this is exactly what people do to God. People make God into what they want Him to be, rather than just believing Him for who He is. It’s a control thing.

- I have conversations quite often where someone tells me that “their” God wouldn’t be like this... (wouldn’t punish sinners in hell; wouldn’t say homosexuality is wrong)—but they don’t base that on what God has revealed about Himself—they just don’t agree with those things and so they assume God agrees with them—
- They want God to be OK with a certain lifestyle... because they don’t see anything wrong with that lifestyle, so God shouldn’t either...
- Both sides of the aisle do this... sometimes a conservative will imagine God to be racist and judgmental and to hate all the people they hates... and so they have a hard time with God seeing value and worth in people who are very different from them;
- Often liberals imagine God to be morally ambiguous and permissive—and to be ok morally with everything they are ok with.
- For both, they are simply imagining God to be a reflection of themselves (God created man in His image...)

I’m like this... I have ways I expect and “need” God to be, and when He doesn’t appear to be that way, I get angry and disappointed at God. I made a small list this week... “God according to J.D.” It goes something like this:

- “If I obey God, nothing bad will ever happen to my family.”
- Financially, my family and I will never struggle (I’ve been a faithful tither... so, I’ll always have abundant cash flow and get anything I really want...after all, God, I kept up my end of the bargain)
- “God will, guaranteed, give my daughters great husbands who love Jesus and make lots of money” (I’ve put too many prayers in that category for Him to ignore that)
- “God is intensely concerned in my daughter’s swim meets, because He knows her self-esteem is on the line.”
- “God will make sure that people who invent computer viruses that affect my computer will catch a real virus and die a slow, painful death.”
- “No one really goes to hell... except for really, really obstinate bad people, but there’s going to be a loophole for most everyone else somewhere...)

This is how I often want and expect God to be.

But when we do this... not only do I get angry and disappointed, I also rob myself of the joy of really knowing God.

- I did this in my marriage, too... I had these ways I expected Veronica to be... and when she wasn't, I tried to manipulate her into being those things... I expected her to be a quiet, non-opinionated homebody who loved to clean and play the piano... if you know my wife, not all those things are entirely true of her... and not only did my expectations cause conflict, they actually kept me, for a while, from seeing the beauty of who she actually was... turns out the Veronica I married was actually much better than the Veronica I made up....
- It's that way with God, too.

Let me tell you a story that will show you how this works out. This story will show you where breaking this commandment comes from, and the consequences of doing it... **Exodus 32**:

- Right after giving them the commandments, Moses has gone back up in the mountain to commune with God and get more instruction for the people.
- Well, the people get scared... They start saying, "Where'd Moses go... maybe he's dead and not coming back! We're out here all alone in the wilderness."

Let me read to you from **Exodus 32**...

^{32:1} When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, "Up, make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."

² So Aaron said to them, "Take off the rings of gold that are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me."

⁴ And he received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf. And they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!"

⁵ When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made proclamation and said, "Tomorrow shall be a feast to (to whom?) the Lord." ⁶ And they rose up early the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings.

- Now, let me make sure you understand what just happened here. The people are scared. And with good cause: they are wandering homeless in the wilderness without any real defenses and susceptible to the attacks of their enemies.
- Get this: What the people request is not a new god, but they want an image of God they can hold on to. The bull was not a completely separate God; the bull was something God had told them to sacrifice in worship to him. To the ancient people, the bull represented strength... So this was not a completely new god; this was a graven image representing God's strength.
- So, Aaron builds it and declares "a feast to the Lord?" and has them (v. 6) "offer burnt offerings and peace offerings..." which are the very things God has told them to use in worship of Him.
- So, these people are not worshipping a new god, they are worshipping a graven image.

Now watch what happens:

And the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play. (To dance; to walk it out. Actually, "play" means "sexual behavior.")

So, God tells Moses... vs. 7, you better get down there, those stiff-necked, hard hearted idolatrous people have totally corrupted themselves...

¹⁹ And as soon as he came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses' anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain.

²⁰ He took the calf that they had made and burned it with fire and ground it to powder and scattered it on the water and made the people of Israel drink it.

Then, in 1 of my truly favorite scenes in the Old Testament... Moses says, "Aaron, what have you done?"

²² And Aaron said, "Let not the anger of my lord burn hot. You know the people, (I love that... "You know the people, Moses... Moses is like, "Yeah, I know the people") that they are set on evil. ²³ For they said to me, 'Make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' He's actually trying to blame Moses.

And just when his defense couldn't possibly get any dumber... he goes and says, ²⁴ So I said to them, 'Let any who have gold take it off.' So they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and... out came this calf!"

- Seriously... Is Aaron like in middle school? "Yeah, just threw it in the fire, and whoa... what do you know? A golden calf! We should worship it."

OK: 3 insights from this story about graven images:

I. Graven images grow out of idolatry.

- Let me explain this one... Israel created this image because they were scared. They didn't trust God... They weren't satisfied with Him, and felt like they needed something besides Him (or in addition) to them to protect them.
- Now, granted, they made an image that reflected God, but the whole thing was an attempt to guarantee God's protection. Their real idol was a need for guaranteed protection, and they thought they needed that more than they needed God.
- This is idolatry. You make an idol out of something whenever you consider it so fundamental to your life that you could not be happy and secure without it, and you prioritize it or hold on to it over God and His will.
- And you make a graven image when you conceive God in a way that guarantees that He'll give that thing to you.
 - I told you that psychologists say that when we re-imagine people to be a certain way it is because a way of control... we feel like we need them to be a certain way, and so we try to manipulate them into being that way...
 - It's the same with God. We need God to be a certain way because we need something we think He can give us more than we're willing just to be content with Him...
- For example:
 - We feel like we have to have money and prosperity to be happy, so we invent a God that will guarantee that to us. This is called the prosperity Gospel and produces books like *Your Best Life Now*.
 - We really need to see ourselves as good people, so we invent a God who is angrier at other's sins than he is ours.
 - We really need to see vengeance on our enemies, so we invent a God who hates our enemies and prefers us and our culture best.

- We really need sexual freedom, so we invent a God who is ok with it. We really want to engage in homosexuality, or we don't want to tell our friends who practice it that they are wrong, so we reimagine God to be OK with it, because we are ok with it.
- We really need family stability to be happy, so we invent a God who guarantees it!
- Or, I used this example a few weeks ago...
 - A lot of people really want to be out of their marriage and married to, or sleeping with someone else. Now, the Bible very says very clearly that adultery is wrong, and that you shouldn't get divorced, unless there is a very specific set of criteria that are met (and, there are criteria)... and, if not, Jesus said (Matthew 5:32), it's considered adultery. That is clear.
 - So what these people do is they say, "Well, I know God wants me to be happy... and so even though the Bible says this, I know God is OK with me leaving my husband and marrying this other man." Even though the Bible could not be clearer that this is immoral and sinful wrong... it's that they want to be out of their marriage to married to someone else so bad that they are willing to redefine God's word to get it! Their desire for a new marriage is an idol that causes them to re-define God.

A graven image grows out of an idolatrous heart.

II. Graven images distort the real God.

- Instead of seeing God for who He is, you end up seeing Him as your idolatrous, dysfunctional screwed-up heart wants Him to be.
 - God becomes simply a reflection of yourself and a reflection of your idolatry.
- Now, your God may have elements of truth in it, but you're not seeing the whole thing.
 - For example, here, the bull symbolized His strength, which was true, but had no representation of His holiness.
 - But wasn't it true that God was strong, like the bull symbolized? Yes, the image of the bull depicted some *true* things.
- But, listen... **God can never be reduced to a static figure or a single attribute...** He is a being complete in all of His holiness and perfections.
 - He is almighty in strength and perfect in holiness.
 - He is fully just and infinitely loving.
 - He is transcendent above the heavens and also close and intimate in our hearts.
- That's the problem with a graven image of God. It shows you only one dimension of God, never all of Him, and that ends up distorting who God actually is.
 - *For example, if you drew a picture of God, would you draw Him smiling or frowning? If you drew Him smiling, you might capture His goodness and Fatherliness, but not His wrath against sin. But if you drew Him frowning, you might capture His wrath against sin, but you wouldn't show His grace and forgiveness.*
 - *If you draw Him towering above the heavens, you obscure the fact that He is as close to us our souls and shares intimately in our pain. But if you show Him as a friend by your side, you obscure the fact that He's the God of infinite majesty and worth and unspeakable holiness*
 - *That's the problem with pictures of God... they conceal more than they reveal.*
- There is only one place you can see a picture of God.
 - **Colossians 1:15**, "For He (Jesus) is the *image* of the invisible God," (image = icon)"
 - **Hebrews 1:3**, "The Son is... the *exact representation*" of His being."
- We see the real God in the stories of Jesus... all of them, together, show you who God is.
- This brings up a question... What about pictures of Jesus?

- The problem with pictures of Jesus... is like all graven images, they show 1 side of Jesus but not all of His character. It's been interesting to see how the pictures of Jesus have changed...
 - 1950's Jesus... a meek and mild, pale faced... delicate looking man with a mysterious glow around His head who always looked like He's about to burst into tears.
 - Then there was 60's Jesus, who manages to look like a hippies-flower-child, non-conventional, free-spirited... with this ethereal look in His eye like He'd just taking a whack on the Prince-of-Peace pipe
 - Then there was 70's Jesus... who always looked like a well-proportioned body-builder with beautiful Rick Flair hair... the obvious creation of a narcissistic society.
- There are elements of truth in all of these... but they don't reveal the real God-man.
 - I heard a guy one time who grew up in Harlem explaining why he didn't become a Christian as a teenager. He said he saw these pictures of Jesus in churches and thought, *"That guy wouldn't last **1 second** on the streets of Harlem! Worship Him? I could take Him."*
 - **Even pictures of Jesus on the cross** only show you one side of Him...they show His humility and His love, but not His majesty and power.
- Listen, I wouldn't go so far as to say all pictures of Jesus are wrong... but I'd say you should be careful. Even movies like *the Passion*... I think Jim Caviezel is a good-looking man and I think he's a great actor... but is he really sufficient to show me what God's face looks like? And I'm not talking about the shape of His nose and eyes... I'm talking about seeing how He looks at people; His eyes of tenderness and compassion... His loving anger at sin; His passion for His people. I don't think it's always wrong to have an artistic depiction of Jesus, I would just say to be careful. Now, it is always wrong to draw a picture of God.
- This is also why we don't use statues and images during worship... they are static images that just can't capture the glory of the invisible God!
 - Christianity was unique among religions in the ancient world in that it was a religion of word... the pagan world was filled with big, impressive statues of "God;"
 - the Israelites didn't have statues (the mercy seat was vacant); **(need picture here of Ark of Covenant)**
 - ...after Jesus rose from the dead, Jesus' Apostles' didn't run around the world building big glorious statues of Jesus or cathedrals that boasted His size... (in fact... **correlation of mercy seat and Jesus' empty tomb**—angels seated on either side of empty spot)
 - No, what the Apostles did is they went around preaching... Christianity is a religion of word... the preached word.
 - **God reveals Himself in words because pictures and images can never contain Him.**
- That's why our sanctuary is the way it is... The center is a pulpit.
 - People come in here and say... *"It's not that pretty..."*
 - Every once in a while people say, "Well, the images really help me worship... they remind me of God." That's because human nature loves to break the 2nd commandment and distort God down into something you can manage, handle and control. You want to know God, think on Scripture; memorize Scripture; meditate on Scripture.
 - Even our worship here is built around the word.

III. Graven images produce corrupted behavior in our lives.

- Important lesson here... they worshipped this depiction of God for less than a day and they were involved in a full scale orgy. Perhaps that is because they only focused on the power of God, and not the beauty of His holiness.

- Real, healthy spiritual growth comes from seeing and knowing God... *All of Him, not part of Him.*
- If you focus on only 1 dimension of God, but not all... then you'll grow in a deformed way.
- For example...
 - If your god is holy and just but not compassionate and gracious, then you tend to be judgmental.
 - If your god is gracious but not just and holy then you tend to treat casually things that He hates...
 - If your god is sovereign but not loving and compassionate, then you become an angry Calvinist who argues all the time about theology but rarely tells anyone about Jesus.
 - If your god is not fully sovereign (which means that He's in-control of even the minute details of your life), then you tend to get worried and stressed out when something goes wrong.
 - If your god is a god of justice but not the God who gave Himself for you at the cross, then when things go wrong in your life you think that He's mad at you.
 - If your god is not beautiful and all-satisfying, you'll find you serve him half-heartedly (so you won't go to hell)... but you won't desire Him with all your heart... and you struggle with attraction to the things of this world and sinful pleasures.
 - If your god is a god that guarantees prosperity and your best life now, then when things go wrong in your life you'll lose your faith (STORY ABOUT HOUSTON), plus, if your god is a god that guarantees prosperity then you'll never get to experience how His presence and promises can be sweet to you in the midst of pain; how He can be better than prosperity... and how he can take even tragedy in your life and turn it for good.
- Here is my challenge for you: Find the places of stress, anxiety, depression, and dissatisfaction in your life...the places where you are most tempted to sin; I guarantee you they'll come from a wrong view of God.
 - For example, If you're worried, you don't believe in God's sovereignty.
 - If you're casual about sin, you don't understand God's holiness.
 - If you are insecure about yourself, you don't understand either God's size or absolute acceptance of you.
 - If you're judgmental, it's because you don't see how much grace God had to show to you to accept you.
 - If you struggle with materialism, it's because you don't see how much more beautiful God is than money.
 - If you're not a generous person, you don't understand how generous God has been with you.
- **Here is what I am trying to say:** *All of our personality dysfunctions grow out of a distorted view of God.*
- Here's how the Bible says it (in Romans 1:21, Jeremiah 2)... *You become like what you worship.* **(Romans 1:21–22; Jeremiah 2:5)** Jeremiah 2:5 says that when we worship worthless things, we become worthless!

Conclusion:

1 - Let God be God

- You can't imagine God... He's beyond anything you could ever come up with. God declares Himself from heaven and says "Believe." Analogy: IN THE ROOM.
- You say, "But He's hard to understand... You're like, I have trouble getting my mind around things like predestination, His sovereign control, how prayer works, why there is a hell, why Jesus had to die on the cross... and some of the moral laws. that's hard for me to understand." Uhh... Yes, He's God! Do you really expect Him to fit neatly into your mind?

- Here's an analogy... if God were the size of all the ocean, then your mind is the size of a little courtesy cup... how idiotic to think you could grasp the fullness of the ocean in your little cup.
- One of my favorite verses: **Psalm 131: ¹ O Lord, my heart is not lifted up; my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me. ² But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother.**
 - There are some things I just can't understand... not that they are illogical, just that they might be beyond my grasp right now. Too high and too marvelous...
- You say, "But I want to understand everything. I am smart and I can figure it out. I got a graduate degree from Duke."
 - Listen, you may be smart, but not compared to God. You might be able to master aspects of the natural world, but you can't necessarily master the supernatural. You think you can really require God to fit into categories your little 46 oz brain that can't remember where you put the car keys this morning? **Get real. Quit flattering yourself about how smart you are, genius.**
 - (Listen, we get this as parents: There are many things that I tell my kids they can't understand. "Daddy, why can't the newborn baby take a bath with us? We'll take care of him?" Have you seen how you treat your stuffed animals? All missing arms and legs... I don't want my son to be like that. Dad, Why can't I drive the car?
 - Sometimes I have to say, "Baby, there's just some things you can't grasp yet, and for now I need you just to trust and obey your daddy... and be quiet."
 - Sometimes our kids need to just trust us because our understanding of the world is so much greater than theirs... but, honestly, which do you think is greater... the gap between my 4 year old's understanding of reality and mine, or my understanding of reality and God's? *Of course, mine and God's.*)
- Quit trying to playing the referee on God and just let God be God. **Listen, you'll find it is immensely satisfying, I promise...** and you'll find it fills your life with a great peace.
- **Psalm 131 tells you that He is a God so large that He blows the mind; but a God so close, that He calms the broken soul.** That is immensely satisfying!
 - **I saw an illustration of that truth in the life of our church this past week... Illus. Trevor and Keva...**
 - **We want explanation; God gives us revelation.**
- If you would ever quit trying to control God, you'd find it would fill your life with so much comfort!
 - **Illus.** St. Christopher in the bag

2 - Get to know Jesus

- How do you know Him? The book!
- Small groups

Bullpen:

Why we can't...

We are idolaters. God ends up looking like we want Him to be, or who will give us what we want

- (Romans 1)
- God is warm and tender; mean and judgmental. This is why pictures of Jesus can be dangerous...
- Woman who redefines God to be OK with her adultery
- God created man in His image; ever since then we've been trying to return the favor

We don't define God, God defines God

- If I wrote a biography of you
- "You don't get your own personal Jesus"
- Big problem in relationships

A god we fashion for ourselves can never really satisfy us

- It further corrupts us (Jeremiah, Isaiah)
- Stepford wives

The way God reveals Himself is through revelation. It takes a "word from above."

- Jesus is the image/icon of God (Jesus fulfilled the 2nd commandment)

This is the only thing that can satisfy us

- We're created for God, as He is
- All of our problems come from a wrong view of God
- Rosary ring
- The mercy seat is empty... wait for Him. He alone can satisfy you.

You're in the dark, coming into the light. Dark is more comfortable, but don't go back there (could do AC illustration)

What about pictures/statues of Jesus, God? Christianity is a "hearing" religion.

There's a problem a lot of people have in relationships...

- When a couple starts dating, often they will define the other person based on what they want them to be, rather than what they really are.
- Psychologists have tried to speculate why we do that... most explanations go back to us doing it as some kind of need for control. I need you to play a certain role... and so I assume you will, and if you don't, then I'll berate you until you do... in order for my life to work, I need this and this from you...

But it's impossible to really someone that way.

- Stepford Wives. Reflection of yourself. 2 problems: these are not real people. 2ndly, to know and love that kind of created person is not at all fulfilling.

- If this is important in our relationships with other humans, it must be absolutely fundamental in our relationship with God.

Most of us have ways that we want God to be. Things that we think would make our lives work out. **God according to J.D.**

- Nothing bad will ever happen to my family (God's primary concern is our safety)
- Financially, we will never struggle (I've been a faithful tither, I've kept my end of the deal, I'm one of your best investors)
- God will give my daughters great husbands who love Jesus and make lots of money (I've put too many prayers in that category for Him to ignore that)
- God is intensely concerned in my daughter's swim meets games (her self-esteem is on the line)
- People who invent computer viruses eventually catch real viruses...
- No one really goes to hell (maybe some really bad people, but there's a loophole for anyone)

For it to be a good life, this is how God needs to be.

Problems:

- It contradicts reality
- That God doesn't exist.
- That God can never *really* comfort me. I've made God into a Stepford Wife. A God of our own making can never satisfy the human condition, any more than a wife of your own making can't really fulfill you!

Some people like Jesus to be...

- Mighty
 - Holy
 - Comforting
 - Accepting
 - *Talladega Nights*
- Whatever our spiritual ill is goes back to wrong view of God (see Keller)
 - Idolatry is loving something more than God that causes us to manipulate our concept of God to get that thing.

Scripture presents revelation.

- Light from heaven: Revelation is the unexplainable meeting the undeniable
- That God can comfort you! "But God I can't understand..." Of course not! Psalm 131
 - "Holding him in my hands?" "If you stop trying to control me, I can hold you."

Jesus is the image of God: Colossians 1:15, "the exact image/icon of God."

God broke the 2nd commandment.

What does this commandment mean about pictures of Jesus?

- The danger... he ends up being a static picture, rather than the full thing (Jesus with flowing long robes... didn't do it for me. I'm not going to worship that guy if I can take him.)
- In Christianity, hearing is more important than sight.

Real quick, let me address... "What does this mean, 'Down to the 3rd and 4th generation?'"

- Does this mean that God punishes future generations? No... but that sin has consequences. It's not that God smacks the children for the sins of the parents, but that the children learn the sins of the parents. It's kind of like this... It's not that the parents get the flu and the kids sneeze, but the parents get the flu and give the germs to the kids.
- Bad patterns really affect us. Wrong views of God are particularly bad. Why my desire is to put before you the Bible!

Coming out into the light... what will you do?

I know you want a God who gives you love that you can feel... part of the life of faith is waiting on God to give Himself to you!

- Mercy seat... Resurrection... we look to heaven.

Bullpen:

We have to have more than faith in faith.

Then these Ten Commandments are transformed by another mountain – in the gospels, the Mount of Transfiguration. God says on this Mount Sinai, “You shall have no other gods before me – absolute, radical monotheistic worship and obedience.” God says on the Mount of Transfiguration, “This is my beloved son, listen to Him.”

People often claim Muslims and Christians are worshipping the same god. But think of it like a high school reunion. You're there at your 20 year high school reunion. You start talking about Gary. While you and your friends are talking about 'Gary', you realize you're talking about a short chubby guy and they're talking about a tall lanky guy. There's some overlap, but you're not sure if you're talking about the same person. You find a yearbook and look him up. You point out 'Gary'. Your friend responds “that's not the Gary I'm talking about. I'm talking about this one.” He flips over to a different page and picture. Jesus is the yearbook picture of God. There may be some common characteristics and overlap between God and Allah, but when you look to Jesus it is evident we're not talking about the same being. You can not obey the first commandment on the other side of the incarnation except through Christ.

- Or, here is 1... we need something from God like protection or good fortune, so we carry some piece around that will give it to us...

Let me tell you a story that will show you how this works out. Exodus 32:

- Right after the giving of these commandments, Moses is up in the mountain communing with God, getting more instruction for the people.
- The people get scared... where'd Moses go... maybe he's dead and not coming back! We're out here all alone in the wilderness.
- So they ask Aaron to make this golden calf... Now, in defense of them, they are pretty vulnerable: they are people wandering homeless in the wilderness without any real defenses and susceptible to the attacks of their enemies.
- And, it's not like they were worshipping a different God. In fact, the bull was something God had told them to sacrifice in worship to him. So, they made a bull and declared it “a feast to the Lord.”

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- **Story:** me with Ted Haggard. As he got louder, he pushed. “HS, that doesn’t feel like you... I’m pushing back!” I stiffened my neck... little war going on... I’m sure he thought, “what a stiffnecked guy!” this is what God says they are doing with Him. Stiffening of the neck...

- ~~So they ask Aaron to make this golden calf... Now, in defense of them, they are pretty vulnerable: they are people wandering homeless in the wilderness without any real defenses and susceptible to the attacks of their enemies.~~
- ~~And, it’s not like they were worshipping a different God. In fact, the bull was something God had told them to sacrifice in worship to him. So, they made a bull and declared it “a feast to the Lord.”~~

⁷ And the Lord said to Moses, “Go down, for your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt (whose people? Who brought them out of Egypt? God is ticked... He doesn’t even want to claim them anymore), have corrupted themselves...”

⁹ And the Lord said to Moses, “I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people.

- One of my favorite images of disobedience... **stiff-necked. Everyone stiffen their necks.**

¹⁵ Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand... ¹⁷ When Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, “There is a noise of war in the camp.” ¹⁸ But he said, “It is not the sound of shouting for victory, or the sound of the cry of defeat, but the sound of singing that I hear.”

- Joshua is like... I hear this terrible noise, are the people in pain? No, wait, that’s not battle music, that’s disco. Is that a strobe light? Is that a mechanical bull? As he gets closer he hears a dance beat...