

Discussion Questions: Living in Freedom
2nd Commandment: Make no Idols – Exodus 20:4-6

Drawn from the January 12, 2025 sermon by Dr. Jeff Chandler

Opener: What is a product you regularly buy where you cannot tolerate a substitute. (example: Coke vs Pepsi, type of mayonnaise, toy brand, etc.) Why is this?

Read the second commandment found in Exodus 20:4-6

“You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations of those who reject me. But I lavish unfailing love for a thousand generations on those who love me and obey my commands.”

1. Soon after hearing this command, the Israelites disobeyed God and created a substitute golden calf (read the story in Exodus 32:7-10). God was so angry over this “stubborn and rebellious” act that he was ready to start over again (which he didn’t actually follow through with). Why would this act of betrayal cause so much anger? How could these people do that after all God had shown them?

2. What do you think Exodus 20:5-6 means when it says children will be affected by their parent’s sin, but God’s unfailing love is available for those who love and obey him?

3. Discuss the following quote: "Human beings tend to make God in their own image, but God wants to remake us into His image". What's the difference?

4. In John 4:24 Jesus taught that "God is spirit and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." Referring back to Pastor Jeff's Sunday sermon, what does true worship look like in your life?

Read I John 2:15-17 (New Living Translation)

"You adulterers! Stop loving this evil world and all that it offers you, for when you love the world, you show that you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only the lust for physical pleasure, the lust for everything we see, and pride in our possessions. These are not from the Father. They are from this evil world. And this world is fading away, along with everything it craves. But if you do the will of God, you will live forever".

5. How might the analogy of marriage help us understand our relationship to God?

6. What does the world offer that is so compelling, and takes our eyes off God? What deep needs do these things seem to meet?

7. Let's look at three main areas where people tend to look for substitutes and brainstorm about the authentic blessing that God offers in these areas – if we have the patience to seek him and wait for it.

For our physical pleasure...

For a sense of adventure or excitement...

For a feeling of success and significance...

Group Prayer Time: In this session we took a closer look at the kinds of idols in our world that can turn our attention away from God. You've probably struggled with one or more of these at some time in your life, or perhaps you have friends or loved ones who are caught in the grip of these compelling temptations. Pray for each other to have the patience to wait for God to provide the authentic blessings in your lives instead of settling for the cheap substitutes. Pray also for any other needs in the group that people mention.

For personal reflection in the group or on your own:

Re-read 1 John 2:16-17. What is it about the world's offerings that makes them a scam? Have you ever been "scammed" by any of these pitfalls and come to realize it later?

Exodus 20:6 and 1 John 2:17 (above) speak about the ultimate benefits of keeping perspective and following God. How have you seen this at work in your own life?

Next week, January 19th , pastor Jeff will cover "Respecting God's name" and there will be discussion questions available in "Downloads" on the SCC website.