

The God Above All Gods

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[0 : 00] We balk at this idea of anyone telling us what to do. We will make up our own minds of what's good for us. Thank you very much. Maybe that isn't you. Maybe instead you're a believer, and what you balk at is the idea of spending 10 weeks going through the Ten Commandments.

That is first-level stuff. And I've sat in many a church pew for many years, many a Sunday, and I don't really want to go over and revisit this. Let's talk about something new, something deeper, not this beginner stuff of just the Ten Commandments, because, of course, I already have those mastered.

I've been a Christian for 30 years. Maybe that's you. Or maybe you're just tired. Maybe every Sunday you drag yourself to church, and somehow in the hour and a half that we're here, all that happens is you manage to feel worse about yourself.

Man, I'm not as good of a Christian as I should be, and you leave just feeling the weight, and you can't imagine talking about the Ten Commandments and seeing how you fall short of meeting these commandments, and that's where you're at.

We don't want to talk about the Ten Commandments because it's just going to be more weight, more things that I have to do to please God. So hopefully if you're like most people and you're in one of those three categories, or maybe somehow you're in more than one, you managed to pay attention this morning, and hopefully we are able to look at them in a way that you don't expect and see the commandments as something different than those notions.

[1 : 36] So we're going to be in Exodus chapter 20. It's just a short passage we're going to read this morning, but I'd invite you to turn there, and we'll be looking at the first commandment, which is Exodus chapter 20, verse 3, but we're going to read from the beginning of the chapter.

So Exodus chapter 20, and we'll read verses 1 to 3. And God spoke all these words, I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

You shall have no other gods before me. We're going to look at that in a little bit. I want to start by addressing two, we'll actually spend most of our time looking at two main objections to this commandment, and then we'll dig into a little bit more of what it means.

But before we do that, let's pray together. Father, we thank you for your word, and you've found it important to give these commands to your people, and through Israel to give them to us.

And we believe that they're meaningful for us, that they show us how to live, they show us who we are and who you are, and we pray that you help us to see that this morning as we look at them.

[2 : 47] Pray that your spirit intercedes among us this morning so that what we hear is your words, because your words have the power to do something in us that nothing else can.

And they have the ability to change our heart, and through changing our heart, changing our lives, and we pray that you do that in us this morning. We pray that you do that in me as well.

Amen. So the first objection I want to look at is this idea that no one worships gods anymore. When we read this commandment, I think that the first thing that most people notice, the first thing I notice, is that it assumes that everybody is worshipping something.

It doesn't say, well, you know, you really ought to worship a god, and if you're going to worship a god, you should worship the true god. No, it's not saying that. It's saying that you are already worshipping something, and it really should be the true god.

So that's what brings us to this objection, because in our culture, we see the kind of the fight is it's between the theists and the atheists. It's between people who say there is no god, or I don't know if there's a god, or if there is a god, it doesn't really affect my life.

[4 : 00] I'm not going to worship this god. And people who say, yeah, there is a god, and he is important for my life. So how does the Bible assume that we're always worshipping something?

Well, I'm going to open that up by saying, well, what is a god? Let's think about that. What is a god? Now, I'm going to go against my better judgment. I've learned that you're good listeners. You're not very good at talking during the service. Some people say things, but I can never hear what they say. So I'm going to ask you to, let's just brainstorm together, and I want to hear what you say.

What is it that makes something a god? What is a god? Don't disappoint me. Don't tell me this was a bad idea. Perfection.

Okay, something that's holy, something that's different from us. Perfection. Something that takes over your life. Maybe something that has value. Or a couple weeks ago, we looked at the word glory.

[5 : 02] Something that has weight. It has matter and impact in our life. Yeah. Something that has power. Yeah. What has the power to change us?

Maybe to change how we view things, change our emotional state. Anything else? Any other thoughts? I heard one whispered. Something, yeah, something we worship.

Exactly. Something, what's worship? Something we sacrifice to. We give a common phrase we use is our time, our talent, our treasure. You know, a lot of people say, well, money can be a god.

I don't really think so. Money is something we value. And where we sacrifice our money, that helps to show us where God is. Because a god is something we worship, and we worship, what worship is, is giving something you value to something you value even more.

We value it our time. Where do we give our time? We value our relationships. Where do we devote those, our money? Yeah, definitely something we worship. Anything else? Something that's eternal.

[6 : 07] Okay, not all gods would be seen as eternal, but something that, again, has that glory, that power that's above us, beyond us, in ways of time and in other ways.

Any other thoughts? Something we order our life around. We talked about that idea of glory and that power of drawing us in. Something to fear.

Yeah. Again, I'd use the word glory for that. Something that's so powerful that it's beyond us that we take notice of it. I think we've got the idea surrounded.

I just want to kind of summarize. So we talked about glory. Wait. The word glory means weight. So it's something that matters to us. Something that has weight to us and it has an impact on us.

So we think, what drives us? What draws us in? Another way to think of weight is that power of gravity. What draws us in? Either in fear or in wonder and amazement.

[7 : 05] Something we worship. We talked about that. Something we sacrifice to. What do we give things that we value to? Something that has power over us, can change us, can change our emotional state.

What I mean by that is, what in our lives do we have that almost instantly can take you from having a good day to having a bad day? What is that kind of power over us?

Something that gives us meaning. We kind of said this in a few different ways, but I didn't highlight it. So we think of a God as a creator oftentimes. And a creator is something that, when you initiate something, you give it meaning.

I have four kids. I don't give them meaning, but I did give them their name, and their name shapes them in some way. And that's even greater when we talk about a creator. So is there something that we have that if we lost it, we would lose our meaning?

We wouldn't know who we were. We wouldn't know how to define ourselves. We wouldn't know our purpose. You know, there might be two people that you know, or you have a friend, and you have the same belief system.

[8 : 08] You have the same values. And yet, if the same thing happens to you, if you experience a loss, maybe a relational breakdown, a divorce, or a fight with your spouse, or a break in your family in some way, it's going to affect both of you.

But for some of you, one person might be completely devastated by it, and the other person, it's just hard, and they go through it. What's the difference between that? The difference is that the one person that's completely devastated by it, their definition of themselves has to do with their family. It's who they are. It's how they define themselves. It's how they give them meaning. Or maybe it's a loss of unemployment. Two people can lose their job, and it's always difficult to lose your job. But for some of us, it completely destroys us, and we don't know what to do because who we are is wrapped up in that vocation.

Here's the thing that I'm trying to show is that gods are much more than we think of them. There's many more gods than we think that there are because we are all worshiping something. Whether it's an actual deity or not, we are worshiping something. Our spiritual diet is a lot like our physical diet. I don't know about you guys, but sometimes in the summer, especially when I'm traveling, I don't want to stop and prepare food and sit down and eat.

[9 : 26] It's just I don't feel like that. But do I stop eating? No, I just replace having meals with eating junk all the time. I'm just as full. I'm consuming just as much food, except I'm consuming junk instead of actual real food.

And the same thing kind of applies with our spiritual diet. If we're not worshiping God, we're filling that with something else. We are going to be giving our lives to something. We don't stop worshiping.

We just don't do it consciously. And that goes for Christians as well as non-Christians. We might be sitting here, but just because we come to church, just because we read our Bible and we sing songs about Jesus doesn't mean that we actually worship him above other gods.

So what do we worship? If we aren't worshiping God, who or what are we worshiping? I can give you a few examples, but you have to understand that these are just, they're just by way of illustration because these things that we worship, that we make into gods, these idols, they can be very concrete sometimes or they can be very abstract and they're hard to define.

In many cases, they're kind of all sorts of things combined together. But I'll give you some general examples that I think we can see clearly and then understand from there. So one is romance.

[10 : 43] There's an old song, you're nobody till somebody loves you. That's an idol construct. You're nobody till somebody loves you. Your identity is completely, you don't exist until someone gives you an existence, gives you a meaning, gives you an identity with their love for you.

And maybe we don't admit that, but many of us believe it and it's sunk down deep into us. We need approval, we need affirmation, we need love, we need respect.

And when we don't have it, we're lonely. Now loneliness is normal. Everybody will experience loneliness, but there's a despairing loneliness.

There's a self-loathing that is not normal loneliness that shows us that romance is our Lord. Our Lord. Because we're not getting romance, our Lord is calling to us and it's singing, you're nobody until somebody loves you.

Do you believe that? And this can be an insidious idol. I know people who, they've been so anxious to find a spouse to get married that maybe they decide they have to sacrifice standards that they had.

[12 : 01] Maybe they said, I'll only date a man or a woman that shares my faith. And then as they grew older and thought they should be in a meaningful relationship and they weren't yet, they decide, well maybe, maybe I won't, I'm going to lay that standard aside now.

Because what's really important to me, what I really need is a significant other. I don't necessarily need to follow these standards, these things that I've laid out for myself, these wise steps, because it's getting in the way of me serving my true God, which is relationship.

Because the things that we worship, we're also obeying. We have to do it. It's an unquestioned thing to serve that idol.

Because the greatest fear in our heart maybe is loneliness. That's the thing that we fear above everything else. And you know what we've done when we've done that? We've named our hell. We've named our hell.

So hell is where God's presence is restricted, where God's presence isn't there. And if we've said the worst thing in our life is to be lonely, then we've named our hell.

[13 : 08] We've said hell isn't where God is and hell is where relationship isn't. Because that's what I want to avoid above all other things is this despairing loneliness I have. And we've named our hell, we've named our idol.

Or how about work? Now there's not actually a song about it, but there could be. I'm nobody unless someone promotes me. I'm nobody until someone promotes me. And there's a person who wants to do well, who wants to work hard, even overwork.

And they're frustrated because they're not doing well. They're not succeeding. They're not getting promoted. And there's a kind of drivenness that goes much deeper than what we should have.

You're going to get it.

You're going to achieve this kind of success. And if anything goes wrong in your job, you're completely devastated because it reflects poorly on you. What does that mean? It means that our work is our identity.

Our success is our identity. You're nobody until someone rewards you, until someone notices you. You're nobody until someone promotes you. Work is Lord.

[14:10] Do you see the difference between work being something that is good and then work, if it's not working out, if you're not doing well at work, then you're unhappy.

That's the difference between work being something that's good and work being your Lord. I think about comfort. We make an idol out of comfort when the most important thing for us is to have comfort, a lack of stress, a freedom, a privacy.

We fear stress and deadlines. We fear making commitments. We can't make sacrifices because it affects our ability to have what we want. We ignore inconveniences.

We just do something else. We distract ourselves until we hope that they go away and they figure themselves out so we don't have to deal with the stress because we just want to have the comfort. And if life isn't comfortable, we need to look for a way to escape or a distraction. Or certainty. Some of us have made an idol out of certainty. We're the worst of all the worriers.

[15:12] Now everybody worries, but everybody's anxious to some degree. But why do you worry so much? Why won't you make a move? Why won't you choose anything unless you have absolute certainty that it'll work out?

You won't take risks unless you're sure. It's absolutely, absolutely necessary for you to always be sure before you make a move. It's because you've made an idol out of certainty.

Now these aren't just contemporary gods that our culture worships. They're not new gods. It's just that other cultures, they would anthropomorphize these.

They would say, this is the god of success. And they would pray and worship that god. But the ends is the same. That's what religion is in the negative sense of the word.

It's not people seeking a god. It's people seeking what's behind the god, what they think the god can give them. And we're actually gonna look at that more next week when we look at the second commandment.

[16:15] But these gods that we serve, they drive everything we do. And again, I don't care if you can invest to be a Christian or an atheist. It's something that I think that we all do.

It's probably true of you just like it's true of me that we serve these gods and they drive everything we do. It's why some of us can survive something that to someone else is a catastrophic loss.

It's why so often we act contrary to our values. We say, I believe this, I value this, I wanna do this. And yet we find ourselves acting differently. I mean, real simple, small example.

How many people, how many of you, when someone comes up to you and say, hey, did you do this? Listen, your immediate reaction is to say yes and then to think about what they actually said. Because, am I alone in this? Am I the only one that does this? I'm sorry. But if someone comes to me and they say, hey, Kyle, did you take care of this that you promised? I'm like, oh yeah, I did. And then I walk away and I'm like, did I actually do that?

[17:16] No, because I want that person to have a good opinion. I mean, I wanna be able to fulfill their expectations. Now, fortunately, hopefully, I have actually done what I've said I have done.

But that drives in us, these gods cause us to act contrary to what our values are. And the point is this, that we are swimming every day in the waters of idolatry.

And I think I've shared this quote with you before. It's from David Foster Wallace. He was an American author and he wasn't a Christian and that'll be obvious when we read the whole quote.

And he said this as part of a graduation addressed to Kenyon College in 2005.

It became part of his book that he wrote called *This is Water*. And this is what he says. In the day-to-day trenches of adult life, there is actually no such thing as atheism.

Remember, this isn't a Christian reading this. There's no such thing as not worshipping. Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship. And the compelling reason for maybe choosing some sort of God or spiritual type thing to worship, be it GAC, he means Jesus, or Allah, be it Yahweh, or the Wiccan Mother Goddess, or the Four Noble Truths.

[18:25] Again, he's not a Christian. Or some inviolable set of ethical principles is that pretty much everything else you worship will eat you alive.

If you worship money and things, if they are where you tap your real meaning in life, then you will never have enough. Never feel that you have enough. It's the truth. Worship your body and beauty and sexual allure and you will always feel ugly.

Worship power and you will end up feeling weak and afraid. And you will need ever more power over others to numb your own fear. Worship your intellect. Being seen as smart, you will end up feeling stupid, a fraud, always on the verge of being found out.

This is what Wallace is saying. He's saying, not only are we all worshiping something, but it's going to crush us. It's going to eat us alive. And it's in this context that God says to us, have no other gods before me.

We look at these commandments, these ten commandments, and on the face of them, we think that they're there to restrict us, to bond us. But the actual result of obedience is always freedom, not bondage.

[19 : 35] This isn't a command to force us into worship of God. It's a command to free us to worship of him instead of something else that's going to eat us alive. That brings us to our, the second objection I want to look at.

The objection is that God must be an egomaniac. Because if I walked in this room and I said, have no other human beings before me, I'd have to have a pretty big ego to do that. And that's not even a fraction of what God is saying here.

How can God make this demand? How can he tell us all to worship him? What is deficient in him that he needs our worship? Maybe let's flip that around. Maybe we're thinking of that backwards. Instead of starting with the command and moving to what that must mean of God. Let's start with what we know about God and then maybe that will help us to understand the depth and the meaning of the command. So if you look back in verse 1 of chapter 20, God gives a little introduction.

He says, I am the Lord who brought you out of Egypt. It's easy to treat this as some meaningless intro into the Ten Commandments, but there's a lot there. First, God is saying that he's our source.

[20 : 39] That Hebrew word that we translate God is the Hebrew word Elohim, which means mighty one, and it invokes this idea of creator. So God is our creator and our source. Secondly, he brought Israel out of Egypt.

He's the redeemer. He works on behalf of his people. Thirdly, if you go back to chapter 19 that we looked at a couple weeks ago, you'll see that, you'll remember that God is the adopter. He takes Israel and he makes them his people.

He says, you will be my people, and that happens even before he gives the law. And that's very important. That order is very important. He adopts Israel and he gives them an identity as his people and then he gives them the law.

And fourthly, he does give them the law, but only after reminding us that he is our source, our redeemer, and then he adopts us. And when we see the law in this light, we'll see that the motive of obedience to the law is intimacy with God.

So what does that mean? It means, well, put it this way. If you look at nature in creation, you'll see that the source always provides the sustenance that's needed.

[21 : 44] So an egg gives a chick all of the nutrients they need, not only to get them until the egg hatches, but actually for several days afterwards. A mother produces milk for her young.

Every plant seed even contains stored food for the plant embryo as it begins to germinate and sprout. So God isn't, as our source, he's also our provider.

And he's not just our provider, but he's our redeemer. He works on our behalf. He adopts us. He gives us an identity. And he gives us the law. And the law turns us back to God, not to restrict us, but because in him we find what we crave.

I'm going to say that again. The law turns us back to God, not to restrict us, but because in him we find what we crave. Let me give you an example of what I mean.

An example that the apostle Paul used. Now Paul worked in two, he ministered in two main cultural contexts. A Greek, a Hellenistic context, and a Jewish context. And this is what Paul says reflecting on his ministry in 1 Corinthians 1.

[22 : 52] He says, Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles. But to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength. What's Paul saying here? Paul's saying that the Greeks, they wanted power, they wanted to see signs of, or sorry, the Jews, they wanted to see signs of power.

And the cross, when they looked at it, that wasn't a sign of power, that was a sign of weakness. The cross was the ultimate picture of weakness. It was to the Jewish mind. And Greeks, they sought after wisdom.

They wanted philosophy. They wanted to think things through. They wanted to see wisdom. And the cross, it's foolishness because who wants to serve a dead God? But to those who were being saved, the cross, it was true wisdom, and it was true strength.

Do you see that? The idol of Greek culture was wisdom, and they were so blinded by that idol that they couldn't see that true wisdom was found in the cross. It didn't look like they thought it would look.

[24 : 05] Wisdom didn't look like they thought it would look, but it was actually what they craved. The idol of Jewish culture was strength. And they look at the cross, and they say, that's not strength, but they were so blinded by their idol that they didn't realize that at the cross there was true strength of God overcoming the gap between him and us and bridging that gap.

The strength of God using the darkest hour of human history when we killed our creator to use that very event to save us. It's true strength.

And what we see in this is that what we seek from our idols is only truly found in God. Think about the idols that we talked about before of romance, of work, of comfort and certainty.

What are we really seeking in romance? What are we looking for? We're looking for someone to look us in the eyes, to know us, and to tell us that they love us.

We want to be loved. Oh, wouldn't it be so great if that would happen, if someone could just love me? And maybe it's because we're single and we've never experienced that before.

[25 : 20] No one's ever told us that they love us and we just want someone to say it. Or maybe it's because we're married and the person that we share our bed with, they don't even know us anymore, let alone love us. And we crave for someone to love us.

Well, what do we have in the gospel? We have this knowledge that the God of the universe sent his son to bridge the gap between him and us and bring us back to him. That he knows us perfectly. He knows the depth of our sin. He knows how bad our breath smells in the morning. He knows what we think about and he knows the terrible puns that we tell and even the ones that we're too embarrassed to say out loud.

And yet, despite all of that, he loves us fully and completely. Unconditionally.

He's brought us into his family. That's love. How about work? What are we trying to get from our work? We're trying to get, I think, an identity, a purpose, a legacy. But what do we have in the gospel?

[26 : 25] God didn't just redeem us, he adopted us. He gave us an identity and then he put us to work. He sent us on his mission which is guaranteed to bring success. Not necessarily to us but to be a part of something that God is doing and God will complete.

Remember a couple of weeks ago we looked at that commission of Israel in Exodus 19. You will be for me a holy nation and a royal priesthood. God sends them on his mission.

And at the end, well done, good and faithful servant. Come and enjoy your master's happiness. Identity, purpose, legacy, all there.

Where? Not in work but in God. How about comfort? We see in the creation narrative God's perfect balance between work and rest.

Comfort is of God. Sure we seek it wrongly. We look for it in places that we'll never find it. But we will find it truly in him. We were made for him.

[27 : 32] We were made in his image. We were made to enjoy him. And if we seek anything else, it won't end in comfort or pleasure ultimately. It'll end in destruction.

Certainty. Whatever certainty we think that we can achieve on this earth in this life, we're still standing on a ball of rock spinning wildly, hurtling around a flaming ball of gas.

There's no degree of certainty. Control and certainty are an illusion except with God. There is no shadow of turning in you. Even though we seek these things in twisted ways, if we came to God, we would see that they were found ultimately in him, fully fulfilled in him and uniquely in him.

Remember that David Foster Wallace quote, you know, he says that you can find this in any God, but any God will eat you up just like those other things that you serve.

Other gods, other moral systems, they don't offer us what God does. They don't give us the certainty of his love. They don't give us the example of his sacrifice showing us the depth of his love for us and the amount that he overcomes.

[28 : 45] They say, come to me and I will love you. God comes to us because he knows we can't bridge the gap. Other gods, they don't give us a part of his mission of it's only in God.

Now, if you've missed the point, if you've confused, if I've confused you, if you've fallen asleep along the way, wake up, here's the point. Does God demanding worship make him an egomaniac? No.

And why? Because God doesn't tell us to worship him for his sake. He tells us to worship him for our sake. Everything we want, everything that we crave, it can actually only be found in him.

God telling us to worship him is like oxygen telling us to breathe it. Oxygen doesn't care if we breathe it or if we breathe carbon monoxide, but we sure care. We sure care what we breathe.

God's saying, if you don't worship me, you'll worship poison, you'll be destroyed. You may think that your hell is not having a boyfriend or a meaningful job or comfort or whatever it is, but that isn't hell. Hell is not having God because he is the only thing that can fill us.

[29 : 55] He's our source. He's our redeemer. He's our adopter and that's why he's our law giver. Now, I mentioned Dave's sermon a couple weeks ago. He said there's three purposes of the law.

A mirror to show us ourselves and to show us God. We've seen that. We've seen we have an idolatrous heart and God is the one that can fulfill us as our source.

Second purpose is to curb us and this commandment, it curbs our proclivity to sin by pointing us to God. And the third thing is to guide us, to guide us into righteous living.

So how do we take this? What is our practical steps? How can we live righteously in light of this? So I ask the question, how do I uproot an idol? And I'll give you an acrostic.

I think this is from Tim Keller. N-U-R. Nur, I think. Apparently it's German for only. I don't speak German. I don't know if I'm pronouncing it right. So if you're German you can tell me afterwards so that I don't have to give that little spiel next time I preach this because I know that I'm pronouncing it right.

[30 : 57] So Nur, name, unmask, rejoice. There are three things we have to do for idols to uproot them if we're going to destroy their power over our life. Name, unmask, and rejoice.

First, name. What I've been trying to show you is to look underneath what you crave, underneath the longing, underneath the chronic despairing loneliness, underneath the anger for not being able to get what you want.

Underneath all of that, the need under the need is what you're worshipping. And the problem under the problem is the things that you insist that you need to have.

Unconditioned conditions, lords that you have over you, idols. We need to name them. We need to see them as idols. We need to call them idols and recognize them as false gods. Admit why they're important to us.

Admit that the reason that we are unhappy is because we're compromising the salvation of Jesus. And you're saying, you know, Jesus, you're nice, but I have to have this too or I'm not going to be saved.

[32 : 00] Name it. Name it as an idol. Second, unmask it. Here's what I mean by unmask. Our idols are things that are beautiful to us. They're very attractive to us. It's that prospect that we think that we want to have.

We need to see it for what it is. So when we say, unmask it, we say, see it for the ugly thing that it is. That it's a slave master. That it's a bondsman. That it has a whip over you.

Look at it and say, you've been pushing me around for all these years. I'm trying to find you and get you and you just have chains on me. You want to destroy me. You'll never be able to satisfy me.

See the slavery of it.

Just this week, we've been doing a lot of driving and so my wife and I had some time to drive and she was calling me out on an idol of comfort. We're going through a time of transition. We're trying to get a place and we're moving to Langley and there's a lot of work to be done and I just don't want to do it so I'm like, I'm going to ignore it and she said, but look what's happening because of that.

Because of that idol of comfort, she's like, then I have to look for things and I have to do this and you're not going to be able to just ignore it. It's going to end up destroying us. So we need to do with our idols as we unmask them for what they are and we say, you're naturally never going to fulfill me. [33 : 20] And then you come to hate it. You come to see it hatefully. And third, rejoice. Believing that Jesus is your savior and not that is the essence of what worship is.

Okay, you have to be able to say, Jesus, you're the justifier of me, not this. You are what gives me an identity, not this. You are what fulfills me, not this. Jesus, you are my savior, not this. We sing those songs all the time but I'm afraid that our hearts don't actually resonate those songs. And I know from talking with others, I know from my own life that this is a cycle that goes on and on and when you're in the grip of an idol, you don't just say, well, you know, you've made romance your idol and really, Jesus loves you so you don't need romance. And the person walks away and they never struggle with it again. They never have doubts again. That doesn't happen. I know that. No, it's a process. It's something that we have to do over and over again. Name, unmask, and worship. And you know what? This isn't something that we do alone.

[34 : 30] The first commandment that we looked at today and the second commandment that we'll look at next week, they kind of go hand in hand. They're very similar. And the second finishes with this. I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God.

I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God. Do you know what? That's good news. Do you know what it means? It means if God is jealous of us, what he's saying is, I love you so much that I can't bear to see you in the arms of these idols.

I can't bear to see you like this. I want you completely for myself because I know that only in my arms are you going to be happy. Have you ever cared for anybody so much and you see them, that person in, in love or seeking someone who's going to just abuse them?

That's how God sees us. He sees us in the arms of these idols. And we need to see that what it will take for us to rejoice in God, to rejoice in Jesus and what he's done for us is that we have to let him love us.

That he has to, we have to rejoice in him. We have to have our imagination captured by who he is and what he's done. It's a discipline. It's a discipline being here. It's a discipline being in prayer daily.

[35 : 47] It's a discipline talking with other Christians, maybe in a growth group and who are working through these same things. It's a tremendous discipline of continually weeding out our idols. But I'll tell you what, until you realize what God says that I am jealous, until you realize how much he loves you, until you feel the love, until you can rejoice in what God has done for you, until you can do it right in the face of the idols that you are worshiping.

Until you can tell them I can only worship God because he is who fills me. That's when we're free from it.

Do you know how to do that? It's a long process. I'm just being honest with you. I mean, this week, for me, was about recognizing how many idols I have and that I'm swimming in this sea of idolatry. but that's what it means to grow in grace, to exchange the lie for the truth. Day in and day out, hour in and hour out. Look at your fears, look at your anger, look at your depression, realize where they're coming from.

They're coming, they're not free-floating emotions, they're coming from unmet idols. And the only way to be fulfilled, the only way to be happy, is to see them as such and to turn to God instead.

[37 : 17] It's the message of the first commandment. Have no other gods before me, for I am a jealous, I am jealous for your heart. Let's pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.