



BULLEEN BAPTIST CHURCH

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SERIES : "10 DUMB WAYS TO MESS UP OUR LIVES"

October 23, 2005 Study 2 "Designing Our Own God" (Commandments 1 & 2)

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

10 Dumb Ways To Mess Up Our Lives a fresh look at the 10 Commandments (See Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5) Note that they are not the Ten Suggestions! They are not arbitrary religious rules. They are not outdated curiosities that belong to an ancient and less sophisticated society. Whilst their introduction has a specific context, the 10 Commandments are not bound to a particular culture or time or nation.

They continue as the BASIC moral laws of creation for all people. If followed, they produce a healthy society by fostering proper relationships with God and with others. If ignored, they produce a mess in both our individual lives and our society as a whole.

Our task in this series is to understand what they mean and how to follow them in our lives and circumstances.

TO TODAY'S STUDY

With the release of new census figures regarding "Australian Religious Preferences" an Age editorial noted

"While 68 per cent of Australians describe themselves as Christian, 27 per cent claim to be either godless or simply refuse to say. It's a far cry from a century ago, when 96 per cent professed Christianity. According to researcher Dr Phillip Hughes, "whateverism" (that is, whatever turns you on) is on the rise. And that is surely a reflection on our times."

In a time of DIY Spirituality, the first two Commandments confront us with a stark alternative : the recognition and worship of the God who REVEALS his nature through his actions in history. Designing our own god? or commitment to the God who is both our Creator and Redeemer.

A. FROM LAST WEEK'S STUDY

1. A SUMMARY OF THE 10 COMMANDS.

Jesus explains the heart of the Law in terms of **RELATIONSHIPS**

'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments. Mat 22:37-40

2. THE CONTEXT OF THE 10 COMMANDMENTS

The 10 Commandments were the **LEGAL BASIS** of the Covenant Relationship established by God with the descendants of Abraham after he rescued them from slavery in Egypt.

'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' Ex19:4-6

The Covenant Relationship is **ESTABLISHED** on the Faithfulness and compassion of God

..... it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery know therefore that the LORD your God is God is a faithful God Therefore, take care to follow the commands and laws I give you today. Deut 7:8-11

The Law of God calls us to be faithful to God in **RESPONSE**

The Ten Commandments define what "**FAITHFULNESS**" to God means in terms of either our

B. AN OVERVIEW OF THE FIRST TWO COMMANDS

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.

You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath, or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God..... Ex20:2-5a

Note that the first paragraph is a general heading for all the commands and puts them all in the context of a relationship with God who was known to them.

1. The First Command binds us to an EXCLUSIVE relationship with God alone.

It is not a "theological statement" about the existence of the one true God (see, for example, 2Sam22:32 and 2Kn19:15 for this), nor should it be read to imply that there are numerous valid choices.

The emphasis is on the personal commitment of the individual in CHOOSING to serve, love and trust the God who had proved himself trustworthy.

"Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers served beyond the river choose for yourselves this day who you will serve but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

The people answered, "We will not forsake the LORD to serve other gods! It was the LORD our God himself that brought us and our fathers out of Egypt and performed great signs before our eyes. We will serve the LORD." Then Joshua said, "..... yield your hearts to the Lord, the God of Israel." And the people said, "We will serve the LORD our God and obey him."

from Jos24:14-24

2. The Second Command forbids the use of an image in worship. (Note that the 1st Command already implicitly forbids idol worship. The force of this command is to not reduce God to less than he is.)

If we can visually represent God, then we have confined him to that representation. Such a God becomes LIMITED and can be MANIPULATED by those who "made" him.

Command 1 tells us that God is KNOWABLE and can be trusted

Command 2 tells us that God is GREATER than our knowledge of him. It nurtures the idea that God is an infinite being beyond our COMPREHENSION, to be worshipped and adored.

C. SOME IMPLICATIONS

1. The centrality of WORSHIP in the human experience. There is indeed a "God-sized" hole in the human heart. If it is not filled with the God of Israel, a substitute (but guaranteed to never satisfy) will be sought.

2. The necessity of CHOOSING our "gods." But watch out, we take on the attributes of the "god" we choose

"The idols of the nations are made by the hands of men. Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them." Ps135:15, 18

3. The importance of FAITHFULNESS in relationships

D. POSTSCRIPT

There is another reason why "images" of God were forbidden. so the field would be totally clear to answer the question "What is God like?" with the person of Jesus!

Philip said, "Show us the Father" Jesus answered, "..... anyone who has seen me has seen the Father." Jn14:8-9

He (Jesus) is the image of the invisible God. Col1:15

..... Jesus Christ: who being in very nature, God ... being made in human likeness ... Php2:6-7

The Son is the radiance of the Father's glory & the exact representation of his being. Heb1:3