

Text: Exodus 20.4

Series: 10 Ways to Be Perfect

Sermon #2: The Second Commandment

Date: 6.9.2019

This morning we are continuing our series in the 10 commandments. So if you have your bible, make your way over to Exodus chapter 20. That will be our spot in scripture for the entire summer. We are going to see, over and over, how the “law” of God is actually our access point into the Love of God. **God’s law & God’s love aren’t enemies; They are allies. In fact, The law is a product of his love.**

And what we said last week is these incredible commands do a 2 POWERFUL things:

- **They show us how to live the good life** – I mean if you walk through the commands slowly enough to just imagine what your own life would be like. Imagine what a society would be like. No murder, no envy, no broken families. Rest & Trust would abound. It’d be incredible.
- **They show us why we need grace** – See the sin inside of each of us causes us to rise up against these commandments. The apostle Paul said in Romans 7 said:
“I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, Do not covet. 8 And sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind.” -- Romans 7:7-8.
He’s saying we all respond to God’s rules like children respond to their parents. DON’T TOUCH THAT....the

desire to touch it goes crazy. If you’ve ever wondered what we mean when we say “sin nature” – it’s that desire to rebel...and it is activated when we hear a law. So we all rebel against God which means we are all in need of God’s forgiveness and grace. So as Mercy Church walks through the 10 commandments this summer, we are going to see over and over how we break God’s laws. How we are at odds with him. And how, like a good father, he chose to make a way for our sins to be paid for. I hope you don’t leave burdened by what you have TO DO, but instead I hope you see more of the glorious character of God, his grace for you, and the life he calls you to.

Today, we look at the second commandment. We are going to look at What it says, how we break it & how we go forward from here.

What does the commandment say?

4 Do not make an idol for yourself, whether in the shape of anything in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth. 5 Do not bow in worship to them, and do not serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the fathers’ iniquity, to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me, 6 but showing faithful love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commands. -- Exodus 20:4-6

The key word for us here is idol. Another translation for this is “image.” If you were around the bible growing up there was

an older translation that said “do not make for yourself any graven images.” He’s saying don’t add a shape or image to God that he has not given to himself.

This is different than the first commandment we looked at last week. I want to put these here next to each other so you can see the difference.

1. Do not have **other gods** besides me -- Exodus 20:3
2. Do not make **an idol** for yourself -- Exodus 20:4

The first commandment is about worshipping the wrong gods. The second commandment is about worshipping the right God the wrong way. **The second commandment is saying you must not imagine the one true God to be who you prefer him to be, you must worship him as he has revealed himself to be.**

And then, this thing has an explanation added onto it about generations and judgment. The Lord is a jealous God. Jealous not just that worship him, but that we worship him rightly. And the spiritual destiny of generations after us are at stake. And I want to take a second to make sure we are clear on something. Repeatedly scripture goes to considerable lengths to ensure we understand we are each individually responsible for how we sin and disobey God.

16 “Fathers are not to be put to death for their children, and children are not to be put to death for their fathers; each person will be put to death for his own sin. -- Deuteronomy 24:16

So what is this saying here in the second commandment? He’s saying God will punish successive generations for repeating the same sins they learned from their parents. God isn’t going to let the children off the hook because they learned sinful habits from their parents. No, he’s saying if they commit the same sins their parents did...which they are VERY LIKELY TO DO...he will punish them just as he did their parents.

And ya’ll I know I’m only about 7 or 8 minutes into this sermon and we just got **real...fast**. Because this commandment is all about believing there is a God, but then us treating him in a way unworthy of who he is. And So All of us may have some pattern-shattering responses to today.

PARENTS – kids see everything don’t they? And they repeat it. And we are going to talk about how we break this commandment in a little while but listen: If your kids HEAR about a Big, important God on Sundays for an hour, and that matches the god of your home, they are likely to worship God as they grow. But a small god that kind of matters to you will not matter at all to them. This is super convicting to me as my kids are very, very observant right now. So parents I’m locked in with you today.

BUT ALL OF US – we need to acknowledge for a moment how formative the religious practices of those who raised us were. Like, you may have a conception of God and how you relate to him that comes from your upbringing but maybe it doesn’t square with who the true God is according to scripture. And if that’s true...its going to be very disorienting to process. Bottom line, I want you to try to be open to assuming you

don't have God 100% figured out yet.

The second commandment is where MOST of us are going to be challenged because we gotta say ok am I worshipping God...and worship is not just singing it is whole life surrender & service...**am I worshipping God the way I THINK he should be worshipped or the way he says he should be worshipped.** I told you man the 10 commandments are DEEP and whole-life shaping. Ok caveat over. Back in:

This 'idol' is a human-made image of God. whether physical or mental. We break this commandment whenever we add something to God. an image or something that goes beyond or runs contrary to who God has said he is in scripture. And ya'll this is that commandment that we rarely even think about but I believe may break routinely. And in breaking it we distort who God really is and miss the power of the knowledge of the one true God. What is it saying? Worship God as he has revealed himself to be.

Let me talk about why this is SO IMPORTANT

See the bible tells us that God is invisible. HE IS TOO BIG TO BE AN IMAGE. And any attempt we make to try and make him visible will certainly distort him. Because at best an image can only conceal and leave out far more than it will reveal about the one true God.

Think about it this way: if you were to create a picture or painting of God, would you draw him smiling or frowning? If smiling - you would be revealing the fatherliness & goodness of God. his warmth. But not his wrath against sin. If you drew him frowning you'd reveal his wrath but not his grace &

forgiveness. Any physical attempt to depict God will conceal more than it will reveal. And God is jealous not only that he is worshipped and no other, but that he is worshipped the right way. And this is for our good. I'm not saying the bible forbids drawing a picture of God. BUT, it certainly prevents worshipping such images.

Ya'll know those absurd renderings of Jesus from the enlightenment periods, and I'm sorry if I'm doing that unearthing wrong childhood worship patterns, but the 6'2 flowy haired white guy Jesus...it's culturally RIDICULOUS. That just isn't a first century jew. He didn't have an Instagram account so we don't know what he looked like, but when you get to heaven you shouldn't be surprised if we are all worshipping a brown man about pastor Rashard's height.

Tom Skinner (a Christian evangelist who grew up on the streets of Harlem) once said that the reason he didn't become a Christian at a younger age was because he had seen several pictures of Jesus and he thought to himself, "That guy wouldn't last one day on the streets where I'm from." Even the most artistic of renderings just cannot portray God. And beneath all of that is God saying, I don't even want you imagining me. Physical images are just imagination expressed. And God is saying, **you must not imagine me to be whatever you want me to be. Your imagination needs to be regulated by truth.**

How do we break it?

Let me start with an example from just a couple chapters later: ISRAEL & THE GOLDEN CALF

This was the commandment that Israel broke before Moses could even get off the mountain with the commandments. Exodus 32 recounts the story. Moses was up on the mountain with God. He wasn't coming back at the time they expected him to come back. And Israel went into a panic. They start to think God had abandoned them.

So, they take off their jewelry, Aaron melts it down and turns it into a calf so they will have something to represent God. Which is amazing isn't it? They didn't trust the God they couldn't see. An invisible God wasn't enough for them. They needed God to be one they could see because then maybe they could control what he would do for them.

But Moses, the guy writing, makes sure to let us know the Israelites thought they were worshipping the one true God, and that they were doing it the wrong way.

5 When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of it and made an announcement: "There will be a festival to **the Lord** tomorrow... The people sat down to eat and drink, and got up to party. -- Exodus 32:5-6

THE LORD is God's covenant name he had given to Israel to talk about his relationship with them. This is Aaron saying...God is now represented in this icon. See what happened? They Changed "I AM" to "what we want you to be." And the result is this eating & drinking & "party" that is actually the word for orgy. Their worship of this image, because it was powerless, actually corrupted them spiritually.

Can you see what is happening? In trying to create an image of God that they thought would work better for them, they actually manufactured an insufficient image of God that was powerless & spiritually corrosive.

J.I. Packer says "Any statement that begins '*I like to think of God as...*', should never be trusted."

- Which by the way is why I love the scene from talledega nights: The ballad of Ricky Bobby. Where Cal Norton Jr Says "I like to picture Jesus in a tuxedo t-shirt. Which says I'm formal, but I like to party. Because I like to party, so I like my Jesus to party too."

That may be silly, but ya'll it is SO true of how we act towards God. We say and think things like "I'm sure God wouldn't care about _____." "My God wouldn't do that." We are creating false images of God and trying to relate to that God as our God. And it doesn't matter how we like to see God. God is who he is. And that's what the second commandment is saying to us.

The question of the second commandment is this: "will you allow truth to shape your imagination, or will you make the mistake of allowing your imagination to shape the 'truth'"

Here's why that matters: ¹Satan's strategy from the beginning has been to lie to us about our view of God, then have us reject that distorted image of God, thinking that we are rejecting the real thing.

And that right there, that's **how we break the second commandment: We define God by who we want him to be instead of who he is.** Of course that's going to be offensive to God right? I mean imagine you are in a relationship. It's going well you think. But then you learn your new girlfriend is going around saying "I like to imagine he is 6'4 and looks like THOR...like infinity war thor not endgame thor." You'd be offended. Why she gotta re-imagine you to like you? Same way God is offended when we re-imagine him in order to like him.

And We see Satan leading people to do this throughout scripture right.

- Genesis 3. Right at the beginning with the first humans, Satan comes in to lie to adam & eve. **Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the Lord God had made....** 4 "No! You will not die," the serpent said to the woman. 5 "In fact, God knows that when you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." -- Genesis 3.1,4-5

What is happening right here? Satan is twisting Eve's view of God. He's saying God is insecure. He is just afraid to lose control. And because he's insecure he makes rules to keep us

¹ I pulled this wonderful wording & the idea from J.D. Greear's sermon on the 2nd Commandment preached in Spring of 2017 as part 3 of the "Unknown God" series.

down. When he denies us something it's because he's oppressing us, not because he's wise.

And naturally Eve says...well yeah I don't want to follow a God like that. So she chooses what SHE deems best. Because this distorted view of God isn't compelling at all. She has created a false image of God and is rejecting that false image.

Another obvious one is Job. If you know the story, Job moves from trusting God in hardship to bitterness and complaining. He doesn't get an immediate response from God on WHY everything bad has happened, and so he starts saying God doesn't exist. See what Satan did? He planted an idea in Job that God owed him an explanation for why bad things happen. That God should be understandable to man. That's a distortion of who God has revealed himself to be. So God shows up in CHAPTER 38 and corrects his view of God. He says where were you when I established the earth? Who put the stars and seas in their place? Have you ever commanded the morning? What road leads to the place where light is stored? God says well? And Job says...yeah I don't know. And God says that's right! And if you can't comprehend the secrets of nature, it's safe to say you can't comprehend my ways.

Satan's primary tactic in getting us to break the second commandment is to twist our view of God. And THEN, to sit back and laugh as we get disillusioned with this false, powerless version of god we've created.

I know we don't necessarily create a lot of wooden statues that we think represent God's presence with us in our day. Maybe, but there are ways we worship God incorrectly. There are mental images & assumptions. This week I read some wonderful insights on how we distort God and in doing so, how we break the second commandment. I pulled this together from a few different pastors and I've cited them in the manuscript we post online if you want to go do some homework. Really good stuff in there and they list out some ways we misconceive of God. I've borrowed a couple and added my own as well.²

1. The Rosary God – This is the closest one to the instruction forbidden in the commandment. This is not to single out our catholic friends by the way because all streams of Christianity do this in some way. I remember one person asking me about a certain bible that they heard had healing powers when touched and should they go try it and in moments of crisis you will do anything. But our God does not confine his power to certain objects. God's spirit exists in and among his people. When we say we need certain things in order to be close to God or to access God, we are re-conceiving God. And in doing so, radically limiting him. And I know we have enough people with backgrounds where this is real that we need to be clear: No saints or their statues, no talismans, no crucifix should be used as access points to God. He is jealous that he be worshiped alone he says right here.

² Greear – 2nd Commandment. & Andy Stanley "Who needs God" series of sermons preached August 2016.

2. The Experience God – This is the God that is only real if you feel him. If your heart doesn't flutter when you think of him, then he must not be real. And entire Christian movements can fall victim to this if we aren't careful. We try to conjure up a felt sense of his presence because man we want that feeling and that feeling is validation that he's real.

The problem with this God is obvious though right: sometimes we don't feel God's presence. David and the other psalmists are constantly crying out about how they don't feel God's presence. Jesus himself on the cross is crying out God why have you forsaken me? Doesn't mean God abandoned either of them obviously.

But if our faith is based on our feelings, we'll stop believing he's real when our feelings shift.

And some people have walked away from God because they weren't experiencing him anymore. But what if you walked away from a god that never existed in the first place? Because the experience God doesn't exist. It's not the real God. Feelings were meant to be led by faith. Not the other way around. So when God feels distant our faith is to tell our feelings what is true. So if you stopped believing in the experience God...good for you! It was a false image.

3. The Smooth – Sailing God – I thought this was a really good one. With smooth sailing God we assume that life will work out good for us because God is on our side. So we'll never have hardships. The problem of course is what? Hardships come. So when bad things happen to good people it CRUSHES

our faith and we assume God must not be real. The problem is...where does the bible say that bad things or unfair things WONT happen to good people?

I mean, the whole Christian religion started with a really bad thing happening to a really good person. So if you lost faith in a smooth-sailing God, GOOD! That was a false image anyway. This is why I get so fired up about prosperity teaching or anything that gets near it. Because it violates the second commandment so blatantly and in doing so it wreaks havoc on true faith. Smooth Sailing God is a false image.

God doesn't promise prosperity, he promises us his presence. As Isaiah 43 says when you pass through the waters I will be WITH YOU, they will not overwhelm you. Romans 8 says even if you face death itself...death cannot separate you from the love and presence of God. Maybe you need to turn to the true God who is big enough to handle your pain.

4. **No-Fun God** – This is the god who doesn't want you to have fun in life. Your non-christian friends have all the fun and you don't get to because God has put a lot of rules in place to keep you from having fun. I recognize that's a certain group but...where did you get that idea of God? Psalm 16 says fullness of joy and eternal pleasures are found in the presence of God. People often think they won't get too serious with God because he'll suck all the fun out of the room and I'm like, that's just not Jesus & Not the God of the bible. Jesus is making weddings more fun, he's bringing Joy. God is the one who created the emotion of Joy. He's got more joy & soul

³ Deyoung, Kevin. The 10 Commandments. 46.

satisfaction for you than anything on the earth. And he wants to give it to you.

There are many others right. Many ways we break this command. But I want to talk about where we go from here. And I think there are two really beautiful steps we can take to begin worshipping God rightly from here. One may seem surprising, one shouldn't at all.

Where we go from here

Pursue friendship with believers. Ok how cool is this: There is one thing that God gave his image to. He gave his image to people! Genesis 1 says We are the divinely chosen statues meant to show what God is like, created in his image after his likeness.³ When we worship other images we are looking for God's image where it doesn't exist, and ignoring God's image where it does exist! Now what is fascinating is how different we are from one another. Which points to the beauty and complexity of God. And God says when someone becomes a follower of Christ he makes his home with that person. And that person walking around under the guidance and strength of God is now an ambassador of God's love here in the world. So here is the awesome thing about being a part of the local church. We get together every week, a bunch of God's image bearers, to celebrate God's love and remind one another of it.

And it's why we make community such a central part of how we do church. Our church gathers every week in smaller

groups of people we call community groups. The reason we do that is because God has created each one of us differently and told us we can see him in one another. And WE are his ambassadors of love and mercy to one another. And as we care for one another and get into life with one another we are actually encountering the character of GOD like he designed. We are engineered to be reflections of the character of God. We will never do it perfectly. We'll mess it up a lot. That's why we should lean on one another but we should NOT put the weight of worship on one another. That leads me to the second point:

Worship Jesus, the image of the invisible God.

(This can be up on screen at same time as Col 1.15)

15He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. -- Colossians 1:15

To look on Christ was to look upon the face of him who could not be seen on the mountain. Jesus did the seemingly impossible. He allowed humans to see the God who cannot be seen. That's the mystery and majesty of the incarnation. We don't need pictures, statues, or icons. We have the icon. Christ is the image of the invisible God!

It seems that God knew we'd look for an image to worship. And so in his grace he gave us that image fully in Jesus. So as we look to him, we find an image we CANNOT CONTROL, but that we can serve. We can give our devotion to him. We can love him. And he will not fail us. He will not ask us to give more and more just to get less and less. He served us first. Gave us everything! And as we begin to serve him, we GET

fullness of joy. He said in John 10.10 I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly.

I told you the commandments would reveal to us how the law of God and the love of God are allies. See we break the second commandment all the time. We are constantly re-imagining God. We craft a lesser version of God and as we give our worship to it we separate ourselves from the one true God. God says that rejection of him is sin. And in his LOVE he came to us in the flesh. To show us who he really is & to even show us HOW to pray, how to love, and then ultimately reconcile us back to the one true God. So look at Jesus! The one who fulfilled the law COMPLETELY. In Christ the law of God and the love of God are embodied perfectly. When we receive his salvation we are made at peace with God. When we love like he loves, and when we love what he loves, our lives are transformed and given a sense of wholeness they never had without it.

My community group leader asked us recently what God has changed in us as we've walked with him and I told them that I've become a more compassionate person. Because my first reaction to any situation used to be self-preservation. But now, the settling of my soul deeper into the joy of Christ...is beginning to allow me to look at others the way he does. And it's just a far more joyful way to live. I don't do it always you know. Like kids bedtime or 5pm traffic...I wouldn't say compassion is all over that. But, God is compassionate. I see it in Christ. I experience it in Christ. And as I direct my thoughts to him and as I try to serve him, I find I just have more compassion to give. What do you do with this? Well, maybe

start with the sources of chaos in your life. And recognize that in those areas there may be a distorted view of God at work. And yield that space to Jesus.

THE BENCH

Because think about what happened to the Israelites...

They traded the one true God for a powerless image of their own creation.

- The true God carried them out of Egypt. The Calf was a lifeless statue that had to be carried around
- The true God provided food & water for them. The Calf was a statue they thought they had to worship to earn provision from.
- One day the true God would redeem them forever. The Calf was a statue! They traded the one true God for the image of a cow.

And of course, this image let them down. It didn't provide for them. Because it wasn't GOD! It was an image that they had projected onto God. And images of God always let you down. You know what ends up happening? They end

What does obedience look like?

What happens if we break it?

How does this commandment point us to Jesus?

16 While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply distressed when he saw that the city was full of idols. -- Acts 17:16 (CSB)

22 Paul stood in the middle of the Areopagus and said: "People of Athens! I see that you are extremely religious in every respect. 23 For as I was passing through and observing the objects of your worship, I even found an altar on which was inscribed: 'To an Unknown God.' Therefore, what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. -- Acts 17:22-23 (CSB)

20 The person who sins is the one who will die. A son won't suffer punishment for the father's iniquity, and a father won't suffer punishment for the son's iniquity. The righteousness of the righteous person will be on him, and the wickedness of the wicked person will be on him. -- Ezekiel 18:20 (CSB)

Both DeYoung and Packer: If the first commandment prohibits worshipping the wrong God, the second commandment prohibits worshipping God the wrong way. "The people in Athens were guilty of both. They were ignorant of the God who raised Jesus from the dead, and their approach to religion was not what the true God had prescribed." – deyoung

God is invisible – 1. Timothy 1.17; Hebrews 11.27***

11 You came near and stood at the base of the mountain, a mountain blazing with fire into the heavens and enveloped in a totally black cloud. 12 Then the Lord spoke to you from the fire. You kept hearing the sound of the words, but didn't see a form; there was only a voice. -- Deuteronomy 4:11-12 (CSB)

15 "Diligently watch yourselves — because you did not see any form on the day the Lord spoke to you out of the fire at Horeb

— 16so you don't act corruptly and make an idol for yourselves in the shape of any figure: a male or female form, 17or the form of any animal on the earth, any winged creature that flies in the sky, 18any creature that crawls on the ground, or any fish in the waters under the earth. 19 When you look to the heavens and see the sun, moon, and stars — all the stars in the sky — do not be led astray to bow in worship to them and serve them. The Lord your God has provided them for all people everywhere under heaven. 20But the Lord selected you and brought you out of Egypt's iron furnace to be a people for his inheritance, as you are today. -- Deuteronomy 4:15-20 (CSB)

God provides his own mediators!

We don't need to create images of God because he has already created them. The implications of Genesis 1.26-27 are staggering. We are divinely chosen statues meant to show what God is like, created in his image and after his likeness. Idolatry diminishes God AND diminishes us. In Ezekiel 18.11-13, right in the middle of a host of horizontal, neighborly sins, is the mention of idolatry. Why? Because mistreating other people and worshiping idols have the same root: a violation of the divine image. In none case, we are looking for God's image where it doesn't exist (idolatry), and in the other case we are ignoring God's image where it does exist (sins against our neighbors). We are God's statues in the world, marking out the planet as his and his alone. He does not need our help in making more images; he asks for our witness. – Deyoung. 46-47.

Keeping the Commandment Today – Deyoung

1. Guard against images of God both external and imagined – art is ok, but avoid infusing any created things with divine immanence and spiritual efficacy. WHAT ABOUT MY NATIVITY SET? – don't use it as a means of connecting with God. Do not try to distinguish between worship & veneration. If we think we need it to be closer to God, that will NOT do. Also, Don't create mental images of God. Be sure we say what God is LIKE. He is LIKE a father running towards the prodigal. But he IS not that. Westminster Larger Catechism on the 2nd commandment (see below)
2. Don't contribute to the idolatry of others –
3. Consider the wisdom of the regulative principle – the acceptable way of worshiping the true God is instituted by himself and so limited by his own revealed will. In other words, corporate worship should be comprised of those elements we can show to be appropriate from the bible.
4. Let's remedy the ignorance of God's people by giving them what they need, not necessarily what they want.
5. Look to Christ as the fulfillment of the 2nd commandment – He showed forth the father to his disciples (John 14.9) - **9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been among you all this time and you do not know me, Philip? The one who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? -- John 14:9-10 (CSB).** To look upon Christ was to look upon the face of him who could not be seen on Sinai. Jesus did the seemingly impossible. He allowed

humans to see the God who cannot be seen. That's the mystery and majesty of the incarnation. We don't need pictures, statues, icons. We have the icon. Christ is the image of the invisible God! (Col 1.15)

Keller⁴

2: Marks of a Godly-Jealous Relationship

If the jealousy of God is angered love, that stays love and doesn't turn evil, then what is the relationship he is calling for? This relationship is marked by three things: Priority, Fidelity, and Intimacy.

3. How Can We Answer This Call?

Godly-jealousy seems to combine the wrath and holiness of God with his love and intimacy. How difficult is that to understand! Keller says, this is a high-bar to live because whenever we sin, we aren't just breaking the rules of a king, we are committing spiritual adultery and betraying him.

Keller reminds us that adultery was a capital offense in the Bible. God is going to have to cut us off. And we are constantly "trampling on his heart."

The answer to this call is in the New Covenant. Eph 5:22ff., Jesus is spoken of as being the bridegroom and us as the bride. Jesus fulfills this call, because he gave himself for his bride. Keller says, "Human love, if pushed, will kill the lover who rejects. But God's love when pushed will die for the one who rejects." Why, in spite of our spiritual adultery, does God

stay with us? Because he paid for the debt himself and died for us.

SUH – Austin Stone

Quoting Keller (HA!) - "If we're allowed to make our own images of God, we cannot avoid controlling him, but if we have no images of God, then we just have this invisible abstraction and we can't know him personally. In other words, if you're allowed to make your image any old way, you'll control God, but if you don't have any image at all, you can't have a personal relationship. It will just be an abstraction."

He says this means we are not just wanting a God that is far off but wanting a God who is near and knows us, knows what it is like to go through what we are going through. Suh says we have this in Christ. Col 1:15, Christ is the image of the invisible God. He is the exact imprint of God, Heb 1:13. He is Emmanuel, God with us. He is the one who knows what we have gone through, and he is the fulfillment of the second commandment. We cannot make an image because we will always get it wrong, but Jesus is the only image that shows the fullness of who God is, not just what we like.

Yet according to Suh we try to make Jesus in our own image too. A Prozac Jesus, numbing the horrors and pains of the world. An Amazon.com Jesus, who gives us whatever we want, and if he doesn't then we go to Walmart or Target.

⁴ Timothy J. Keller, "The Jealousy of God," Redeemer Presbyterian Church, March 27, 2011, <https://gospelinlife.com/downloads/the-jealousy-of-god-6097/>.

District Attorney Jesus, who goes after all the people in our lives who have wronged us but won't go after us. Retirement Planner Jesus, where we will pay towards our retirement by tithing, reading our bible, going to church, etc., so long as he pays out in the end because we earned it.

Suh quotes 1930s poet W.H. Auden who was an atheist and went back to Christianity. When his friends asked why he is going back, Auden said, "I believe in Jesus because He fulfills none of my dreams because He's in every respect the opposite of what He would be if I could've made Him in my own image."

Westminster Larger Catechism

Q. 108. What are the duties required in the second commandment?

A. The duties required in the second commandment are, the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath instituted in his Word;⁵¹⁸ particularly prayer and thanksgiving in the name of Christ;⁵¹⁹ the reading, preaching, and hearing of the Word;⁵²⁰ the administration and receiving of the sacraments;⁵²¹ church government and discipline;⁵²² the ministry and maintainance thereof;⁵²³ religious fasting;⁵²⁴ swearing by the name of God;⁵²⁵ and vowing unto him;⁵²⁶ as also the disapproving, detesting, opposing all false

worship;⁵²⁷ and, according to each one's place and calling, removing it, and all monuments of idolatry.⁵²⁸

Q. 109. What are the sins forbidden in the second commandment?

A. The sins forbidden in the second commandment are, all devising,⁵²⁹ counselling,⁵³⁰ commanding,⁵³¹ using,⁵³² and anywise approving, any religious worship not instituted by God himself;⁵³³ tolerating a false religion; the making any representation of God, of all or of any of the three persons, either inwardly in our mind, or outwardly in any kind of image or likeness of any creature whatsoever;⁵³⁴ all worshipping of it,⁵³⁵ or God in it or by it;⁵³⁶ the making of any representation of feigned deities,⁵³⁷ and all worship of them, or service belonging to them,⁵³⁸ all superstitious devices,⁵³⁹ corrupting the worship of God,⁵⁴⁰ adding to it, or taking from it,⁵⁴¹ whether invented and taken up of ourselves,⁵⁴² or received by tradition from others,⁵⁴³ though under the title of antiquity,⁵⁴⁴ custom,⁵⁴⁵ devotion,⁵⁴⁶ good intent, or any other pretence whatsoever;⁵⁴⁷ simony;⁵⁴⁸ sacrilege;⁵⁴⁹ all neglect,⁵⁵⁰ contempt,⁵⁵¹ hindering,⁵⁵² and opposing the worship and ordinances which God hath appointed.⁵⁵³

Exodus is the second book in the bible. It has two pretty evenly divided parts to it. The first 19 chapters tell the story of God bringing his people up out of Egypt. It's wild, its packed with rich meaning for us here and now. And it becomes the reference point God uses for himself for the rest of Old Testament. It's very common when he's talking with Israel to say "I am the one who brought you out of Egypt." That's God's credentials and it comes from the first half of Exodus.

The second half is 21 chapters of laws & instructions about social and religious order for the people to follow out in the wilderness. And in the middle of the two is the giving of the 10 commandments. Which are these pinnacle, whole life encompassing decrees that come straight from God to us.

Tom Skinner (a Christian evangelist who grew up on the streets of Harlem) once said that the reason he didn't become a Christian at a younger age was because he had seen several pictures of Jesus and he thought to himself, "That guy wouldn't last one day on the streets where I'm from". Artistic renditions of Jesus have a very limited capacity to encapsulate all of who Jesus/God is, and in this instance they had a detrimental effect on Tom Skinner's faith.

-Even deeper than that, what God is saying is "you shall not imagine me". Physical images are based on mental images, and God says "you must not imagine me to be whatever you want me to be. Rather, you must let your imagination be regulated by the truth".

-Based on the 2nd commandment, J.I. Packer says "Any statement that begins '*I like to think of God as...*', should never be trusted."