

## The 1st Commandment: Put God First

by Rev. Dennis Kneer

*Here are all the words God spoke. He said, "I am the Lord your God. I brought you out of Egypt. That is the land where you were slaves. "Do not put any other gods in place of me. Do not make for yourself statues of gods that look like anything in the sky. They may not look like anything on the earth or in the waters either. Do not bow down to them or worship them.* —Exodus 20:1-5 NIV

The 1st Commandment tells us to not worship objects, like statues. But it also tells us not to put anything before God in our lives. If something or someone takes first place in our hearts and lives over and above God, then we are breaking the 1st Commandment.

Here is an example of putting something first in life instead of God. The game of golf is a fun sport to play. But some people may decide it is more important to play golf than it is to worship God in church on Sunday mornings. The issue is not Sunday morning; the issue is missing weekly worship. If someone chooses to do other things instead of worshipping God, those things become first in their life. So something fun, like playing golf, becomes an idol, or a false god, when it is treated as more important than God.

- [Missing church once in a while is not horrible, but have you ever felt something was more important than worship?](#)
- [If so, why do you think you felt that way?](#)

The same can be true with loving money. We all need money in order to live. Money is not bad, but loving money more than we love God is wrong. When making money or wanting money is more important than worshipping God, money becomes an idol.

- [Is there something that tempts you or makes you feel it is more important than God?](#)
- [Think about things people become addicted to: sports, alcohol, video games, TV. What are some other things people may put ahead of God?](#)
- [How can we put God first in our lives?](#)

All of us sin; all of us are tempted. Most of us are tempted to make idols of good things, like our work, hobbies, our possessions, or maybe even another person. Putting anything in place of God is a sin. But sins are forgivable. When we confess or tell God about our sins, we are forgiven. Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins. He paid the price for us, and God grants us full and free forgiveness; God can help us when we need help putting Him first. Talk to God; count on Him.

### Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,  
We know You are the only God.  
Help us fight the many temptations we face in our lives; especially help us put You first.  
Give us strength.  
Forgive us when we sin.  
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

