

Name:

Abiding Savior Free Lutheran Church Confirmation

The First Commandment

After completing the lesson, the student will be able to:

- Describe the two divisions of the Ten Commandments.
- Know what the First Commandment is.
- Know what the First Commandment means in our lives.
- Be able to define what it is to “fear God”.
- Be able to define what it is to “trust God”.
- Be able to define what it is to “love God”.
- Will be able to define idolatry and identify ways in which idolatry exists today.

TEN COMMANDMENTS

We find the Ten Commandments listed in two places in the Bible. They appear in Exodus 20:1–17 and in Deuteronomy 5:6–21. They are simply designated as “the words” of God in the Hebrew text, and in Exodus 34:28 called the “Ten Commandments”. You may also hear the term “Decalogue” in reference to the Ten Commandments. This word comes from the Greek words “10” (deka) and “word” (logos).

These “10 Words” were the centerpiece of all of Israel’s religious, moral, and social life, and for us today provides the summary or guideline for all of our conduct as well. The Ten Commandments can be broken down into two tables or divisions:

- The first deals with the relationship an individual has with God.
- The second deals with the relationships the individual is to have with others.

Jesus summarizes the Commandments in this way as well. Look briefly at the text of Exodus 20:1-17. Do you observe any particular numbering of the Commandments?

We must note that the Bible does not number the Commandments. In fact, there are 3 different systems used to number them, with the differences being in how Exodus 20:2, 3-6, and 17 are determined. Again, the Bible itself does not number the Commandments! For our purposes, we will follow a system that regards Exodus 20:2-6 as the First Commandment and divides Exodus 20:17 into the 9th and 10th Commandments.

1. Whose words are the 10 Commandments?
2. What are the two tables or divisions of the Commandments?

3. Read Matthew 22:36-39. According to Jesus, what is the summary of the First Table of the Ten Commandments (Commandments 1-3), and what is the summary of the Second Table of the Ten Commandments? (Commandments 4-10)?

4. Read Psalm 19:7-8. How do these verses describe the Law of God?

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

5. Use your catechism to write in the following information about the First Commandment. Please copy it word for word below.

What is the First Commandment?

What does this mean?

6. Read Exodus 20:3-6. What is the First Commandment? Why do you think it is listed first? (Remember the purpose of the First Table—to describe our duty and relationship to God)

It is important as we consider the First Commandment that we understand the meaning of the terms ‘fear—love—trust’. To fear is usually meant to be afraid of something. Yet that is not its meaning as we speak of ‘fearing God.’ Fearing God rightly means one holds a true reverence and respect for Him. We do not sit with our faces hidden in the corner because we are afraid, but rightly acknowledge His greatness and give to Him our appropriate respect. Christians are to fear the Lord not in the sense of being afraid He will hurt them, but in the sense of respecting Him and that harm would come from disobeying Him. To love God means we hold Him higher than any other thing. To love God means we think more highly of Him than anything else. We love God only because He first loved us. It is God’s love for us that produces our love for Him. Only when we rightly understand the sacrifice of His Son Jesus for our sakes can we truly love God. This love is evidenced in our lives as we seek His will and His glory (not our

own!), as we spend time with Him in the Word (the Bible) & prayer, as we trust in the Gospel, live at peace with others, bear good fruit, and worship Him publicly and privately.

To trust God above all things means we depend upon Him alone for our care and our provision. This does not mean we can just lay in bed all day and channel surf because God will provide for our every need, but it does mean we can carry on in our daily activities being assured that He has our best interests in mind and will certainly provide for our needs. Notice the use of the word “need”—God will not necessarily provide for our “wants”, but He will see to our “needs”! Trusting in this fact will remove the burden of anxiety, anxiousness, and worry from our lives.

As we reflect upon this commandment, it is good to ask “What is forbidden?” Essentially what it forbids is “idolatry”. Idolatry means to give the highest place in the heart to something or someone instead of the one true God. It is to place that thing ahead of God. Anything that replaces or takes higher place than God is an idol. Anytime we worship, reverence, love, or trust in anything above or instead of God, we are committing idolatry. Idolatry can take many forms. Open idolatry would be the worship of statues, pictures, or objects in nature. It may be the adoration of people, past or present. Secret idolatry consists in putting ourselves, others, or things above God. These things would include friends, possessions, business, pleasure, career/job, sports, popularity, or money.

7. Describe idolatry. Is there a certain area of idolatry that you struggle with?

8. Think about how our lesson defined what it is to ‘fear, love, and trust God’. How are you doing in these areas? Is a right fear, love, and trust of God seen in your own life?

9. Read the following passages and summarize what they say regarding the First Commandment.

Deuteronomy 27:15

Psalm 115:2-8

Isaiah 42:8

Matthew 4:10

Martin Luther summarizes this command with these words:

“Thus you can easily understand the nature and scope of this commandment. It requires that man’s whole heart and confidence be placed in God alone, and in no one else. To have God, you see, does not mean to lay hands upon him, or put him into a purse, or shut him up in a chest. We lay hold of him when our heart embraces him and clings to him. To cling to him with all our heart is nothing else than to entrust ourselves to him completely.”

Student & Parent Questions: *for the student and a parent to discuss and answer together*

1. Review the 1st Commandment from Luther’s Small Catechism and take note of the word “All”.
Are there activities, events, or possessions that your family has made a greater priority than God?

2. What is one step your family can take to keep God as the top priority in each of your lives?

STUDENT & PARENT SIGNATURE:

By signing below, we affirm (1) this lesson is complete and that (2) we completed the “Student & Parent Questions” section together

Parent Signature: _____

Student Signature: _____