

God's Priorities for Life
Selected Scriptures

Introduction

The sermons in January were designed to lay the theological foundation for the practical application of the truth about God in how we respond to Him. I have often said in conversations that every problem man faces is ultimately theological, and that is clearly seen in the choices that people make with regard to how they should live their life and the things they pursue in the few short years they are alive on this earth. If you reject God in disbelief or are just plain defiant toward Him, then you will also reject His purpose in creating you and try to find some alternative reason for your existence. As we saw last week, anything pursued apart from God is described by Solomon as ultimately vain, futile, chasing after the wind. If you have a distorted understanding of God because you follow a false religion or one of the many perversions of Christianity, you will also find that what you pursue in life will be ultimately futile, and even worse, that will be true despite your best efforts in pursuing your religious beliefs. How horrible to believe you are serving Jesus Christ only to find out at judgment that you have the wrong Jesus (See Matthew 7:15-27).

Understanding the purpose of your existence starts with some basic understanding of the God who created you, and the first thing to understand about your Creator is that He is far beyond you. His ways and thoughts are much higher and beyond your own because He is infinite and you are finite. However, we can understand God according to whatever He has revealed to us about Himself and His purposes, and much of that is understandable to at least some degree. I cannot understand being eternal or omnipresent, but I can understand that God declares He is not trapped in the time-space box with me. I cannot understand omniscience or omnipotence, but I can understand that God is greater in knowledge, wisdom and power than me and all of humanity combined. I cannot understand the Trinity, but I can understand that God has declared Himself to be only one God and that He has also declared three distinct persons who are each co-equal to be fully God. I cannot understand the intersection of God's sovereignty and the volition that He has granted to man, but I can understand that I am completely responsible for my choices and thank God for His intervention in my life that regenerated my spirit to know the truth and place my faith in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ to redeem my sinful soul.

Because God is Creator and I am but a creature made by Him, then the purpose of my existence is totally bound up in Him. I exist for whatever purpose God has created me and He has declared that all things have been created for His own glory. He has further declared that I as a human will glorify Him as I reflect His image as a person who has cognition, emotion and volition even though those abilities to think, feel and make choices are corrupted by sin. The Christian will reflect God better than the non-Christian because the image of Him is more clear as we become more like Christ in holiness and character reflecting His communicable attributes.

God is also glorified as His attributes such as eternal power, majesty, and intelligence are displayed in all creation. Additional attributes such as goodness, kindness and compassion are displayed upon all living creatures as He provides for their needs. God displays tolerance, patience and longsuffering as He extends mercy in giving sinful man time to repent. To those that do repent, God demonstrates attributes such as sacrificial love, grace, kindness, righteousness and justice as Jesus takes on the penalty of man's sin as a substitute to redeem him from sin. On those that do not repent, God will display the other side of the attributes of righteousness and justice as He brings to bear His wrath and condemnation upon those that will not obey the gospel. In summary, the purpose of the existence of man is to glorify God, and every human will glorify God as either a vessel of His mercy or a vessel of His wrath.

This morning I want to put these truths into practical application by discussing the priorities that God has set for life. Since our purpose of existence is to glorify Him, then it should be the endeavor of every human to do that to the greatest extent and as effectively and efficiently as possible. How can that be done? I believe it will be done best by those living according to God's will according to His priorities. All of God's commands are important, but there is a hierarchy within them about what is most important.

Becoming a Vessel of Mercy

As I pointed out last week from Romans 9, God will glorify Himself in you as either a vessel of mercy or as a vessel of wrath. For your own sake, it is certainly a lot better to be a vessel of mercy, but I also believe that He is glorified more in vessels of mercy than in vessels of wrath. I say this for several reasons beginning with God's stated will toward man.

2 Peter 3:9 states it succinctly, *"The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."* God is glorified in the redemption and reconciliation of man which begins on man's part with humility and repentance. That is why in Acts 17:30 Paul told the philosophers in Athens that God had overlooked the times of ignorance but was now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent. That is why Peter responded to the people who asked what they could do to be saved to repent (Acts 2:38; 3:19).

Repentance is a change of mind that results in a change of action.

Repentance includes confession which in itself glorifies God as demonstrated in Joshua 7:19 when Joshua said to Achan, *"My son, I implore you, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and give praise to Him; and tell me now what you have done. Do not hide it from me."* Confession, which means to agree with, to admit, glorifies God by demonstrating His faithfulness and righteousness as expressed in 1 John 1:9, *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* God is true to His promises. Those who believe in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ are redeemed, forgiven and granted eternal life.

Repentance and belief are also tied together because it is a change of your beliefs about sin, self and the Savior. Jesus declared in Mark 1:15, *"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."* Those are imperatives, not suggestions. Jesus is commanding the people to repent and believe. In John 6:28-29 Jesus was asked, *"What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?"* ²⁹ Jesus answered and said to them, *"This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."* God will glorify Himself in those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ because such belief is His work. God glorifies Himself in vessels of mercy.

How do you become a vessel of mercy? Again, while we do not understand the intersection of God's sovereignty and man's volition, God has made His commands clear. Repent and believe! How can you do that? It begins with humbling yourself before God, and an honest comparison of yourself to God should do that. You are a wretched sinner who is a creature and finite and He is your holy Creator who is infinite. Add in the fact that He is a righteous and just judge and you should be desperate to find a way to be made right with Him before it is too late. Jesus explained in the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 that the kingdom of heaven was for those who were poor in spirit, those who come to God as spiritual beggars mourning over their sin and pleading for His mercy. They will receive it and righteousness too. Just the act of humbling yourself before God to seek Him is already a demonstration of the Holy Spirit at work to convict you of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:8-11). Humans in their natural state will remain proud either rejecting God Himself, substituting Him with a false god, or trying to find some alternative means to gain entrance to heaven.

Jesus stated it plainly in John 14:6 that He is the way, the truth, and the life and no one comes to the Father except through Him. Those that do are vessels of mercy in whom God will glorify Himself in displays of all His attributes we find to be positive such as His love, grace, kindness and faithfulness.

Those who do not will be vessels of wrath in which He will glorify Himself in the display of what we view as the negative sides of His attributes of holiness, righteousness and justice as His anger and judgment are carried out in eternal condemnation upon sinners who have disobeyed the gospel.

Are you a vessel of mercy or will you be a vessel of His wrath?

The Great Commandments - Matthew 22:35-40

How do we know God's priorities? It all comes down to knowing the commands God has given to us and ranking them according to what He has declared. As I explained when I was preaching through Matthew 22:35-40 and the parallel passage in Mark 12:28-34, this idea of ranking God's commands was commonly debated among the Jews and a lawyer finally posed the question to Jesus. "*Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?*" There was no hesitation or debate on Jesus' part. He answered directly saying, "³⁷ *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.*' ³⁸ *This is the great and foremost commandment.*" Jesus then added, "³⁹ *The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'*" ⁴⁰ *"On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."*

While all of God's commandments are important, and all of them are to be obeyed with disobedience to any of them subjecting you to His judgment, they are not all equal in importance. Jesus makes it plain that there is hierarchy in them. The first priority is given to those commands related to loving God. Second priority are commands related to loving others. That means what is related to yourself is last. To use an old acronym to remember it: J.O.Y. - Jesus, Others, You.

I am not going to spend a lot of time explaining this passage since I preached three sermons on it a couple of years ago (Sept. 2018). I do want to point out that the word for love in both of these commandments is the Greek word ἀγαπάω / agapaō which is a love that is primarily an act of the will and mind in a determined care for the welfare of someone else. It involves commitment to what is righteous, noble and true regardless of what feelings may or may not be present. That is a contrast to the sensual, physical idea of love (ἔρως / eros) common in Greek society. It is also a contrast to φιλέω / phileō, the tender affection and emotion of friendship. The love we are to have for God and others is not based in attraction or how well we like the person, but rather on a purposeful, willful, commitment to do, behave, and even think in the ways that are pleasing to God and which will be in the best interest of others.

Jesus said that the whole law and prophets were dependent upon these two commands of loving God and loving others. Why? Because if you do these two things you will also fulfill all of God's other prescriptive commands and will not violate any of His prohibitions. Or in other words, you will do everything God wants you to do and will not do any of the things God does not want you to do. You will walk in His will. But what does it mean to love God and others in the manner commanded here by Jesus? We begin by the specific ways Jesus said we are to love God.

Loving God

The command to "*love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind*" comes from Deuteronomy 6:5 as part of the Shema in which Moses instructs the second generation that would conquer the Promised Land about what and how they were to teach their children so that they would be blessed and not cursed. The command is repeated in Deuteronomy 10:12 and 11:13 as summations of God's commands to the nation of Israel. What does it mean to love God in this manner?

To love God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind and all your strength (Mark 12:30) is not to say that your love is to be broken into three or four categories, but rather to express the totality of that love for God. You are to love God with every part of your being. Loving God is the priority.

Loving God with all your heart (καρδία / kardia) is to love Him with the core of your being and seat of your will which is what the Greeks and Hebrews referred to by using the term heart. Your life is to center and revolve around Him with your will set to love Him above all else.

Loving God with all your soul encompasses the seat of your emotion. This does not refer in any way to letting your emotions lead or guide you, but it does refer to having a passion for God that should energize your love for God.

Loving God with all your mind refers to your ability to think and to the subject of your thoughts. It can be hard mental work to learn and comprehend what God has revealed about Himself and how He wants you to live. It also takes work to keep your mind focused and not be distracted by all the other things that are part of life so that you lose the priority of what is actually important and what is not.

Loving God with all your strength expresses the idea of doing all within your power to love God. This is having a love for God that exceeds all else which will take up all of your strength in pursuit of it.

The problem immediately arises from the fact that our minds, emotions and will all get muddled with our ignorance and innate selfishness so that we are left confused about how to love God in this manner. What Jesus taught exposes my sinfulness, but by God's grace He redeems me and changes me by the power of the Holy Spirit. However, until I am fully mature and conformed to the image of Christ so that I will innately love God and others in this manner, I will need additional practical guidance about what it means to love God and others. What does that look like? What are the specifics that will guide me to fulfill those commands? That is where the principles and precepts of God's specific laws come into play. The broader my understanding of all that God has revealed about Himself and what He has commanded, the easier it is for me to understand the purpose of His laws and the inter-relationship between them so that I can keep the priorities God has set for my life. That is one of the reasons it is so important that you study and learn the Word of God.

Keeping His Commandments

The Ten Commandments in Exodus 20 were given as a summary upon which the specific laws would be based, and so they also provide a basis for understanding God's priorities for man. The first four govern man's relationship to God. The last six cover man's relationships with one another. We will look at each of them over this week and next and I will suggest some practical applications for them.

1) *"³ You shall have no other gods before Me."* This is the prohibition related to the prescription to love God. If you love God supremely, you will not have any other god's before Him. This obviously covers all the deities of false religions, however, it also encompasses secular philosophical thought of the atheists and agnostics whose god is their own reasoning. While claiming to be non-religious, they attribute to inanimate matter mystical powers of intelligent design and morality. The vast majority of the world has some other god whether specifically identified or left in a mystical philosophical haze. This command and its corollaries are repeated multiple times in both the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, and repetition is an indicator of importance.

In practical terms this means that God is the first priority in everything for He is the Creator and the source for all meaning in life. Do not allow anything to come between you and your relationship with Him. The immature faith of many is shipwrecked because God is not their first priority. Instead of being diligent to learn of Him and His will based on what God Himself has said, they have a cursory faith based on the authority they have yielded to those who have told them stories and preached sermons to them. At some point a challenge to that faith arises that calls into question their source of authority which then shifts to something or someone else.

It was pointed out to me this week that there are people raised in churches that are posting their stories of the deconstruction of their faith or deconversion. The Biblical term is apostasy. The stories vary a lot in the specifics of why they have rejected God or at least their previous understanding of Him, but underlying all of them as their actual problem is that they always had another god, another source of

authority in their life instead of God Himself. They simply shifted to another source of authority which is their new god, often themselves.

Two of the more common reasons are: 1) giving more weight to the philosophical musings of supposed science than God's historical narrative of what He did. This is the Creation vs Evolution debate. 2) The God of the Bible does not meet the moral criteria they have come to embrace for a variety of reasons. They position themselves to judge God but are blind to the fact that the foundation of their moral stand is non-existent for it is built on the ever shifting sand of whatever is currently popular among the social group with which they seek to identify. Morality does not exist without the laws set by our Creator, and He is the judge, not man.

Be sure your convictions of belief are based in God and not man, and be sure that you train your children to develop their convictions the same way. Seek out the true God with all your being and do not let anything become a substitute for Him. The second commandment expands on this.

2) ⁴“*You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.*” ⁵“*You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,*” ⁶“*but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.*” Those who love God supremely will also naturally keep this command for worship or service to anything else would violate that love. This is not a prohibition of works of art, otherwise God would not have directed that both the Tabernacle and Temple include designs from nature, such as pomegranates, or from heaven, such as seraphim. This is an expansion of the first command for the objects described as prohibited are worshiped or served, and Jesus said, “*It is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only’*” (Luke 4:8 cf. Deut. 10:20).

This certainly includes any depiction of any false deity or of God Himself. The pagan nations commonly made idols and graven images to portray their false gods. The children of Israel got in trouble for making the Golden Calf at the foot of Mt. Sinai as a representation of God. Isaiah 40:18 asks rhetorically, “*To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare with Him?*” No art form can accurately portray God Himself for He is a spirit.

But this applies to more than just these things. If your life is devoted to something other than God or you are serving it instead of God, you have created an idol for yourself. It could be a car, a house, a pet, your job, your hobby, or anything else to which you give greater attention than God. It would also include any of the wrong purposes of life I mentioned last week - hedonism, materialism, fame, position, power, etc.

Too many professing Christians regulate God to a couple of hours on Sunday morning, or perhaps a few minutes each day for a short devotional, but something else, often many other things, are more important to them. It is busy today, so your devotional time is cut out. You are in a public place, so skip the prayer of thanksgiving for your food. You're tired or want a day to relax and do something else, so corporate worship is cut out. You had an unexpected expense, so you reduce your budgeted giving. How you spend your time, money and energy reveals what is important to you. What do your financial statements and personal calendar reveal about your relationship with God and His importance in your life? He is to be the priority, so it is past time to get rid of the idols - all of them.

3) ⁷“*You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.*” If you love God supremely, you will use His name with the utmost respect and reverence. Those who take His name in vain demonstrate they are either unthinking, uncaring or defiant toward God. The name of the LORD is to be lifted up and magnified, not treated with indifference or disdain like a curse word.

In practical terms this is more than just you avoiding doing this. It is also about avoiding having it done in your presence. You may not be able to stop someone in a superior position from doing it, but you can ask them to stop. It could also mean finding a different position for yourself. You can also ask

your friends to stop - or choose better friends. And you certainly do not need to subject yourself to entertainment in which God is blasphemed. A priority on reverence for God can and will have an effect on many choices you make in life. If you would not allow someone to use the name of someone you love in that manner, why would you allow it to be done to God?

4) ⁸“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.” While this command is not required of Christians, there are still two principles in this command that those who love God will carry out. A lot of Jesus’ contention with the Pharisees was over their traditions on what it meant to keep the Sabbath which Jesus often violated declaring that “*the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath*” (Matthew 12:8), “*it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath*”(Matthew 12:12), and that “*the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath*” (Mark 2:27). In Romans 14:5-6 and Colossians 2:16-17 Paul makes it clear that Christians are not required to keep Jewish Sabbath laws for they are “*a shadow of what is to come*” and each is to regard and observe a day as they are convinced in their own mind.

So while it does not have to be a particular day of the week, there is still the original principle set by God’s example in Genesis 1 that man needs a day of rest (Exodus 23:12). There is also the principle related to observing the day for the Lord.

The Sabbath was when the Jewish community was able to gather together to worship God. Christians gather on various days depending on the culture of the nation in which they live. Friday, Saturday or Sunday are the most common, but whatever day is observed, man needs to set aside time to worship God, and Christians are not to forsake assembling together (Hebrews 10:25). This means that you do not have to be a Sabbatarian for there to be practical ramifications for the Christian and especially in setting aside time to corporately worship God on a regular basis. It may have a direct effect on whether you take or keep a job, and it should certainly influence how you schedule your week so that you can include time set aside to worship God. Diane’s rotating schedule as a nurse precluded her from attending Sunday morning worship at her church, so she set aside time on a different day for worship and found other times to meet with other believers. She did it because her priority was set on loving God.

In addition to these four commands in the Ten Commandments, there are promises related to loving and serving God as the first priority. One of my favorite promises is what Jesus taught in Matthew 6 about worry and the promise given in Matthew 6:33, “*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*” If I will keep God’s priorities in my life, I do not need to worry about the necessities for living life such as food, drink and clothing, for I can trust Him to provide what is needed. This verse alone has a lot of ramifications in setting priorities on the use of your time, money and skills as well as where you live and the job you take.

How much does the kingdom of God and His righteousness figure into what you consider in taking a job or finding a place to live? I am very glad to say that there have been some people that have thoroughly checked out churches in our area before moving here, and a few have moved here specifically to be involved in serving God in this area, but such people are rare. I dare say that for most professing Christians the kingdom of God and His righteousness are not considerations in finding a job or a new place to live other than perhaps praying He will bless the decision they have already made. Over the years I have seen many people move from our area for many different reasons, but it has not been often that I am consulted at all about finding a good church where they will be moving. I have had more people simply disappear without a forwarding address than those that want to talk about what God’s will may be as they consider a job change or a move.

Conclusion

God’s purpose for your life is His own glory and He will glorify Himself in you one way or another. If you are not already a vessel of His mercy, you can be if you will humble yourself to seek the Lord asking Him for His mercy and grace.

Jesus said that the greatest commandment is to love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. We love Him because He first loved us, and the character and desires of those who love Him will be changed. Their quest will become doing God's will according to God's priorities. Like David in Psalm 119, God's commandments become precious to them because it increases righteousness and therefore God's glory. They also learn to trust God to keep His promises which removes the worries of the world which further enables them to live according to God's priorities.

Be wary of falling prey to the wisdom of men and the winds of doctrine that would lead you away from the priority of love for God for anything else no matter how personally enticing. That includes the religion of mediocre Christianity that separates secular life and sacred life. For the true Christian, all of life is sacred for every aspect of it is lived for the glory of our God, Creator of heaven and earth and you!

I will expand on this a little more next week and then look at the priorities God has given us toward one another in the commands related to loving your neighbor as yourself.

Sermon Notes - February 9, 2020
The Priority of Loving God - Selected Scriptures

Introduction

Man's problems are ultimately _____ & demonstrated in the choices man makes in how he lives
Pursing purpose in life apart from _____ is ultimately vain, futile chasing after the wind (Ecclesiastes)
God is beyond man's comprehension, but we can understand aspects of what He has _____ about Himself
The purpose of your existence is totally bound up in God who created you as a _____ in His image
God is also glorified in the display of His various _____ in dealing with man

Becoming a Vessel of Mercy

God glorifies Himself in _____ vessels of mercy & vessels of wrath (Romans 9)
2 Peter 3:9; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30 - God desires & commands men to _____
Repentance includes _____ which in itself glorifies God - Joshua 7:19; 1 John 1:9
Repentance requires a change in _____ about sin, self & the Savior - Mark 1:15; John 6:28-29
To be a vessel of mercy you must _____ & believe - so humble yourself to seek God - Mt. 5; Jn 16:8-11
Jesus is the _____ way to the Father (Jn 14:6) those who try to find another way will be vessels of wrath

The Great Commandments - Matthew 22:35-40

All of God's commandments are important and are to be obeyed, but there is an _____ - J. O. Y.
ἀγαπάω / agapaō is primarily an act of the ___ & mind in a determined care for the welfare of someone else
A purposeful, willful, commitment to do, behave, & think in the ways pleasing to _____, beneficial to others
If you _____ God & others in this manner you will fulfill all of God's other commands

Loving God - Deuteronomy 6:5; 10:12; 11:13, Matthew 12:37; Mark 12:30

To love God with all your heart, soul, mind, strength expresses the _____ of that love for God
Loving God with all your heart (καρδία / kardia) refers to the core of your being, the seat of your _____
Loving God with all your soul encompasses the seat of your emotion - it expresses _____ for God
Loving God with all your mind refers to your ability to think and to the _____ of your thoughts
Loving God with all your strength expresses the idea of doing all within your _____ to love God
Our minds & emotions muddled by our ignorance & selfishness leave us _____ on how to love God
The principles & precepts of God's specific laws give the practical _____ needed to love God properly

Keeping His Commandments - Exodus 20

The Ten Commandments are a _____ of all the specific laws based upon them
1) Exodus 20:3 - no other God: The _____ related to the prescription to love God
God is the _____ in everything for He is the Creator & the source for all meaning in life
Underlying all apostasy is a shift in who / what the person believes is the _____ of authority
Common alternative authorities are: 1) evolutionary pseudo-science. 2) _____ as the judge of morality

2) Exodus 20:4-6 - no idols to _____ or serve, see Luke 4:8; Deut 10:20. Not a reference to art work

Includes images to _____ false deities or the true God - Exodus 32; Isaiah 40:18

Anything you worship / devote yourself to or serve more than God can be an _____ to you

3) Exodus 20:7 - no blasphemy. The name of the Lord is to be magnified, not treated with _____

Treat the Lord's name with _____ and do not allow Him to be blasphemed in your presence

4) Exodus 20:8 - Keep the Sabbath day holy. Sabbatarianism does not _____ to Christians - Rom. 14; Col. 2

The day is flexible, but man still needs a day of _____ (Exodus 23:12; Mark 2:27)

Christians around the world gather on _____ days to worship God and encourage one another (Heb. 10:25)

God has also made _____ related to loving and serving Him as the first priority - Matthew 6:33

Consideration of the kingdom of God and His righteousness should have _____ in the decisions you make

Conclusion

God's purpose for your life is His own _____ - will that be as a vessel of mercy or a vessel of wrath?

The greatest commandment is to _____ God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength

Do not fall prey to the musings of men & winds of doctrine that would lead you _____ from that priority

Everything in life is _____ for the true Christian, because every aspect of it is lived for God's glory

KIDS KORNER

Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help. **Young Children** - draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. **Older Children** - 1) Count how many times "priority" is mentioned. 2) Talk with your parents about how to love God as the first priority in your life.

THINK ABOUT IT!

Questions to consider in discussing the sermon with others. Why are all the problems men face ultimately theological? What will be the final result of pursuing purpose in life apart from God? Why is it essential to understand your position as a Creature and God's position as the Creator to understand your purpose in life? While we cannot fully comprehend God, what can we understand about Him? Why will a Christian better reflect the image of God in man than a non-Christian? How does God display His attributes upon mankind in general? Upon redeemed mankind? Upon those who do not repent? What is God's stated will for mankind - 2 Peter 3:9; Acts 17:30, Acts 2:38; 3:19? What is the relationship between repentance and confession? Between repentance and belief? From the human side, what must you do to become a vessel of mercy? What did Jesus teach is the greatest commandment? The Second greatest? What kind of love is required for both of these? Why are all the Law and the Prophets dependent on those two commandments? What does it mean to love God with all your heart? With all your soul? With all your mind? With all your strength? How do the specific laws of God clear up the confusion about how to love Him properly? What is the purpose of the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20? What is the meaning of Exodus 20:3? In practical terms, how is it obeyed? Why do people become apostate? What are common sources of authority for apostates and other non-Christians? What is the meaning of Exodus 20:4-6? Does this apply to artwork? Explain. Can this apply to things other than representations of pagan deities? Explain? What idols do you have in your life / before becoming a Christian? What is the meaning of Exodus 20:7? In practical terms, how is it obeyed? What is the meaning of Exodus 20:8? How had the Jews perverted this command? How does this apply to Christians since we are not required to observe the Sabbath (Romans 14:5-6; Colossians 2:16-17). What is the context of Matthew 6:33 and how does it apply in the life of a Christian? How do you apply it in your own life? What have been the blessing in keeping it? What have been the consequences in not keeping it? What are some other promises God has made to those that put Him first?