

Pastor Harry Sexton

The Second Commandment: Do Not Make an Idol

Theme: The Ten Commandments – Exodus 20:4-6

Sermon Link: <https://www.youtube.com/live/0We-Epxq2JE>

Date of Sermon: 10/18/2026 • Main Passage: Exodus 20:4-6

Summary and Highlights

Opening Context — Pastor Sexton noted the major cultural shift in our 21st-century Western society away from a Judeo-Christian, God-centered worldview toward new atheism, militant secularism, mass consumerism, humanistic Christianity, and personal self-sufficiency. These become idols that rob people of genuine worship. Nature abhors a vacuum—when God is removed, something else fills the space.

The Command – Exodus 20:4 — “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.” God speaks in the singular (“you”), addressing every individual believer as well as the corporate people. This is not a ban on all art or artistic representation (the tabernacle had cherubim; a picture of Jesus is allowed). It forbids making anything that becomes an object of devotion or a rival to God. Scripture treats idolatry as spiritual adultery (cf. Colossians 3:5—greed is idolatry). No loopholes: “in the form of anything.”

Three Realms Closed Off

- Heavens above: Ancient sun, moon, and star worship (still reflected in “Sunday” and “Monday”). Created on Day 4 (Genesis 1). Why worship the created instead of the Creator? Psalm 19:1—the heavens declare God’s glory; humanity is without excuse.
 - Earth below: Canaanite bulls, fertility symbols, and human figures. Every creature is God’s handiwork, never His rival.
 - Waters under the earth: Egyptian Nile gods, crocodiles, fish deities. God demonstrated His power in the plagues (Nile turned to blood). Revelation 13:1 pictures rebellious powers rising from the sea.
- Any tangible or invisible rival steals devotion that belongs to God alone.

The Warning – Exodus 20:5 — “You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the father’s sin to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me.” God’s jealousy is not petty envy; it is His holy covenant passion to protect what belongs to Him (like a faithful spouse guarding the marriage). The multi-generational language refers to consequences, not arbitrary punishment of the innocent. Sinful patterns are learned and repeated. 2 Kings 17:41 shows children continuing the idolatry of their fathers. Deuteronomy 24:16 clarifies that each person is judged for his own sin. The cycle can be broken when a generation turns to God in love and obedience.

The Encouragement – Exodus 20:6 — “But showing faithful love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commands.” God’s mercy far outstrips His judgment (three/four generations vs. a thousand). This is hyperbolic language for unending covenant faithfulness. Obedience today shapes futures we may never personally see. The blessing is for those who love God (personal affection rooted in gratitude for redemption) and keep His commands. Love for God is not mere duty. Obedience flows from trust; His commands are not burdensome (1 John 5:3). Children who see parents practicing heartfelt obedience inherit both an example and the blessing of God’s continued

favor. This is not salvation by lineage, but a clear advantage when parents love and obey God (cf. Proverbs 22:6).

Closing Challenge — What has your life been building? A pattern of idolatry that scars the next generations, or a pattern of loving and serving the Lord that invites His blessing for generations to come? You can break a destructive cycle today. Confess Jesus as Lord (Romans 10:9), trust His finished work, and begin a legacy of faithfulness. God is jealous for your good and will not abandon His people to rivals.

Key Takeaway — Do not make or worship any idol—tangible or invisible—because the Lord alone deserves your devotion. His holy jealousy protects His people. Idolatry sets a pattern of consequences that can affect three or four generations, but loving and obeying God invites His steadfast covenant love for a thousand generations. What you build today shapes the spiritual future of those who come after you. Turn to Christ and break any destructive cycle.

Plan of Salvation — God is holy; every person is a sinner deserving judgment (Romans 3:10, 23; 6:23). In love God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, who lived sinlessly, died for our sins, and rose again (Isaiah 53:5–6; 1 Cor. 15:3–4; 2 Cor. 5:21). Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, not by works (Eph. 2:8–9; Titus 3:5). God calls us to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus as Savior and Lord (Mark 1:15; Romans 10:9–10, 13). All who trust Christ are forgiven, declared righteous, born again, adopted, and given eternal life (John 1:12–13; 3:16; Romans 5:1; 8:1).

A Prayer of Salvation — Heavenly Father, I know I am a sinner and cannot save myself. I believe Jesus Christ is Your Son, that He lived a sinless life, died for my sins, and rose again. Today I turn from my sin and trust Jesus alone as my Savior and Lord. Forgive my sins, give me a new heart, and help me follow You. Thank You for Your grace and the gift of eternal life. I confess Jesus as Lord and receive Him by faith. In Jesus' name, Amen.

If you prayed this prayer, please contact us: Laveen Baptist Church • 5036 W. Dobbins Rd, Laveen, AZ 85339 • 602-237-4885 • lbc@laveenbaptistchurch.org • laveenbaptistchurch.org