

THE CATECHETICAL CHURCH

The Ten Commandments



1. What does it mean to “have a god”?

Martin Luther said it well: “A god is that to which we look for all good and in which we find refuge in every need.”

2. In the context of this commandment, what does it mean to “fear”?

To fear God means to honor and respect him above anyone or anything else. It means to recognize that he not only has the power, but the right to punish us if we do wrong, but also that he uses his position to provide for us every day.

3. What does it mean to “love”? How do we demonstrate love to God?

To love God above all things means to consider him as our dearest treasure. We demonstrate our love for God through our service and obedience.

4. What does it mean to “trust”? How does worry demonstrate a lack of trust?

To trust God means to have complete reliance in him and his Word. Worry indicates a lack of faith in God and his promises.

5. Idolatry is the worship of a false god. “Open idolatry” happens when people openly worship someone or something other than the triune God. Give examples of people who practice open idolatry today, and, if possible, explain what those people confess.

Open idolatry takes two forms: when people worship an idol (for example, Buddhists), or when people worship a god other than the triune God. There are numerous examples of the latter: Jehovah’s Witnesses and Mormons, who deny the deity of Jesus Christ as presented in the Scriptures; Unitarians, who believe in a singular-personed god; Jews, who deny that Jesus is the Son of God.

6. “Secret idolatry” takes place in a person’s heart—when a person secretly gives someone or something, rather than God, first place in

his heart. Give examples of things that might lead a person to commit secret idolatry?

Many people love and trust money more than they love and trust God. Others give their job, possessions, pleasure, and people first place in their hearts.

7. At times people may think that it's allowable to love something in this world as much as they love God. Jesus said: "No one can serve two masters" (Matthew 6:24). Apply his words to your money, the members of your family, your job, your possessions.

It is sinful to love anything as much as we love God or to let anyone or anything share the first place in our hearts with God.

8. **Agree or disagree:** If we could keep the First Commandment, we would be sinless.

Agree. If we could truly love God above all else, we would keep all his commandments.

9. Luther calls work-righteousness (also called self-righteousness) the "height of idolatry." Explain Luther's words.

When people look to themselves and their own works for salvation, they are committing the height of idolatry: trusting in weak, feeble, sinful flesh rather than in the almighty and gracious God.