



19 Minutes with Luther

The First Commandment

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- **1st Commandment**
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
- 8th Commandment
- 9th & 10th Commandments
- The Conclusion
- The Gospel & the Nature of God
- The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
- 1st Article (Creation)
- 1st Article (Preservation)
- 1st Article (Protection)
- 1st Article (The Fall into Sin)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Person)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Office)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Work)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Humiliation)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Exaltation)
- 2nd Article (Christian Life)
- 2nd Article (Saved by Faith)
- 3rd Article (The Holy Spirit)
- 3rd Article (Calls)
- 3rd Article (Enlightens)
- 3rd Article (Sanctifies)
- 3rd Article (Keeps in Faith)
- 3rd Article (Invisible Church)
- 3rd Article (Visible Church)
- 3rd Article (Forgiveness)
- 3rd Article (Eternal Life)
- Baptism (Part 1)
- Baptism (Part 2)
- Holy Communion (Part 1)
- Holy Communion (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 1)
- Keys & Confession (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 3)
- Introduction to the Lord's Prayer
- The Address
- 1st Petition
- 2nd Petition
- 3rd Petition
- 4th Petition
- 5th Petition
- 6th Petition
- 7th Petition
- The Doxology

You shall have no other gods.

What does this mean?

We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

1. What does it mean to “have a god”?

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

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

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

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.

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?

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.

8. Agree or disagree: If we could keep the First Commandment, we would be sinless.
9. In his Large Catechism, Martin Luther called work-righteousness (also called self-righteousness) the height of idolatry. Explain Luther's words.
10. Evaluate: Jeff left the Lutheran church and became a member of the Jewish faith because his fiancée was of that religion. He said that he thought it was better that they both belong to the same church. He also mentioned that his fiancée did not want to become a Lutheran.
11. Explain why a Christian might say this: "The First Commandment is my favorite. It convicts me of so much sin that I just have to love my Savior all the more."

Luther said:

"Mammon is the world's favorite idol. One who has money and property has a sense of security and feels as happy and fearless as if he were sitting in the middle of paradise. On the other hand, one who has nothing is as insecure and anxiety-ridden as if he had never heard of God. . . . The desire for riches sticks, glued to our nature right up to the grave." (Large Catechism, *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959, pp. 365,366.)

(Location references are to *The Book of Concord*. Translation is the author's own.)

Closing Prayer

Lord God, give us the strength to avoid every form of idolatry. Lead us to worship you alone and, with our whole hearts and entire lives, to give you glory. Amen.

At home

- Memorize the First Commandment and its meaning.
- Analyze the appearance of your home. Does it reflect your faith and the fact that God is #1 in your life? What could be changed?

Helps

(1) 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) To fear God means to honor and respect him above anyone or anything else. (3) 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) 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) Open idolatry takes two forms: when people worship an idol (for example, Buddhists), or when people worship a god other than the true 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) 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) 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. If we could truly love God above all else, we would keep all his commandments. (9) 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. (10) Jeff is committing both secret and open idolatry: showing greater love for his fiancée than for God and joining a church that openly worships a false god. Jeff has sacrificed peace with God for peace within his home. (11) Every sin is a sin against the First Commandment. The enormity of our sins will lead us to see, more and more, the grace of God in Christ.