

Q47. What is forbidden in the first commandment?

A47. The first commandment forbids the denying, or not worshiping and glorifying, the true God as God, and our God; and the giving of that worship and glory to any other, which is due to him alone.

Romans 1:20-21, 25; Psalm 81:11, 14:1

DQ1: What are two things that the First Commandment forbids?

DQ2: Who should not be denied, not worshipped or not glorified?

DQ3: What does God not share with another?

DQ4: How are you doing in not doing the things that are prohibited by the First Commandment?

Notes:

The First Commandment contains both the requirements and prohibitions. We have already asserted that the First Commandment should be considered the most important of the Ten Commandments. And the most significant of the Ten Commandments forbids two things: (1) denying, not worshipping or glorifying God as God and (2) giving worship to and glorifying any other thing or person. A clear understanding of the prohibition is critical to the understanding of the First Commandment.

An obvious lesson of the First Commandment is that God alone is true God. If so, then it is only right that He alone is to be worshipped and glorified. But, there is a reason why A47 must be taught. Even though it would seem that people would naturally worship and glorify the true God, sadly this is not the case. Despite the fact that God of the Scripture is the only true God, people continue to break the First Commandment. The fact that people do not worship and glorify God means that they take the First Commandment lightly and sometimes approach it contemptuously. When people know and acknowledge God as required by the First Commandment, they cannot but worship and glorify Him. Therefore, the First Commandment forbids any behavior that distracts from full obedience.

Our obedience must be true from two different perspectives. The first perspective is that we must worship God as God. The second perspective is that we must not worship anyone else or anything else. These go hand in hand. To worship anyone else or anything else is to deny God. The First Commandment prohibits God's people from serving two masters or being divided in their loyalty. God cannot be denied His rightful worship and glory. God will not share his glory with another! Any attempt to give any portion of God's glory will be an egregious violation of the First Commandment.

Psalm 81:11 says, "But my people would not listen to me; Israel would not submit to me." A major issue is the fact that it is "my people" and "Israel" that would not listen or submit. The First Commandment does not tolerate such a behavior of God's people. It is not enough that God's people acknowledge God. They must proceed to the point of worshipping and glorifying God. The First Commandment forbids anything short of it.

Psalm 14:1 says, "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.'" When this verse is examined carefully, we can conclude that the fool is the one who is unable to worship and glorify God alone. The First Commandment forbids spiritual foolishness. It is clear that God does not desire us to live as a fool.