

WEEK THREE

# RULE 2: DON'T LET ANYTHING ELSE TAKE GOD'S PLACE IN YOUR LIFE

## BIG IDEA

# WORSHIP ONLY GOD

*Don't let anything else take God's place in your life. Don't make any image to worship, but love and worship only God.*

## A LESSON FROM GIDEON

### PREP: (Kids can help!)

- Put on a tray eight objects (or pictures from magazines) that could become idols (cash, car keys, ipod, TV, a toy, friends (picture), sports equipment, a medal, phone, video game, work, house). Cover with a tea towel.
- Buy a bag of sweets.
- Write the second commandment on the front of an envelope for each person, 'Worship only God' and on the back, 'God loves it when you choose Him first'. Then put a sweet inside each envelope.
- Into a bag, put an iPod or similar techno gadget; a ball, and a mirror.

### WHAT GOES IN THE BOX?

- The commandments.
- Pencils and paper.
- The sweets.
- The envelopes with the treat inside.



### INTRODUCTION

God is much bigger than anything we can see or imagine. He made the whole world and He made us and loves us more than we can ever know. The second commandment tells us we are not to make an image of anything to worship. Because if something is just made of wood or stone or metal or plastic, it hasn't got real eyes to hear or ears to listen or a heart to love us. We must only worship God and not let anything else take His place in our lives.

We may not know anyone who idolises and bows down to a king or a carved statue, but our society has different kinds of idols, like money, popularity and power.

We're going to talk about being on the watch for things that become more important than God; things that might stop us loving Him with all our heart, and stop us living freely and lightly.

### Questions:

- Can anyone suggest some things that might become more important to us than God?

### OUT OF THE BOX

- Bring out the bag. Explain that you have some idols in here.
- Take out the iPod then the ball.

**How could these things become idols?**

**What would make them become more important than God?**

- **Say how the last thing is often the biggest idol of all – and pull out the mirror!**

God cannot bless us if we pray to other Gods. Only the true and powerful God is able to help us and answer our prayers.

### Memory Game – No Idols

We've got some other things here that sometimes become idols.

- Bring out the tray with the 'idol' objects on it.

This is a memory game. So when I take off the cloth you will have to look really hard to try to remember what is on the tray.

- Take off the cloth, count to 30 and then cover the items again.
- Give everyone a pencil and paper and see how many things they can write down that they remember were on the tray.

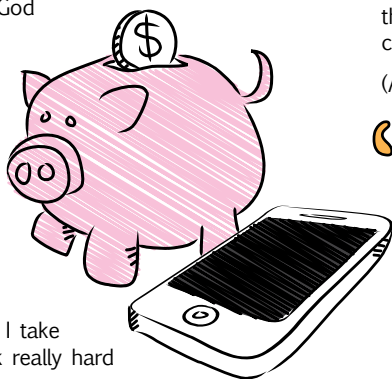
### EXPLORE

God created us each as really special, but we are never to think that we are more important than God. And especially he doesn't want us to set our hearts on bad things.

God did many mighty miracles for his people, and he wanted to live amongst them and bless them. But often they turned away and built idols to worship instead of loving Him.

### READ

- Give each child a few sweets and put the rest in a dish in the centre.



Let's pretend that these sweets represent all God's blessings and His love for us. Listen to the story, and when the Israelites turn away from God and worship idols you must give up a blessing and put it back into the dish. But when the Israelites turn back to God you can reclaim your 'blessing' sweet.

(At the end you will be able to eat them!)

“ Joshua was the leader who took the Israelites in the promised land. After he died, the people of Israel began worshipping idols. The Lord was very angry about this and sent armies to fight against them.

But when God's people stopped worshipping the idols and asked the Lord for His help, he gave them leaders called judges. The judges helped them fight against their enemies and win. Yet as soon as God set the people free, they forgot him and sinned again by worshipping idols. This sinning and coming back to God went on for more than three hundred years!

Because of their sin in worshipping idols God had allowed the Midianites to make the Israelites slaves, but when they called out to God, he gave them Gideon as their judge.

One day Gideon was threshing wheat, separating the grain from the straw. As he worked, the Lord came to him in the form of an angel. “You will free the people of Israel from the Midianites!” the Lord told him. “But Lord, how can I do that?” Gideon asked.

“I will be with you!” the Lord replied, “and you will wipe out their whole army!”

But Gideon made lots of excuses – “I am too weak, too small, too young.” God told him everyone would be okay and He would be with him. Gideon really wanted to obey God and do what he was telling him to do, but he still felt

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nervous about whether he had truly heard God, so he asked Him for a sign.

First he prepared an altar as an offering for God. This was the way they gave gifts and asked for forgiveness to God before Jesus died on the cross. He set his offering of meat and unleavened bread down on the rock, and fire came up from the rock and completely consumed it. Then Gideon knew it was a sign, and that he had truly spoken with an angel of the Lord.

That same night the Lord told Gideon to take down the altar his father had built for a fake God (Baal) and to cut down an Asherah pole (this was made for another fake god people worshipped).

The Israelites had started believing in these fake gods and that's why God had been angry with them. He is the only real and true God and these people were praying and giving offerings to pieces of wood and statues that can't do or hear anything.

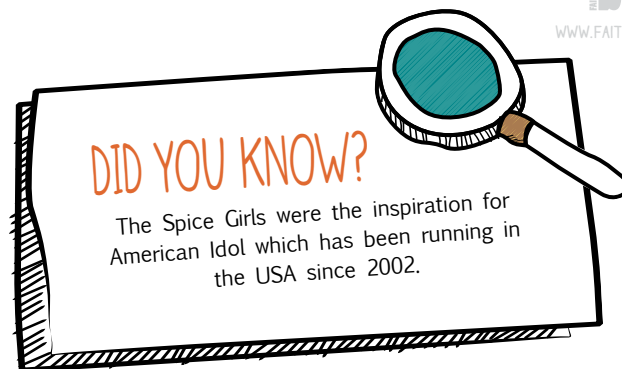
So Gideon took ten of his servants at night (because he was afraid of getting caught from the people in the town) and tore down the altars.

The people were mad when they realized Gideon had wrecked their altars but they decided that if Baal was really a god he could punish Gideon. Of course nothing ever happened to Gideon because Baal isn't real.

After this Gideon followed God in everything. He knew that only God could help his people. God led Gideon to win a mighty victory in a very unusual way. With torches and trumpets and a very small army, God helped them beat the huge Midianite army.

The Midianites were driven out of Canaan and the people of Israel were finally no longer slaves. Gideon had put God first, and God made what seemed impossible happen. ))

*Excerpts from NIV Judges 6-8*



### FAMILY TALK TIME

If you were stuck on a desert island what three things would you want to have with you?

- **Each person share what you would take.**

We have lots of stuff that we think is important but these things don't matter so much when it comes to what is really important.

### GAME

#### The Money or the Envelope

- Take out the envelopes with the second commandment written on the outside ("Worship only God").
- Get each child to think about the thing they love most and thank God for it...Then say, "I can enjoy God's blessings, but even \_\_\_\_\_ is not more important than obeying God."
- Turn the envelope over and read, "God loves it when I choose Him first".
- Then find the treat to enjoy. (If they find it hard to choose God over their loved "thing" explain that, as they grow up, they really might have to make such a decision).

A good way of knowing how important something is becoming in your life is by checking what is being sacrificed because of it. e.g. Does it stop you from growing closer to God? Does it separate you from your friends and family? Does it change the way you spend your time and money?

When we let other things become more important than God, it is like letting weeds grow in a garden. The good beautiful healthy plants can be destroyed by the weeds that want to take over and become most important.

But when we stand up and say “No” to those things that could become more important than God, we let healthy and beautiful things grow in our lives again.

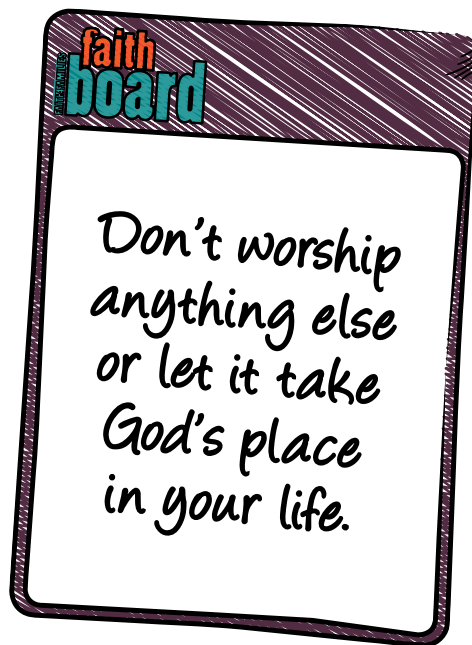
### PRAY

- Place the envelopes in the middle of the table... and each take turns in telling God you love him and that He is more important than anything else.

### LIVE

Have more discussions about how to check if something is becoming too important.

This week, try placing the envelope with “Worship only God” near the item that each child named as the thing they love most. Try putting God first and enjoying the item or activity without letting it become too important.



**NOTE TO PARENTS:** You may want to talk to older children about other forms of idolatry. In addition to materialism, we may be tempted to toy with horoscopes, fortune tellers, Ouija boards etc. 1 John 5:21 tells us to “keep away from anything that might take God’s place in your hearts” NLT. So we must not turn to false idols, but trust God and ask Him alone for guidance.

### OTHER IDEAS

- Watch *Veggie Tales: Rack, Shack and Benny*
- The Empty Hole – Only a relationship with God can fill our need.

You’ll need a doll or toy that requires batteries, some batteries for the doll/ toy, a dollar bill, pictures of a house and/or an expensive car, pictures of a pretty girl or handsome guy, and a Bible. Gather the family together and show them the doll with the empty place where the batteries belong. Ask: What does this doll need to work? (Batteries.) There is a hole here made specifically for batteries. But I wonder if anything else can make it work? Place the dollar bill into the battery compartment. What happens when I put money in the battery compartment? (Nothing happens. The doll needs batteries.) Place a picture of a house or a nice car into the compartment. What happens if I give this doll a house or a nice car? Place a picture of a handsome guy or pretty girl into the compartment. Share: Nothing happens because this doll was made to need batteries.

Now, place the batteries in the doll and demonstrate how it functions properly.

Discuss how God has put a need in us not for batteries, but for God. Everyone has this need, but not everyone looks to God to fill it. A lot of people try to stuff other things in their lives to fill this God-space.

**CHECK OUT WHAT YOU NEED FOR NEXT WEEK...**

