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Road to Happiness Begins with First Step

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This is my second column in a series on the famous Ten Commandments.



Let's walk through these important words written to us, His followers, not looking at them as though God wants to take our fun away.

Rather, let us see them as they were intended – to show how our Mighty God loves us and wants to give us a happy life, now and forever.

In any activity, whether it be a church or synagogue service, a woman's retreat, or a sports activity, there must be rules and boundaries or no one will be happy. I don't know about you but I definitely do not want to live in chaos.

Here is the first commandment: "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." – Exodus 20:2.

The specific Commandment is, "You shall have no other gods before Me (verse 3)".

God begins by reminding Israel about its bondage in slavery and literally how, through His servant Moses, they were delivered.

When chased by the Egyptians in horse-driven chariots, miraculously Israel walked through the Red Sea as upon dry land. They received the commandments at Mt. Sinai and headed for the Promised Land.

Christians look at these words, spiritually, and know they were in slavery and bondage to sin. Their leader, Jesus Christ, delivered them from slavery. He too gave the Ten Commandments and the indwelling Holy Spirit to enable them to keep them.

God is No. 1. As His betrothed bride we are told not to have any other gods before Him. The first temptation in the Garden was to worship and obey the imposter Satan who was and is fixated on being worshipped. Speaking of being narcissistic, he expresses this malady here big time.

Clinical psychologist Dr. Jim Friesen lists five basic characteristics of narcissism: the individual thinks he or she is right all the time and thinks it's obvious to all; has zero empathy for the needs of others; must be in charge and goes to any means to accomplish it; never seeks help; can verbally beat you up and not look like it.

What does it mean to have other gods before the Lord? Is there any entity, person, habit or activity we are worshipping or putting in place of God?

The First Commandment is challenging us to love "the Lord (*Adonai*) our God" who has delivered us from spiritual death and eternal bondage. We must not have other lovers before Him but make Him first and foremost.

Of course He wants us to love our mate, children, parents and friends. But He is talking here about an exclusive relationship with God our Creator.

To help you remember the order of the commandments I want to teach you the first ten letters of the Hebrew Alphabet. These letters also are numbers and have spiritual meanings. When we finish this study together, and someone asks you what Commandment number seven or four is, you will be able to answer him.

Aleph is the first Hebrew letter "a" and numerically it means No. 1. Spiritually, *aleph* is defined as being strong and mighty. That describes God well.

Since it's hard to write Hebrew in a news column you can look up the letters in Psalm 119 in the KJV or the NIV Bible, and of course in the Hebrew Bible or *Tanakh*.

To draw an "*aleph*" begin with a diagonal line like a tipped seesaw. Now put a *yod* on the top right (that's the letter for ten) and one on the bottom left, like two children on a seesaw.

Jesus learned these Hebrew letters when He was a little boy. Have fun learning what He was taught in childhood.

Make God No. 1. See you in my next column.

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