

# No.1: Number One is #1

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, if we could, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling this morning, if we could turn to the book of Exodus and Exodus chapter 20.

Exodus chapter 20. Exodus chapter 20.

These are the house rules that God has given to his family. So we're going to read Exodus chapter 20. We're just going to read the first three verses. Exodus chapter 20.

If you're using the pew Bible, it's page 73. God spoke all these words saying, I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

And this is the first commandment. You shall have no other gods. Before me. You shall have no other gods. Before. Me.

[ 1 : 24 ] I want to begin this morning with a very personal, but also a very practical question. Who is number one in your life?

Who is number one in your life? If you were to write down a list of the top ten priorities in your life, who or what would have number one spot?

Who or what would be number one? Now, I'm sure it's safe to say that on your list of the top ten priorities in your life, you would probably have your spouse, or your siblings, or your family, your friends, your work, your health, your home, your hobbies, your happiness.

But there are only nine. There are only nine of the possible top ten priorities in your life. Which means that there's one place and one space to fill.

And that's a question that we're being confronted with this morning. Where does God feature on that list? Where does God feature on that list?

[ 2 : 40 ] Or maybe the question should be, does God feature on that list of the top ten priorities in your life? Who is number one?

Who or what is number one in your life? And I ask this question because as we consider these ten house rules, these ten commandments, we see that commandment number one is number one because God needs to be number one.

Commandment number one is number one because God needs to be number one. So who or what is number one in your life today?

And as I said, it's a very personal question. But it's also a very practical question. And I want us to see that because it involves two things. It involves, first of all, loving God and living for God.

Loving God and living for God. There are two headings this morning. Loving God, living for God. So commandment number one, verse three. You shall have no other gods before me.

[ 3 : 46 ] You shall have no other gods before me. Now we read earlier Mark chapter 12. A chapter in which different gatherings and groups, they were all there looking for a way to catch Jesus out and arrest him.

But as you know, there was so much hypocrisy in all the questions that they asked. In the way that they confronted and challenged Jesus by all the questions that they posed to him.

Because we read there that the Herodians, the Herodians who hated the Roman Empire, they started this discussion about the importance of paying taxes to Rome.

So absolute hypocrisy. The Sadducees who didn't believe in the resurrection, they started a debate with Jesus about marriage at the resurrection. Total hypocrisy.

And then the scribes who had written more laws than God himself, they asked Jesus, which commandment is most important? In other words, which commandment is number one?

[ 4 : 50 ] And as we read, Jesus answered their question. Jesus said, The most important commandment is, Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God, The Lord is one.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this, says Jesus, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. And there is no other commandment greater than these.

But what Jesus did there, when he answered the question of the scribes, what he did was summarize all ten of these house rules, the ten commandments.

So Jesus summarized the ten commandments in two sentences. He summarized the ten commandments in two sentences. Because the first four commandments, they are all about loving God.

They are all about our vertical relationship with God. Then the last six, or the final six commandments, they are all about loving our neighbor. They are all about our horizontal relationship with people.

[ 5 : 54 ] Therefore, if we are to summarize these house rules, these ten commandments, they are all about loving Jesus and loving people. That is what these house rules are all about.

Loving Jesus and loving people. And you know what is really interesting, is that's our mission statement as a congregation. Our mission statement as a congregation, it's written on our church website.

So if you go on to [barbersfreechurch.org](http://barbersfreechurch.org), the first thing you will see is what we are all about. Loving Jesus and loving people. If you've never been on our website, go on to our website, and you'll see there what it says.

Loving Jesus, loving people. Because if anyone wants to know what Barbers Free Church is all about, that's what we're all about. That's what we should be all about. Loving Jesus and loving people.

Loving Jesus and loving people. Because, you know, I always remember Bob Aykroyd. He was my professor when I was in the Free Church College. And Bob said to us, I'm not going to do his American accent, but he said, ministry is not simple, but it is straightforward because it's all about loving Jesus and loving people.

[ 7 : 09 ] Ministry is not simple, but it is straightforward. It's all about loving Jesus and loving people. And that's what Jesus summarized to the scribes when he stated that the most important commandment is about loving God.

It's about putting God first. It's about putting Jesus first. So commandment number one is number one. Because God needs to be number one.

Commandment number one is number one because God needs to be number one. But of course, when Jesus summarized these house rules, when he made that statement to the scribes, he didn't pull that statement out of thin air.

He didn't just make it up on the spot. No, Jesus went back to the Bible. Jesus quoted the only rule to direct us. He quoted Scripture. He came to the Word of God.

And he quoted from Deuteronomy chapter 6, which reads, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.

[ 8 : 14 ] And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. And when Jesus quoted this summary statement from Scripture, the scribes couldn't disagree with him.

They couldn't come back at him because it's a summary statement that they had learned from their childhood. Because one of the first things a Jewish child is taught is the Shema.

The Shema. The word Shema means to hear. And it's from the first word of this great commandment. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And to this day, Jews throughout the world, they will recite the Shema every morning and every evening. They will say, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

In fact, if you ever meet a Jew or find out where a Jew lives, they will probably have what you call a mezuzah. It will be fixed outside their front door.

[ 9 : 19 ] A mezuzah, it's a small box with a tiny scroll inside with the words of the Shema written on it. The words, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

And you know, what's remarkable is that the Jews, they're taught to recite the Shema their whole life. From birth, throughout their life, morning and evening, and even on their deathbed, the Jews are taught to recite, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

And you know, it might seem strange to us to recite the Shema day and night, both morning and evening, all the time, all the way through your life, and even on your deathbed. But it was always with this one intention of reminding and reaffirming to them who is number one.

Who is number one? Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. He's not only the one living and through God, He's also the number one God.

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. He's number one. He's top of the list. There is no one else besides Him. And that's why when it comes to these house rules, commandment number one is number one because God needs to be number one in our life.

[10:43] God needs to be number one in our life. That's what we're commanded in verse three. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall have no other gods before me or even beside me.

You shall have no other gods elevated above me or even equal to me. Which means that God is to be first and foremost. He's to be first in line.

He needs to be first in the list. He's to be foremost in rank and foremost in recognition in our lives.

He's to be primary. He's to be in pole position. He's to have priority of place in our lives.

He's to be, you could say, the top tier and the top trump. He's to be elevated and exalted above everything else. As we're reminded in the Bible, He's to be King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

He's to be superior and supreme over all. And you know, my friend, commandment number one is number one because God needs to be number one.

[11:47] And so when it comes to writing down these top ten priorities or priorities in your life, God says clearly and categorically to us, I must be number one.

I must be number one. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength.

You shall love the Lord, what He's saying, you shall love the Lord with your entire being. You shall love the Lord with your whole life.

life. Why? Because it's God who has given you life. It's God who has given you life. He's the one who has strengthened you and sustained you to come here this morning.

It is God who has given you life. Which is why the number one house rule is not only very personal, it's also very practical. because it involves loving God and also living for God, which is what we see secondly.

[13:04] So, loving God and living for God. Living for God. He says, the commandment is, you shall have no other gods before me. You shall have no other gods before me.

So, as we read, when Jesus was confronted and challenged by the scribes about the commandment, which commandment is number one. As we said, Jesus quoted the summary statement from Scripture.

Jesus quoted the Shema, which the scribes couldn't disagree with. They couldn't argue with what Jesus had said because he was quoting from Scripture. In fact, the scribe who asked Jesus the question, he affirmed Jesus' answer.

And he affirmed Jesus' answer by saying to Jesus, you are right, teacher. You are right, teacher. You have truly said that God is one and there is no other besides him.

And to love God with all your heart, mind, and strength, and one neighbor as oneself, one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

[14:10] But, you know, as we read, Jesus responded to that scribe with a profound and a very probing statement.

And it was so profound and so probing that no one dared ask Jesus any more questions. Jesus just shut them all up by his answer because Jesus said to them, you are not far from the kingdom of God.

You are not far from the kingdom of God. And you know, I've often wondered what Jesus meant when he said that. You are not far from the kingdom of God.

Why was the scribe so near to the kingdom and yet you could say so far? Why was he so near to the kingdom of God and yet still not in the kingdom of God?

I could ask you the same myself, my unconverted friend. Why are you so near to the kingdom of God this morning and yet still not in the kingdom of God?

[15:20] And the answer is that it's all about your soul. It's all about your soul. The soul is soul and so important.

Jesus said to the scribes, you are not far from the kingdom of God because when he confirmed the number one commandment, this scribe said, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, and strength.

He missed out the soul. But when Jesus confirmed the number one commandment, he said, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength. My friend, the scribe wasn't far from the kingdom of God because he loved God with his head, his heart, and his strength, but not his soul.

Not his soul. And I don't know, maybe I can say this to you, my unconverted friend. you are not far from the kingdom of God, but you are still not in the kingdom of God.

[16:36] And we want you to be in the kingdom of God, but you're still not in the kingdom of God because you don't love God with your soul. Yes, you love God with your heart because you come to church to worship him.

And you love God with your mind because you listen to what God has to say in church. And you like hearing what you hear in church. And you also love God with your strength because you support the church.

You support the church by coming each week. But the question is, do you love God with all your soul? Do you love God with all your soul?

Do you earnestly, wholeheartedly, sincerely love God with your soul? My friend, is he number one? Is he number one? Because commandment number one is number one because God needs to be number one. God needs to be number one.

[17:43] And you know, this is important because it's the difference between loving God and living for God. Loving God and living for God. We can all say that we love God. God. I'm sure every single one of you in here this morning or watching at home online, you would all say that you love God.

You love God because he's given you life. He's provided for you. He keeps you. He watches over you. You know that he exists. You love God with your heart and your mind and your strength. But the rubber hits the road, doesn't it?

The rubber hits the road when we're told that we need to love God with our soul. Our soul, our entire being.

You know, it's when we start living for God and living our lives with an eye towards the glory of God. That's when we're loving God with our soul.

And you know, that's what this number one house rule is all about. It's all about loving God and living for him. Because as we said, it's not only personal, it's also practical.

[18:49] Therefore, the number one house rule is you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your mind, all your soul, and all your strength. You shall love the Lord your God with your entire being.

All that you are and all that you have is to be towards God and the glory of God. You're to love the Lord your God with your whole life.

Why? Because it's God who has given you life. It's God who has given you life. He is, as the Bible reminds us so clearly, He is your creator.

He is the one who made you and molded you. He's the one who shapes you and sustains you. He's the one who protects you and provides for you. He is your creator and He has given to you breath in your lungs and health in your body and strength in your limbs.

He has given you many blessings and many benefits in life. Why? Paul says because it's in Him. It's in Him that we live and move and have our being.

[19:58] My friend, He has created us for His glory. He has created us for His glory. That's man's chief end.

I'm sure many of us learned the catechism as children. I'm sure we were all asked by our Sunday school teacher, what is the chief end of man?

Which is really the question, why are you here? Why do you exist? Why were you born? And you were born to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.

You were born to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. And you know, this is why Paul said at the end of Romans 11, he said that all that we are is from God.

All that we have is through God. And all that we are to be is to God. All that we have is from God. All that we have is through God.

[ 21 : 01 ] And all that we are to be is to God. Therefore, we're not to live our lives before any other God. No, we're to live our lives facing towards the one living and through God.

We're to live our lives focused and fixated with Him. For as Paul says, from Him and through Him and to Him are all things to Him be glory forever and ever.

Amen. But you know, the sad thing is, and it really is sad, I thought it once, but so many people think that having God as your priority and putting God first and foremost in their life, it somehow eliminates and eradicates their enjoyment in life.

that being a Christian isn't fun. It takes away your enjoyment. But you know, that's not true at all.

As I mentioned last week, these house rules, they are from our Heavenly Father. They're given to us as His children. And even though eight out of ten of these house rules say, no, thou shalt not, do not do this, don't do that, they're all given to us not to eliminate or eradicate our enjoyment.

[ 22 : 23 ] They're given to us, they're given to us out of love. They're given to us to look after us, to protect us, to provide for us. And as we said before, we need house rules.

Without rules, there's recklessness. Without laws, there's lawlessness. Without commandments, there would be chaos. And so this number one house rule is not eliminating or eradicating our enjoyment of life.

No, rather it's emphasizing and explaining how we are to enjoy life. Because man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.

We're to enjoy life the way we were created to enjoy it. I mentioned to you before all the F's of life.

All the F's of life. Fun, food, family, friendship, fellowship, falling in love, fitness, football, and finance.

Nothing wrong with the F's of life when they're all below God in the list. All the F's of life are only truly F's of life when God is the first F, first and foremost.

[ 23 : 37 ] My friend, this number one house rule is all about loving God. It's all about living for God. Because the thing is, we can't say that we love God and then go out and live as we please.

We can't say that we love God and then live as we please. No, the Bible tells us that we know that we love God when we seek and strive to keep His commandments. We know that we love God when we seek and strive to keep His commandments.

Of course, as we said before, the commandments, they're not there to tell us how to be a good person with good values and good morals. Because there's none good. No, not one.

These commandments remind us very clearly we've all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. But the purpose of these commandments is to remind us and reaffirm to us we're all sinners.

All sinners in need of a Savior. And that there's a Savior in Jesus Christ. This Jesus who loved us and gave Himself and gave Himself for us.

[ 24 : 44 ] That's why the first commandment calls us to make Jesus our priority. To give Him primacy. To give Jesus the preeminence. The gospel calls us to love Jesus and look to Jesus and lean upon Jesus and ultimately live for Jesus.

My friend, the gospel calls us to make Jesus number one in our life. to make Jesus primary and priority. To make Jesus first and foremost.

To make Him superior and supreme over all. To make Jesus King of kings. Lord of lords. To make Jesus Lord of all.

Because you know the truth is and you know I often think this and I often say it. if Jesus is not Lord of all then He is not Lord at all.

If Jesus is not Lord of all then He is not Lord at all. Commandment number one is number one because God Jesus needs to be number one.

[ 26 : 03 ] And you know when it comes to every area of our lives every aspect of our lives. We should all ask ourselves is Jesus Lord here?

Am I putting Jesus first in what I'm doing? Is He number one? Is He priority? Is He primary? Is He getting the praise in what I'm doing?

Is He first and foremost in all the F's that go on in my life? Is He first in fun and food and family and friendship and fellowship and falling in love and fitness and football and finance?

Is He first? Is He first in all the F's of my life? Is Jesus Lord over all of it? Because if Jesus is not Lord of all the Bible teaches us He's not Lord at all.

He must be first in order to be Lord. So if Jesus is not Lord of all then He's not Lord at all. And you know if we thought more about who is number one if we thought more often about who is number

one in this situation in this circumstance I was thinking about my own life and I was thinking well it would have such an impact and an influence upon my own Christian discipline my own Christian devotion my own Christian dedication to the Lord.

[ 27 : 28 ] It would have such an impact and an influence upon my work and my witness and my worship because we would work for the Lord faithfully.

We would witness for the Lord fearlessly. We would worship the Lord fervently. If we were putting the Lord first our waking thought would be our Bible and then to pray.

if we were to put the Lord first on the Lord's day our first thought would be I'm going to church to worship God because it's God who has given me life.

That would be primary. That would be priority. That would take precedence over every other thing on the list in our lives. And it would be primary.

It would have priority. And it would take precedence because Jesus would have as Paul says he would have the preeminence. The preeminence in all things.

[ 28 : 34 ] All things. He would have the preeminence in all things. My friend commandment number one it's number one because God needs to be number one.

He needs to be number one in our lives. And so I want to end the way I began. Just with this personal and practical question. Maybe you could do it if you went home after you go home.

Write down a list of the top ten priorities in your life. Write down a list of the top ten priorities in your life.

Who would be number one? Maybe there's nothing wrong with what's a two, three, four, and five, and so on. But who's number one?

Who's number one? My friend, Jesus is to be primary. He's to have priority. He's to take precedence in our lives because he is to have all the preeminence.

[ 29 : 44 ] The preeminence in all things. And if he's not number one, make him number one. God's God's God's God's God's God's God's God's God's kingdom of God and his righteousness and all the other things will be added unto you.

Commandment number one is number one because God needs to be number one. Well, may the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray.

O Lord, our gracious God, that we give thanks to thee for these commandments that teach us who is primary, who is to have priority in our lives.

We give thanks, Lord, for all the blessings that we have from thine hand, all the benefits that we receive day by day. But help us to see that everything that we have and all that we are.

It comes from our God, our God who has created us for a purpose, that man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.

[ 30 : 59 ] And Lord, we pray that all that we would seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, that we would make God our number one priority in life because he is the one who has given us all things.

Bless us, we pray. Bless thy truth to us, we ask. O Lord, go before us, we plead, that even on this Lord's day that we would put the Lord first in everything.

Go before us then, we pray, take away our iniquity, receive us graciously for Jesus' sake. Amen.

We're going to bring our service to a conclusion this morning.

We're going to sing in Psalm 119. Psalm 119, we're singing from verse 103, so that's on page 408 if you have the blue psalm book.

Psalm 119, from verse 103 down to the verse marked 106. We sang this psalm last week, not these words, but from Psalm 119.

[ 32 : 16 ] As we said, Psalm 119 emphasizes the importance of God's word in our lives, that God's word is to have primary place in our lives because it's from God.

And this is what the psalmist says about God's word, verse 103. He says, How sweet unto my taste, O Lord, are all thy words of truth. Yea, I do find them sweeter far than honey to my mouth.

And then he says in verse 105, Thy word is to my feet a lamp, and to my path a light. I sworn have and I will perform to keep thy judgments right.

So we're singing Psalm 119 from verse 103 to 106. And we'll stand to sing if you're able. to God's praise. O sweet unto my taste, O Lord, not all thy words of blue, yea, I do shine and sweet and sow our heart.

Our while ■■ laud about Ma Sorry, going on, through thy presence but through thy precepts and  
■■■■■ and out on our pure To understanding it I live for every way that falls With all my heart to  
hear Thy word is to my feet alone

[ 34 : 38 ] Unto my path alight I swore the word I will perform To keep thy judgment's light The grace  
of the Lord Jesus Christ The love of God the Father And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit Be with  
you all Now and forevermore Amen Amen Amen Amen