

# Lutheran Women in Mission

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## No Other Gods (A study on the First Commandment) by Gretchen Gebhardt

*Editor's Note: In past issues of Lutheran Woman's Quarterly, we have brought you Bible study series on the Lord's Prayer and on the fruit of the Spirit. This study begins a new series on the Ten Commandments.*

Sing "Come, O Almighty King" (LW 169, LBW 522, TLH 239) or "Jesus, Name Above All Names" from *All God's People Sing* 145 or *The Other Song Book*.

### Which One?

"Why do you limit yourself to the Christian teachings?" my friend asked. "Other religions have things they can teach us too."

"The Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit is the only true God," I replied. "Any other god is a false god. No other god can hear or answer our prayers. No other god can save us from our sins."

"Well, that's only your opinion," she protested. "I don't believe there are false gods. It doesn't matter if you pray to the god of the Buddhists, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Sikhs or anything else; it is the same god."

My friend's answer was politically correct but completely contrary to God's Word. What would you have said to explain your faith?



### Get Real

Many people have faith in gods that do not exist. We also may desire to define God on our own terms instead of searching the Scriptures to learn about Him. Read the following verses and note what God's words or actions tell us about Him. How do each of these things help us to distinguish the one true God from all others?

- Genesis 1:1, 27, 31
- Exodus 20:1-6
- Psalm 91:11-12
- Matthew 28:18-20
- John 14:6
- John 17:3
- Galatians 4:4-7

### The Command

Read or recite the first commandment and its meaning (found in Luther's *Small Catechism* or LW p.300). What does God command us to do? What does He forbid?

The people at the time of Elijah wanted to worship God and Baal. Elijah knew it is impossible to be true to God while worshiping another god and he set out to prove this to the Israelites. Read **1 Kings 18:21-24**. What was the test?

The prophets of Baal shouted to their god. They slashed themselves and frantically prophesied, but without success. Their false god could do nothing. Read **1 Kings 18:30-37**. How did Elijah prepare the sacrifice? How does he address God? Why? Now read **1 Kings 18:38-39**. What were the results of Elijah's prayer? What does this prove?

### Faith and Trust

Even when our faith and trust in the Triune God is strong, we are often tempted to rely on things instead of on God. These things become our idols. Mark the following statements true or false and then with a partner identify the idol that has taken God's place.

- T F** I have personality, so I will always have friends.
- T F** I have enough money, so I need not worry about getting old or sick.
- T F** I am smart and talented, so I will always be able to get what I need.
- T F** I live right, so I will not get sick or have an accident.
- T F** I am a good Christian, so God will give special attention to my needs.

What does your heart cling to in time of need? This is your god.

### Hope in Christ

Many people falsely believe that the goal of the church is to teach people to be good. They believe that being good will get them to heaven. Jesus, the Son of God, is the only one who lived a truly good life. Out of love He took our sins upon Himself so we can be forgiven. Read the following verses and note the promises that are given to all who believe in Him.

- **John 11:25-27**
- **Romans 6:3-4**
- **1 Peter 1:18-19**

Our hope in Christ is not a false hope. We can be certain that we are loved, forgiven and destined for heaven because of Him. We need no other god. He meets all our needs.

How can you share this good news with someone today?

Close by singing "We All Believe in One True God" (*LW* 212, *LBW* 374, *TLH* 252).

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