

What Really Matters?

1 Corinthians 8:1—13

Introduction

What really matters in this life? Some tell us that Black Lives Matter. In response, others say that All Lives Matter. Some say Civil Rights Matter and call for defunding the police. In response, others say that Blue Lives Matter. Some see the decline of the United States and say that America Matters, as they seek to Make America Great Again. Others say that people matter more, and the government exists to support and care for all people living in the country: citizens and aliens. Some say the woman's freedom to choose matters, while others say the life of the unborn matters. It seems that everyone has a cause, what matters to them. But, in this life, **WHAT REALLY MATTERS?**

What Matters Most Is Your God

Of course, many things can matter, can have importance. But when we ask, "What really matters?", we're asking what matters most. Imagine a pyramid with seven lines. At the base, list the seven most important things or people in your life. As you move to the top, there is room for fewer things on each line. When you get to the top, the one thing that remains will be the one thing you cannot live without. That is what really matters. That is your god.

Back to the First Commandment

The First Commandment says: *You shall have no other gods.* **The Small Catechism** says that this means *we should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.* Citing **Deuteronomy 6:4**, *Hear O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one* and the words of our Lord in **Matthew 28:19**, *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"*, the **Explanation of the Small Catechism** identifies this *true God as the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three distinct persons in one divine being (the Holy Trinity).* It goes on to say that *God forbids us to have other gods.* *"You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve"* (**Matthew 4:10**).

Many gods in Our Lives

While the First Commandment makes things crystal clear, we still have many things that vie for our attention. From time to time, one or more will come to the foreground and distract us from the one true God. What can we do?

“Love the Lord Your God”

The key is love. Chrysostom said: *Knowledge is not productive of love, but rather it prevents the unwary of acquiring it by puffing him up and elating him. Arrogance causes divisions, but love draws people together and leads to true knowledge (Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 20.2).* That’s also why Jesus said the greatest commandment is to *“love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37).*

God’s Word

When we love God, we are known by Him. Our desire is then to know Him better, since Paul says our knowledge of God is incomplete. We get to know Him better in His Word, His revelation of Himself to His people. As we read and study His Word, our lives are shaped by it, and we learn what really matters.

The Sacraments

In His Word, we also see that He makes Himself known and present to us in the Sacraments: Holy Baptism and Holy Communion. As we receive the body and blood of Christ, He forgives our sins and strengthens our faith. And that’s **WHAT REALLY MATTERS.**

*And the peace of God,
Which surpasses all understanding,
Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
