

The Ten Commandments

Commandment #10: “Thou shalt not covet...”

Today’s commandment is one that is very hard to keep in our materialistic and hedonistic world. We are surrounded by consumerism and unchecked, fleshly passions. My desire today is to expose a bit of what lies underneath our temptation to covet and talk about the real, heart-level battle that is taking place when we place our eyes and desires on people and/or possessions.

1. Covetousness comes from a lack of faith
 - a. We spoke in an earlier lesson about the implications of property
 - b. Suffice it to say, God makes it clear that it is right, and necessary, for us as people to “own” things
 - i. I put the term own in quotations because, ultimately and finally, we own nothing forever
 - ii. Nevertheless, we have been entrusted with things and have entered into covenantal relationships which bring with them the right to possession
 - c. The sin of covetousness sometimes arises when we misunderstand or mistrust the God who gives us good things to steward
 - i. I am tempted to covet when I take my eyes off of the knowledge of the Sovereignty and goodness of God and His promises to me
 - ii. Covetousness sometimes arises out of jealousy and/or fear of want
 - iii. I covet someone else’s car, or home, when I see it through the eyes of what they stumbled into versus what I “earned”
 - d. The remedy for this kind of covetousness is a deep trust in the Lord and a conviction that He will provide us with all things AND that He will only give me what is good for me
 - i. Sometimes, what seems to be a blessing is really a curse
 - ii. At other times, what might bless one man would harm another
 1. For instance, I am grateful that God did not give me the millions of dollars I wanted as a college student
 2. While that seemed appealing at the time, in later years, the supposed blessing of a fortune is more obviously a curse
2. Covetousness arises out of misplaced affections
 - a. Another reason why we covet is tied to our love for meaning, fulfillment and pleasure

- b. If I see things or mortals as the key to my happiness, I am prone to covet them precisely because I want to be happy!
- c. When I believe that this possession or this person will “complete” me or give me peace or joy, then I am on the fast track to covetousness
- d. Conversely, when I root my affections in Christ as my all-in-all then the missing out on other things or relationships loses its grip on my heart
 - i. If I believe that Christ is all I need and the very ground of my satisfaction, then other trinkets become far less appealing and meaningful to me
 - ii. It is only in this deep state of contentment that I can enjoy the gifts God gives because it is only in deep and abiding love for God that I can use and enjoy His gifts while reveling in the goodness of the gift giver

3. Application

- a. If you are coveting today, it is wise to ask why?
- b. Why do you want that job, that promotion, that new house, someone else’s wife or the like so badly? Could it be that you have rooted your hopes in future joy in a temporal object or person? If so, remember that none of these things will bring lasting joy. Only Christ is able to fill that hole in your soul and until your affections are set on Him, you will never be satisfied.