

AUGUST 7TH
CONTENTMENT MATTERS

“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.”

EXODUS 20:17

Because of our struggle against sin, we are often unsatisfied. Mark Buchanan diagnoses our hearts well: “I belong to the Cult of the Next Thing. It’s dangerously easy to get enlisted. It happens by default—not by choosing the cult, but by failing to resist it. The Cult of the Next Thing is consumerism cast in religious terms. It has its own litany of sacred words: *more, you deserve it, new, faster, cleaner, brighter*. It has its own deep-rooted liturgy: *charge it, instant credit, no down-payment, deferred payment, no interest for three months*...It has its own ecstatic experience: the spending spree. The Cult of the Next Thing’s central message proclaims, “Crave and spend, for the Kingdom of Stuff is here.” Guilty as charged! But God. What does God say here in this final commandment? What is God teaching us as His men?

We don’t use the word “covet” much, but everyone knows what it means. When we look at other people’s stuff and we want what they have, we are guilty every time. Even further, we must remember that it’s also about wanting the reputation that someone else has. As men, we are competitors by nature. There’s nothing inherently wrong with wanting to compete with someone else. However, the shadow side of competition quickly shows its ugly head...I want to win because it makes me feel better about myself. Why do I need to feel better about myself when God has already shown His perfect love for me at the cross of Jesus? Most of us struggle with envy. What we have just isn’t quite good enough. Isn’t this why social media is so potent to our damaged souls? People want to post something so other people notice. People want others to “follow” them. People compare family stories and wonder why their family doesn’t look like the other family in the picture. Here lies the root of envy. We don’t trust our gracious God who shows His perfect providence over our lives. Instead, we want our own story. We make this life about us and avoid God’s grand story.

This final commandment affirms the giving nature of our God. Isn’t there a reason that Psalm 23 is the most used passage among believers and unbelievers? That’s certainly the case during funeral services. But why is this the case? Psalm 23 is so powerful because it uses a megaphone to shout to us God’s care for us. Upon death, each person faces their mortality. While the dead may have requested to have items placed in their coffin, these objects can’t join their souls. This truth causes everyone to face that God is all that is left. All the searching for stuff that someone else has comes up empty, because none of it is eternal. But one thing is eternal: our God. Psalm 34 describes a powerful image: “Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!” Tasting AND seeing God’s goodness. It’s like hiding in a giant castle with food and water for eternity. God’s castle is a rock that protects me from myself. He reminds me that He is enough...and He is all that I need. Now that’s a story!

Spend some time thanking God for what He has given you. Ask Him for wisdom to see your ways when you drift from seeing Him as enough for you.

For Further Reading: Philippians 4:10-20

