

“The Ten Commandments (Part 11 – No Coveting)”

Most advertising is designed to make us feel ungrateful about what we have and to feed our greed for what we don't have. Advertising simply capitalizes on our coveting hearts. Because producers covet consumers' money, they need to get consumers to covet their goods. Will Rogers once said, *“We buy things we don't need, with money we don't have, to impress people we don't like.”* In contrast to our culture of coveting The Tenth Commandment dispels the myth of more. **The key to not coveting what others have is to be content with what you already have.** The LORD says in Exodus 20:17, *“You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's.”*

The word “covet” is used both positively and negatively. The positive meaning is a *strong desire or delight*. For example, the trees in Eden were delightful and pleasant to the sight. Also, God's Word is *more to be desired* than gold. Some use the word *covet* when asking for prayer, *“I covet your prayers.”* The negative use refers to *an excessively strong desire to have something that belongs to someone else*. It means to *desire something which one has no right to have or possess*. It's a *grasping for more; a selfish desire so strong that it compels someone to violate another person's property*. It's *an overt dissatisfaction and discontent with what God has provided and a longing desire for what He has forbidden*. Lust is forbidden desire, and lust is never satisfied. Know this: *Forbidden fruit has led to many a jam!*

Consider these characteristics of coveting:

1. **Coveting hits close to home.** The word “neighbor” is used three times in this command, because it's those things we see with our neighbors every day which are so alluring and enticing.
2. **Coveting is strictly forbidden.** Twice the LORD says, *“You shall not covet.”* Make no mistake, this is no sweet, safe, little sin.
3. **The command against coveting is very specific.** We are not to covet property, people, possessions, or anything that is our neighbor's.
4. **This command is unique.** No other code from other civilizations contain such a law.
5. **Coveting is an invisible sin.** This command moves from actions and deeds to attitude and desire. It's on the inside, not the outside. One commentator writes, *“If God had not given us the tenth commandment, we might be tempted to think that outward obedience is all we need to offer.”*
6. **The prohibition against coveting may be the most often broken commandment.** Oh, how we need to control our desires.
7. **Coveting is the root of all other sins.** At the root of every sin is the belief God has somehow not given us everything we think. Using this erroneous rationale, we justify reaching for what is forbidden.
8. **Coveting comes with a warning.** Watch out when you sense coveting rising within.

Jesus strongly contradicts the values of our coveting culture. If you have a covetous heart, no matter what you have, it will never be enough. Your stuff will never satisfy; your relationships will never be good enough; you will always want something you don't have. If you are not satisfied with what you have now, you won't be satisfied should you get what you're wishing you had. **The cure for coveting is to learn the secret of contentment** as found in Philippians 4:11-13. Contentment means wanting what God wants for us rather than what we want for us. We can be content in whatever circumstance we're in because of the strengthening work of Christ in our lives. You can have everything you think you want, and if you don't have Jesus, you have nothing. If you have Jesus, you have everything. Unless Jesus is enough, you'll never have enough.

Discussion Guide/Action Steps

1. Do you find yourself saying (or thinking), "*If only I had...?*"
2. You might have a coveting heart if:
 - You do a lot of grumbling and complaining;
 - You are envious of what others have;
 - You're preoccupied with your possessions;
 - You're stingy with what God has given you;
 - God is getting your leftovers;
 - You love things and use people rather than using things and loving people.
3. Are you able to say, "*Everything I want I already have?*"
4. Is Jesus enough?