

The Tenth Word: You Shall Not Covet

Exodus 20:17 ¹⁷ "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."

I. What is the difference between desiring and coveting?

- It is not wrong to desire good things.
- Coveting is an inordinate desire that is self-serving and elevates our desire for things over our desire for God. Covetousness is idolatry.

II. We are not to covet anything.

- Coveting leads to other sins. Desire is at the root of every conflict.

James 4:1-3 What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? ² **You desire** and do not have, so you murder. **You covet** and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. ³ You ask and do not receive, because **you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.**

James 3:16 ¹⁶ For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.

III. We are to be content and satisfied in God in our lives.

- God is all we need. Contentment is an issue of trusting that God is enough in every circumstance.

Hebrews 13:5 ⁵ Keep your life free from love of money, and be **content** with what you have, for he has said, "**I will never leave you nor forsake you.**"

Philippians 3:7-8 But **whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.** ⁸ **Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.** For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, **in order that I may gain Christ**

- We can find true joy and contentment in God because of who we are in Christ Jesus.

Colossians 3:1-10 **If then you have been raised with Christ,** seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When **Christ who is your life** appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. ⁵ **Put to death therefore what is earthly in you:** sexual immorality, impurity, **passion, evil desire,** and **covetousness, which is idolatry.** ⁶ On account of these the wrath of God is coming. ⁷ In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. ⁸ But now **you must put them all away:** anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, seeing that **you have put off the old self with its practices** ¹⁰ and have **put on the new self,** which is being renewed in **knowledge after the image of its creator.**

Ephesians 5:1-5 Therefore **be imitators of God, as beloved children.** ² And walk in love, **as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us,** a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. ³ But sexual immorality and all impurity or **covetousness** must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. ⁴ Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. ⁵ For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or **who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.**

1 Timothy 6:6-11 ⁶ Now **there is great gain in godliness with contentment,** ⁷ for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. ⁸ But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. ⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. ¹¹ But as for you, **O man of God,** flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.

- We are to be selfless servants rather than selfish and self-serving.

Romans 13:9 ⁹ The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, **You shall not covet,**" and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall **love your neighbor as yourself.**"

- Contentment can be learned.

Philippians 4:11-13 ¹¹ Not that I am speaking of being in need, for **I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content.** ¹² I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, **I have learned** the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. ¹³ I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

IV. The Law and the Gospel

- The law points us to the gospel. Out of great love and mercy, Christ fulfills the law for us - the law we could never keep - to redeem us.
- The gospel precedes the law. God's grace not only redeems and saves us, but it also empowers us to seek godliness, let go of our idols, and worship God alone. We can grow to live as the image-bearers of God we were created to be.

Tim Keller: *"The gospel frees us from the law for the law."*

Ephesians 2:8-10 ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And **this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,** ⁹ **not a result of works, so that no one may boast.** ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus for good works,** which God prepared beforehand, **that we should walk in them.**

Titus 2:11-14 ¹¹ For **the grace of God** has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹² **training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions,** and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, ¹³ waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who **gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness** and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are **zealous for good works.**

John Newton: I Asked the Lord

I asked the Lord that I might grow
In faith, and love, and every grace;
Might more of His salvation know,
And seek, more earnestly, His face.

'Twas He who taught me thus to pray,
And He, I trust, has answered prayer!
But it has been in such a way,
As almost drove me to despair.

I hoped that in some favored hour,
At once He'd answer my request;
And by His love's constraining pow'r,
Subdue my sins, and give me rest.

Instead of this, He made me feel
The hidden evils of my heart;
And let the angry pow'rs of hell
Assault my soul in every part.

Yea more, with His own hand He seemed
Intent to aggravate my woe;
Crossed all the fair designs I schemed,
Blasted my gourds, and laid me low.

Lord, why is this, I trembling cried,
Wilt thou pursue thy worm to death?
"'Tis in this way, the Lord replied,
I answer prayer for grace and faith.

These inward trials I employ,
From self, and pride, to set thee free;
And break thy schemes of earthly joy,
That thou may'st find thy all in Me."