

“You Shall Not Covet”
Exodus 20:17

THE 10th COMMANDMENT EXPLAINED

1. Definition: ‘covet’ = to have an unrestrained, ungoverned, selfish desire for something

-NOTE: Desire itself is not bad. God created desire. But the 10th Commandment forbids wrong desire.

2. The 10th Commandment is all-inclusive. “neighbor’s house” = everything he has...

-NOTE: “things” are not bad; not ‘dualism’ = spiritual world is good & physical world is bad, etc. (E.g., Plato)

3. The 10th Commandment carries no punishment in the OT Law.

- You cannot legislate the 10th Command. Yet the Bible condemns coveting as a serious sin.

THE 10th COMMANDMENT APPLIED

1. Coveting is a DEEP sin—it is deeply rooted in the heart. Mark 7:21f

- The previous 9 Commandments start on the outside and work in. The 10th starts with the heart.

2. Coveting is a DANGEROUS sin—it leads to greater sins.

- Eve coveted the fruit—and broke the 1st Commandment (“you will be like God”). Gen 3:6
- The prodigal son coveted his inheritance—and broke the 5th (honor your father & mother). Lk 15:11f
- Ahab coveted Naboth’s vineyard—and broke the 6th (murder). 1 Kings 21:2, 13
- David coveted Uriah’s wife Bathsheba—and broke the 7th (adultery). 2 Sam 11:2-4
- Achan coveted silver and gold of Jericho—and broke the 8th (stealing). Joshua 7:21
- Gehazi coveted wealth from Naaman—and broke the 9th (lying). 2 Kings 5:20-22

3. Coveting is a DECEPTIVE sin—it is not easily recognizable.

- 1 Thes 2:5: *...a cloak of covetousness...* (KJV) The value of material possessions can change overnight.
- Luke 12:15: *Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed [covetousness]; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.*

4. Coveting is a DAMNING sin—it is worthy of eternal judgment in hell. Eph 5:5; Col 3:6; 1 Cor 6:9

-Eph 5:5: *No...covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.*

-Col 3:6: *Because of these things [incl. coveting]...the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience.*

THE 10th COMMANDMENT REMEDIED AND FULFILLED IN JESUS CHRIST

1. The cure for coveting is coveting.

- The solution for coveting is *not* getting rid of desire.

-Philosophies like Stoicism & religions like Buddhism believe freedom is found in the death of desire. WRONG.

→ The remedy for unholy coveting is holy coveting.

2. Three specific aspects of ‘holy’ coveting:

a. Pray for mortified and sanctified desires. Matthew 5:6

- Pray for a mortified & sanctified imagination... desires... dreams.
That God’s Spirit in you would put to death specific desires, lusts. (Identify them, journal them.)
That God’s Spirit would bring to life...thanksgiving... contentment... zeal... concern for the poor, etc.

b. Pray for a greater desire for heaven. Hebrews 11:13-16, 24-26

-Phil 3:20: Our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ

-Mt 6:32-33: For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

c. Pray for an all-consuming desire for God Himself. Psalm 63:1

Ask God not to kill your desire—but to fuel it for Something greater: Him!

- Heb 13:5: *Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He himself has said, “I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.”*

3. How does Jesus fulfill the 10th Commandment? OT prophet Haggai

-Haggai 2:7: I will shake all the nations; and the DESIRE of the nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory.

-Jesus Christ is the ‘desire’ of the nations.

THE WESTMINSTER STANDARDS
The Larger Catechism
Questions 146-148

Q146: *Which is the tenth commandment?*

A146: The tenth commandment is, *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.*

Q147: *What are the duties required in the tenth commandment?*

A147: The duties required in the tenth commandment are, such a full contentment with our own condition, and such a charitable frame of the whole soul toward our neighbor, as that all our inward motions and affections touching him, tend unto, and further all that good which is his.

Q148: *What are the sins forbidden in the tenth commandment?*

A148: The sins forbidden in the tenth commandment are, discontentment with our own estate; envying and grieving at the good of our neighbor, together with all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is his.

Matthew 5:6: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Ps 63:1-5: O God, You are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for You; my body longs for You, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. Because your love is better than life my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live and in your name I will lift up my hands. My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you.

Psalm 99: Exalt the LORD our God and worship at His footstool; He is Holy.
Exalt the LORD our God and worship at His holy hill; For Holy is the LORD our God.

Isaiah 26:8-9: We have waited for You eagerly; Your name, even Your memory, is the desire of our souls. At night my soul longs for You; Indeed, my spirit within me seeks You diligently.

Isaiah 58:11: The LORD will continually guide you and satisfy your desire in scorched places, and give strength to your bones. And you will be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters do not fail.