

Tenth Commandment Part 1

Oh Lord God, we do thank You that You are a God who gives us commandments and have not left us blind to where we should go. Instead You have given us a lamp for our feet. Lord, let us be a people that desire to walk according to your light and not according to our own light. Lord, as we consider covetousness, Lord let us learn not to covet. It is so normal for us in the flesh to covet things, instead Lord let us recognize what You have for us is the best thing that we can receive, that every trial should be a time of joy and we can count it all as joy because You have sent that trial and You are God and we are not. Lord, we thank You that You teach us not to covet, that you change our hearts as we come to know you better and better, to align our will with Your will, align our thoughts with Your thoughts, to teach us that Your ways are better than our ways. Lord, we pray as we consider coveting tonight that we realize how easy it is and Lord protect us from it and cause us to take every thought captive so that we don't get bound up by covetousness. We ask this in Your Son's name, amen.

As we move onto the final commandment, this twenty week series went a little bit longer than originally anticipated as we're into the seventieth week or something like that. As we move onto the final commandment, Deuteronomy 5:21, "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife; and you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, his male servant, his female servant, his ox, his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's." I think it's worth reviewing and to think of the pattern of the commandments as we come to this last commandment. The first commandment, 'you shall have no other gods before Me', this is that God reserves for Himself first place in all things. The world is about God, it is not about man, it is about God. God blesses man so that we can recognize Him as our Creator, Him as the One in whom we live and have our being, He is the center of all things and we are not. The first commandment is to remember that, to remember that He is the center of all things, that no other thing should come before Him. Then the second commandment starts to take obvious conclusions from that, a conclusion from that if there is no other god before Him, then an obvious conclusion is that you shouldn't make graven images, create something that attempts to mislead and direct people to a god that's not the true God, worship a god who is a false god, or direct them to worship the true God in a false way. So the second commandment becomes about the first duty that we have because we are created by God and the world is about God. The first duty that we have is to worship the true God so you shall not make a graven image. Then the next commandment is another obvious conclusion from the first commandment, you shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain. If you claim that He is your God, but it's only in form and not in substance, then that's to put another God before Him. It's to treat Him as if He were not God, it is to take His name in vain. So the third commandment again is a form of violation of the first commandment and the fourth commandment, to observe the Sabbath day and to keep it holy, this is to acknowledge what it means to be God. What it means to be God is that He can command us to do things, we are His people that He has the right as our God to tell us what to do. This is inherent in being God, He gets the right to tell you what to do and to set your schedule. He gets the right to declare how you use your time and in that if you don't treat Him as the One who can command you to use

your time you are setting someone above God saying that your time is not His, your time is yours or someone else's. The fourth commandment is about saying that there is no other gods before Him, that He is the true God who gets to direct your steps and time. Then the fifth commandment, honor your father and mother, this is still about acknowledging who God is. The fourth commandment was saying that He has all rights over you, He has the right to the slave master over the slave. He can tell you what to do and when to do it. The fifth commandment is about how He is an authority and it's about honoring your father and mother. This is the first authority that He gives everybody, He gives them a father and mother and in that, that is where you have to acknowledge God and His right to delegate authority. So the sum of the fifth commandment is to accept that all authority is from God and to reject that authority is to reject God. So if you go into what's called the second table of the law, it's about how in practical working out, we deny that God is God. When we don't honor our father and mother we say God doesn't have the right, He doesn't have the ability to delegate authority. When we won't accept rules by the authority God has placed above us, then we are in effect rejecting God. The sixth commandment, you shall not murder, that is instead of treating God as God you are trying to destroy the image of God because that's the heart of the sixth commandment whether it's anger, hatred, a male dressing as a female, all these things are about destroying the image of God. Then the seventh commandment is about service, that you have a duty to serve God. The seventh commandment is to fulfill that duty you don't serve the flesh. Thou shalt not commit adultery is about serving the flesh. There are other ways you can serve the flesh too, but that's what it's summed up on. If God is God, then you serve God. If God is not your God, then you serve your flesh and you're in violation of the seventh commandment. The eighth commandment, you shall not steal, it's about not being ruled by this world. It's about the world is given by God and created by God and He has given you things that you need and are to have, but if you are ruled by the world rather than ruled by God, just like if you are ruled by flesh you break the seventh commandment, if you are ruled by the world you break the eighth commandment, you shall not steal. The ninth commandment, you shall not bear false witness, that's about our tongue ruling us rather than us ruling our tongue. Instead of edifying we speak to destroy, instead of speaking truth we speak falsehood. So it's about not allowing and not using our tongue for the purpose that it was created which is to praise God and give Him thanks along with other things, instead we use it to destroy. So that brings us to the tenth commandment, you shall not covet. You shall not covet means you shall not be ruled by your desires. Your desires are not supposed to be the ruling thing in the world. God's desires are the ruling things in the world. When you think about it, why does everything in the world happen in the way that it happens? Psalm 135:5-6, "For I know that the Lord is great, And our Lord is above all gods. Whatever the Lord pleases He does, In heaven and in earth, In the seas and in all deep places." To covet is to say that the world is about what pleases you, but the real world is about what pleases God so it is fundamentally to reject that God is God. It's to put another god before God, it's to say that God is not ruling and that it is not created for His pleasure. When we covet we say the world is created for our pleasure. The Ten Commandments start with putting no other god before you and the last commandment is, don't put yourself before God. Not even in your thoughts. When you put yourself before God in your thoughts, even if it doesn't manifest itself, even if it means you don't go and chase a woman or go steal and murder, if it's just in your thoughts that you're putting yourself before God, which is what

coveting is, you're in violation of the commandments of God, you have flipped the world upside down and you've put yourself on top instead of God on top. With that introduction, let me walk through the text. Deuteronomy 5:21, "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife; and you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, his male servant, his female servant, his ox, his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's." You shall not covet, that word 'covet' means 'to take delight in'. It's a very strong version of delight, but that's the root word, it's to take delight in. If you go over to your neighbors house and he shows you hospitality, it doesn't mean that you can't take delight in the meal that his wife cooks. Of course we are allowed to take delight in that. This is where we take an unlawful delight, this is where we're seeking pleasure where we're not supposed to seek pleasure. It's when our desire is against the law of God, that's when you start to sin and start to covet. If you say God should have given me this, I deserve that, that's what coveting is, it's to put what we delight in in the place of what God has said this is good for you. That's when we're coveting. It's worthwhile for us to recognize the first time that this word is used in Scripture, Genesis 3:4-6, "Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. " She looked and coveted the tree is what that says, it was a tree to make her wise and she coveted the wisdom that could come from that tree. The fall starts with coveting, that's how serious covetousness is. God said this is not for you, Satan said what God said wasn't true and if you just eat from the tree you would be like God and know good and evil and be able to define what good and evil is and she wanted to be wise. She wanted to be like God, she wanted to put herself in the place of God which is the heart of coveting so Satan doesn't cause her to commit adultery, doesn't lead her to commit murder, doesn't lead her to steal, what he leads her to do is to covet. The fall starts with coveting. She coveted the fruit because it would make one wise, she wanted the position of God. Remember, whenever we covet, that's why we covet. We say we want the world to be about our pleasure, about what we want rather than what God wants. Her desire was for something that was not lawful, God had clearly said you shall not eat from it and instead of saying God is wise, this is what pleases God and I should do what pleases Him, she said she would do what pleased her. That's the heart of coveting. I want to make sure as we consider coveting, we consider the significance of it and the power of it. This is what led to the fall of man, we shouldn't think that this doesn't matter that much. Her coveting and wanting to have the position of God, wanting the world to be about her pleasure, about what she wanted rather than what the Creator had for her, because of that the whole world falls. Yes, it's because she ate and then Adam ate, but it starts that Satan triggered in her a desire that was an unrighteous desire, a desire to have God's position. So let's make sure we recognize just the power of coveting for destruction, the power of coveting for sorrow. This is what coveting produces, it produces death and sorrow, it produces misery. The things that we look around and see in the world, recognize it starts with coveting. It wasn't her alone, it wasn't that afterwards that nobody coveted or coveting didn't cause any destruction. No, as I go through tonight I am going to read a lot of examples of people in the Scripture where it started with coveting and it leads to their destruction. Coveting destroys people, coveting starts the fall of the human race, but don't think that you don't need to be concerned about coveting. You do because it can lead to your

destruction. If you accept coveting in your heart and in your mind, if you don't take those thoughts captive, that's the place that they lead you to. They lead you to rebellion against God, they lead you to say God can't be like that. It's a very frightening thing if you talk to someone strongly Arminian and you say this is what the Scripture says about God and they say God can't be like that. They're coveting a god that's different from the real God. It leads to destruction, it's not a minor thing. Categorically it's not any different than coveting that new car that your neighbor has. Both of them are saying God's not sovereign over what's happening and God is sovereign over what's happening. To covet is to reject the sovereignty of God and say He's not in control of all things. Consider the order of the second table of the law. Starting at the bottom because coveting is usually what leads to lying. People don't usually lie except they want something they can't have and that's why they lie. That leads to stealing or adultery or to murder. This is the path that most sin goes through just like the path that it went through with Eve. Before she gets to the rebellion with God it starts with coveting. We need to recognize if we think it's ok to sit back with our own thoughts and think that we want this or that or we're not satisfied with where we are or satisfied with my wife or my house or satisfied with what God is doing in our life, understand where that goes. Eve wanted to be like God. 1 Samuel 2:6-7, "The Lord kills and makes alive; He brings down to the grave and brings up. The Lord makes poor and makes rich; He brings low and lifts up." When we covet, this is what we want to be able to do. We want to be able to say we should have this, not that God does, but we get to decide this. Don't put yourself in the place of God, don't think the world is about your pleasure. Coveting is powerful enough that it can lead to death, it did to Eve. We are warned about that in Deuteronomy 7:25, "You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; you shall not covet the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, lest you be snared by it; for it is an abomination to the Lord your God." This is what they're supposed to do if they have an idol that has gold and silver on it. If they covet that gold and silver, that coveting will be a snare to them. It's not that coveting is the end, it's that coveting is the beginning. It's so much easier to deal with sins when they are small than after they start to produce more and more fruit in your life. This is why we need to take the thoughts of coveting captive. They covet the gold or silver from an idol, it becomes a snare to them and it leads them to idolatry. Think about this example, Achan, remember Joshua tries to figure out why Israel lost when they went up against Ai so he casts lots and he finds out that Achan is the one so he goes to him and says he should confess what he did in Joshua 7:20-26, "And Achan answered Joshua and said, "Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and this is what I have done: When I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it." So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and there it was, hidden in his tent, with the silver under it. And they took them from the midst of the tent, brought them to Joshua and to all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the Lord. Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the garment, the wedge of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and all that he had, and they brought them to the Valley of Achor. And Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? The Lord will trouble you this day." So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. Then they raised over him a great heap of stones, still there to this day. So the Lord turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the

name of that place has been called the Valley of Achor to this day.” Achan’s sin started with coveting and this is how seriously God took it. Recognize the seriousness of coveting. It’s interesting reading that because the list of things there, his ox and his donkeys, his sons and daughters, this is very similar to the list you see in the commandment. He lost everything, he lost all the good things that God had given him, all the blessings that God had given him he lost because he had coveting that he didn’t control. I want to consider him not just because this is a good verse to use when people say confession should end a matter, which it is, but to consider just what the situation that led to this position that he was in, that God would cause them to take him out and stone him because he coveted and took what God told them not to take. They had been traveling for forty years in the desert and during that time all those who were twenty years or older, when they first spied out the land, all of them had been killed. Leaving Egypt is a picture of salvation, justification and then forty years in the desert is a picture of sanctification. That’s exactly what happened to Israel and it’s a picture of what happens to a Christian, but as they walk through those forty years, God keeps chastising them for different things. He keeps training them and teaching them so when they first walked in and spied out the land, they were afraid to go in. When they come up the next time, even when there are giants in the land still, they go on and fight the giants and they defeat them. God is giving a picture of what sanctification looks like, being delivered from the bondage of sin and walking in the newness of life. They see the blessing of God so here they are, when you arrive at this point they are a nation that went to war against the city, they sent up 3,000 people because they said it was such a small city that they don’t need more than that and they’re shocked because thirty-six people die out of a force of 3,000. Think about it, you have an army that has 3,000 and you usually have a lot more than thirty-six die, but Joshua is saying that clearly God has turned His back on them because they had thirty-six people die and they didn’t defeat Ai. Enough so that he goes before God and asks what’s going on and that leads into the whole thing with Achan. Joshua is shocked by it because for those forty years they have been trained to obey and then they go up and get defeated. It puts them in the situation where all the training that they had received and all the death and destruction that God had poured out to Israel and judged them within the desert. Achan sees a garment and he sees some silver and gold and he forgets the commandments, he forgets that their shoes didn’t wear out for forty years, he forgets that God fed them manna from heaven, he forgets that God gave them victory over giants, and he wants that gold, silver, and apparel and he forgot everything that God had taught them and everything that God had revealed to them because of covetousness. Recognize the power of covetousness, recognize that if we don’t take every thought captive, if we don’t control our coveting, then it will lead to destruction. Even in the most sanctified, this is where the battle moves to. The more you are sanctified the less you are going to burst out in anger, the less you are going to be tempted to steal, the less you are going to be tempted to commit adultery, but it still boils down to if you’re not taking your thoughts captive so your heart is coveting other people’s things, other people’s positions, other people’s fields, whatever it is, if that’s what you’re still doing it can burst out at any moment. We need to make sure that we’re taking every thought captive. There’s a pattern to sin. The planting of the seed is just the same way Satan planted the seed to get Eve to covet. Make sure you are watching out for coveting in your own life because it can be the seed to your destruction. Understand this is probably the hardest aspect of taking every thought captive, it’s doing exactly the opposite of what Eve did. When we

see something according to our wisdom, when we see something and say it's good for us instead of saying we will figure out a way to get it regardless of what God says, instead if we take every thought truly captive we stop desiring it, we say this is not for me and God knows better than I know. If God wanted it for me I would have it, but God doesn't want it for me so therefore I don't have it and that means it's not good for me to have. That's about keeping God in His place and putting no other god before Him. That's about not substituting our pleasures and our desires for God's pleasures and desires. It's remembering that He is God and we're not. It doesn't mean that we just push aside those thoughts, push aside the coveting, you actually have to repent of coveting and say that it's wrong and you're not going to do it anymore. Let's consider some areas of covetousness that we should watch out for. The first one that's listed in the commandment is your neighbor's wife. When we think of coveting our neighbor's wife we can think of an easy example of destruction and that's David when he covets Bathsheba. 1 Samuel 11:1-4, "Then Nahash the Ammonite came up and encamped against Jabesh Gilead; and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Make a covenant with us, and we will serve you." And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, "On this condition I will make a covenant with you, that I may put out all your right eyes, and bring reproach on all Israel." Then the elders of Jabesh said to him, "Hold off for seven days, that we may send messengers to all the territory of Israel. And then, if there is no one to save us, we will come out to you." So the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul and told the news in the hearing of the people. And all the people lifted up their voices and wept." It was sin for David to look upon her. He already had multiple wives, there was no reason he should be looking out onto the rooftop at her. Again, his covetousness didn't bother him, he let it run free. When he looks at her he wants her and when he finds out that it's his neighbor's wife, he doesn't say it's sin and repents of the covetousness. Instead he feeds the desire and it leads to adultery and it leads to murder. That's what I was saying, coveting is so often the gateway to these other things. Theft is because you're not satisfied with what God has given you, adultery is because you're not satisfied with the wife of your youth. Remember the power of covetousness, this was a man after God's own heart and yet he still falls to covetousness to the point he is willing to commit adultery and murder. Don't think he is so different than you are. If you let covetousness reign in your heart you shouldn't be surprised if you get the same fruit. Consider what God did to him because of it in 2 Samuel 12:7-10, "Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more! Why have you despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon. Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.'" This is why there is a northern and southern kingdom. This is why all that destruction comes upon Israel, but it starts with coming upon his house. This is why you have Aminadab and all the other ones that go on, Absalom attacked him and drove him out of Jerusalem. The root of it is that he looked on her and desired her. He looked upon her and said he wanted her for his wife even though it's clearly not God's will for her to be my wife or I would have her as my wife. She is married to another and instead of saying therefore this is God's will, he says therefore I will covet and I will fulfill my

coveting. Because of that, destruction comes upon his house. It's easy for us to think of coveting as not being a serious matter, but coveting is a very serious matter. Instead of being pleased with what God was, he wanted to put his pleasure in the place of God. With Bathsheba it's sexual, he coveted Bathsheba, Uriah the Hittite's wife. He knew it was Uriah the Hittite's wife, but he did it anyway. There's also a pattern of these if you notice, the woman was very beautiful to behold. In some cases in Scripture, the word that's typically translated 'covet' or 'to delight in' or 'to desire', sometimes it's actually called 'beauty' and translated 'beauty' contextually. Coveting is looking at something and saying it's beautiful. She looked at the tree and said that fruit was beautiful. David looks at Bathsheba and says she is beautiful. Achan looks at the Babylonian garments and says they are beautiful. These are all different types of coveting, but covetousness frequently starts with saying 'that's a beautiful thing'. It starts with the idea that you are looking at something that you shouldn't consider beautiful, like a Babylonian garment, like the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and you're saying this is beautiful and you want it for its beauty. He looked at another man's wife and instead of saying she was another man's wife, he said she was very beautiful to behold. Be cautious of beauty that's out of place, be cautious of looking at something that's not for you and looking at it and fixating on its beauty, it's very closely tied to coveting. Let's go back to how we shouldn't covet our neighbor's wife. It doesn't always have to be sexual, it can be that you wished your wife looked like that, I wish my wife could cook like that, I wish my wife kept the house as neat as that neighbor's house is. All these are coveting, all these are saying, 'God, the wife you chose for me was not a good choice.' It's about saying that what you want is different than what God wanted. It can be many things, but the heart of it is the wife God has given you is not the best wife. It's equally as easy for a woman to covet her neighbor's husband and it's equally sinful. Why doesn't my husband make as much money as our next door neighbor makes? Why doesn't my husband have the same reputation as my neighbor's husband? Why isn't my husband as smart as her husband is? Why isn't my husband as wise as her husband? We can go on and on, and it's not just about males coveting females, it works the other way too. It's being dissatisfied with who God has given you, that's the heart of coveting our neighbor's spouse. It's to reject what God said is good. Genesis 2:23-25, "And Adam said: 'This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.'" Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." They were both naked and not ashamed. God says it is not good for man to be alone so He gave him a wife so he wouldn't be alone and when you look at your neighbor's spouse and say that you wish he was your husband or she was your wife, that's rejecting the person who God has given you. God produced a wife for Adam and God established marriage and He made it so the two would become one flesh. We look at our neighbor's spouse and to desire them instead of the spouse God gave you, that is to reject the work that God did. It's a serious sin because again, it's saying this is what God has given me and He is wiser than I am. If we look and say this spouse would have been better and why isn't she my wife or he my husband, we are saying we are wiser than God and God was wrong to take the two and make them wrong. God was not wrong, we are wrong when we think that way. We are wrong when we let our thoughts even approach that because it's about being proud and lifted up, it's about saying we are wiser than God. God gave you the spouse He gave you with infinite wisdom and knowledge, infinite power. Maybe He will never give you a

spouse, but that's also in His wisdom and in His power. David brought destruction on his own house because he said he wants this woman who is not for him. Make sure you don't desire someone who is not for you. Make sure you don't desire somebody and covet somebody who it's not God's plan for them to be your spouse. It goes on and says you should not desire your neighbor's house. I use a lot of negative examples, but here I want to use a positive example. There are a lot more negative examples of coveting, but here is a positive example that I can think of, Jeremiah 35:2-10, "Go to the house of the Rechabites, speak to them, and bring them into the house of the Lord, into one of the chambers, and give them wine to drink." Then I took Jaazaniah the son of Jeremiah, the son of Habazziniah, his brothers and all his sons, and the whole house of the Rechabites, and I brought them into the house of the Lord, into the chamber of the sons of Hanan the son of Igdaliah, a man of God, which was by the chamber of the princes, above the chamber of Maaseiah the son of Shallum, the keeper of the door. Then I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites bowls full of wine, and cups; and I said to them, "Drink wine." But they said, "We will drink no wine, for Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, 'You shall drink no wine, you nor your sons, forever. You shall not build a house, sow seed, plant a vineyard, nor have any of these; but all your days you shall dwell in tents, that you may live many days in the land where you are sojourners.' Thus we have obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, in all that he charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, or our daughters, nor to build ourselves houses to dwell in; nor do we have vineyard, field, or seed. But we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed and done according to all that Jonadab our father commanded us." They received a commandment generations before, hundreds of years before that said you wander about and you don't have houses. You can imagine as they are wandering about without houses to dwell in for literally four hundred years or something like that, and instead of coveting and instead of saying, 'No, we're people that aren't to have houses' and instead of looking around them asking why they can't have house and rebelling, they control their coveting. There had to be real coveting here, it's hard to live in a tent. Some of us find camping very difficult, it's hard to live in a tent and yet for hundreds of years they raised children in tents, they did their work out of tents and they did everything in tents for hundreds of years instead of coveting and saying they wanted those people's house. If they coveted they would have left and as you read this it's almost certain that some of these sons of Rechab actually started to covet and they left and they built houses and they no longer associated themselves with Rechab and Jonadab, but those who are associated with Jonadab control their coveting to the point that God blessed them. Now, Jonadab had probably warned them that Israel was a nation that was going to be destroyed which is why they shouldn't desire these things that other people are in, but that was a dozen generations before. Because of that they received a blessing. Jeremiah 35:18-19, ""And Jeremiah said to the house of the Rechabites, "Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Because you have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts and done according to all that he commanded you, therefore thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: "Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not lack a man to stand before Me forever." ' "" For generations they controlled their coveting and God protected them from it. When we were in Romania some years ago, this is another story about coveting houses, you go down this nice street of this town and there's all these big houses on both sides. I was talking to the guy there, our guide that was driving us around, and he said if you go into any of those backyards they all have a tent there

because they are gypsies and gypsies do not live in houses, but it didn't stop them from coveting houses so they all built houses and then they live out in the backyard because they want houses, because they want the prestige of having a house and want to look like they are rich like the other people that have houses. So even though they are living in tents, they go build houses. Recognize why people go and build houses, a lot of times it's not about the space. Why do we have mansions these days? It's not because people need the space or even use the space, they want the big roofs and they want the second stories and they want all this stuff that's never finished, not because they want the space to use it, but because they want their house to look bigger because it's about their reputation. When people covet houses, this is driving our culture today, this is why you have these neighborhoods with all these houses in them. People want large homes to show off, the average family size has dramatically decreased since 1973, but in 1973 the average house size was 1,660 sq. ft. and in 2013 it was 2,679 sq. ft. It went up by more than a thousand square feet in that forty year period. They don't want these big houses because we need them or that we are using the space effectively or efficiently. We want the big houses because in our world that's what it looks like for applause. I've seen people leave a church because other people in the church had bigger houses than they did. That's what coveting looks like. It's not bad to have a big house if you're going to use it, it's not bad to have a small house if you're using it efficiently. The size of the house isn't the important thing, it's whether you are being a good steward that is the important thing. As a nation we covet and we go into debt, we become slaves and borrow a whole bunch of money so we can be a slave so we can show how great we are and how beautiful of a house we have when it's really the bank's house; it's not even your house. Make sure coveting your neighbor's house is not driving your life, that is what our culture teaches so make sure it's not driving your life because that is what you will hear, that is what you will see. When you drive around that's what you will see, the houses get bigger and bigger and more and more empty. It's different to covet someone's house rather than having things you would like to do in your own home, whether adding space, those things are fine and that's not the point. The point is when you say you want to keep up with the Jones's, I want to keep up with the people next door, they got a bigger house so I need to get a bigger house, they upgraded from their starter home to a bigger home so I want to upgrade from my starter home to a bigger home; when you're doing it just for reputation and to keep up. We're also not to covet our neighbor's field. There's another good example for this coveting, which is another king who gets destroyed for coveting. 1 Kings 21:1-7, "And it came to pass after these things that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard which was in Jezreel, next to the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. So Ahab spoke to Naboth, saying, "Give me your vineyard, that I may have it for a vegetable garden, because it is near, next to my house; and for it I will give you a vineyard better than it. Or, if it seems good to you, I will give you its worth in money." But Naboth said to Ahab, "The Lord forbid that I should give the inheritance of my fathers to you!" So Ahab went into his house sullen and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him; for he had said, "I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers." And he lay down on his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no food. But Jezebel, his wife, came to him, and said to him, "Why is your spirit so sullen that you eat no food?" He said to her, "Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite, and said to him, 'Give me your vineyard for money; or else, if it pleases you, I will give you another vineyard for it.' And he answered, 'I will not give you my vineyard.'" Then Jezebel, his wife, said to him, "You now exercise authority

over Israel! Arise, eat food, and let your heart be cheerful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.”” Notice the picture here of what coveting does. Here’s a man who is ruling the nation, he’s king, he can have whatever he really needs, but yet Naboth says he can’t have the field and because of that the coveting consumes him to the point that he’s sullen, to the point that he’s sorrowful, that he’s displeased about everything, to the point where he can’t even eat. Everybody isn’t as extreme in their coveting as Ahab is, but all of this has an aspect of it, when we covet this is what we get. When we covet we get to be unhappy about things. When we covet we’re going to be displeased, when we covet we’re going to be filled with sorry, that is what covetousness produces. He didn’t get his way so he is filled with sorrow and sadness. The opposite of coveting is to be content. Paul writes that contentment with godliness is great gain, that’s because you’re not coveting. Contentment is the opposite of coveting, but what covetousness does is even regardless of how much we have, if we start to focus on coveting then we will be measurable in the good things that we have. Instead of seeing the good things, what we will see is the things that we’re lacking, the things that God didn’t give us that we thought God should give us. Covetousness makes you miserable, it is the opposite of righteousness, peace, and joy. Look at Ahab, he clearly isn’t righteous, he’s willing to send Jezebel to frame Naboth so Naboth is murdered. He doesn’t have peace because all he can think about is this field that he can’t get and he’s sullen and miserable. Covetousness is the opposite of the kingdom of God, the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy and covetousness produces all the opposite effects. That’s the normal end of covetousness. We see how it ends after Jezebel goes and frames Naboth and causes him to be put to death. 1 Kings 21:17-22, “ Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, “Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who lives in Samaria. There he is, in the vineyard of Naboth, where he has gone down to take possession of it. You shall speak to him, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Have you murdered and also taken possession?” ’ And you shall speak to him, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord: “In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, dogs shall lick your blood, even yours.” ’ ”So Ahab said to Elijah, “Have you found me, O my enemy?” And he answered, “I have found you, because you have sold yourself to do evil in the sight of the Lord: ‘Behold, I will bring calamity on you. I will take away your posterity, and will cut off from Ahab every male in Israel, both bond and free. I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, because of the provocation with which you have provoked Me to anger, and made Israel sin.’” He’s thinking he will be filled with joy because he got this thing that he coveted and here comes Elijah. God says He’s going to destroy the house of Ahab because Ahab coveted Naboth’s field and that covetousness produced what is usually produces. When you think about it, don’t think that it’s a minor thing when your child wants something that they shouldn’t have. Part of your duty as parents is to teach them to be satisfied with what they receive. We live in a nation where all the television commercials are about the same thing, they are all about trying to foster covetousness, to desire that car that will go speedily around corners, to desire that big house, to desire all the things that God hasn’t given you. Our culture will teach your children to covet. You need to realize and teach them that it’s not acceptable, that it’s a serious sin in the eyes of God. Are there fields that you covet? That field could be a field of work, it could be a field of ministry, it could be the place that you live. God has put all the fields in your life where He wants them and He has placed them there for a purpose and His purpose is based on greater wisdom than you have. Do not covet your

neighbor's field. What covetousness produces with the field, instead of doing best where you are, taking that field and working it and trying to figure out how to produce something that's good out of it, how can I improve it and take dominion over it, covetousness is about wanting something different and not being satisfied with what God gave you. Micah 2 warns us about this too, verses 1-3, "Woe to those who devise iniquity, And work out evil on their beds! At morning light they practice it, Because it is in the power of their hand. They covet fields and take them by violence, Also houses, and seize them. So they oppress a man and his house, A man and his inheritance. Therefore thus says the Lord: "Behold, against this family I am devising disaster, From which you cannot remove your necks; Nor shall you walk haughtily, For this is an evil time." When we think it's ok to covet, when we foster covetousness, we should expect the judgement of God. Covetousness is idolatry, it is to put ourselves in the place of God. His male servants and female servants, this isn't the same as then, but if you think about it, before our tax system we had the income tax that made it so expensive to have servants, servants used to be a lot more common. When you have servants and you have a good servant, your family is a lot more comfortable. If you have a bad servant it's not that comfortable so having a good servant was a big deal. Your reputation outside would be based on your servants. Remember what the Queen of Sheba said when she looked at the clothes that Solomon's servants wore and said what a great blessing it is to have a ruler that has the God that you have. The servants and the way they presented themselves were your reputation outside in a lot of cases so it would be really easy to covet someone else's servants. Covet the fact that they are a better cook, covet the fact that they have better skills and ability, instead of saying God gave you the servants that you were to have. Or his ox and his donkey. You still see this with farmers today, there's a lot of competition with who can have the best animal. This is what farm shows are based on, where they all take their best animals and they say this is the best horse or donkey, and people want to look and say they wish their horse was as good as that horse. These may seem far removed from you and me, but they aren't far removed from the things that continue to happen in our world today. Anything that is your neighbors, do you desire what others have? When someone has success in something do you truly praise God in their success or do you say you wish that was you or that it could have been you? Those are signs of coveting, where we can't rejoice with those who rejoice because we are coveting. We are saying that should have been me, no, God was right in what He did. Coveting anything else that is your neighbor's, it could be skill or reputation or other material things, in the end the heart of it is always the same. Are you satisfied with God as your provider? Are you satisfied with what God says is good or do you have to say what Eve did, where even though God said the tree was not good to eat, that it's actually good to eat? Do you say that what pleases God doesn't please you? That's what covetousness is, coveting is powerful. Make sure you take every thought captive related to it. Make sure you don't open that door and cause sin to run rampant in your lives. God is a jealous God and when we covet we are putting God out of the position that He's in and we should expect there to be real results, just like there was with David, just like there was with Ahab, just like there was with Eve. Coveting is a big deal, make sure you treat it like that in your own life.

Let me close us in prayer. Oh Lord God, we do thank You for Your word. We thank You that You teach us and guide us. We thank You for this commandment, let us not deceive ourselves and think that this commandment is far from us breaking and instead let us recognize how easy it is for us to break it. Lord, keep us from breaking it and the destruction that comes when we break it. We ask this in Your Son's name, amen.