

The Ten Words – The Sin We Never Admit! Exodus 20:17

INTRODUCTION

Today, we bring to an end our study of the **Ten Words**. Because we are considering the last Word or Commandment, let's go ahead and read all of the Commandments so we can fully appreciate all that we have studied. Please turn in your Bible to **Exodus 20**.

The 10th Commandment/Word deals with **coveting**. A **sister word** would be **'envy'** and its **first cousin 'greed'**. Flip the Tenth Commandment over and it reads like **this**: "*You shall not set your affections (desires) on that which you have no right to possess.*" Abraham Lincoln was walking down the street with his two boys, both of whom were crying. A passerby asked, "*What's the matter with your boys?*" Lincoln replied, "*Exactly what's wrong with the whole world. I have three walnuts, and each boy wants two.*" Someone has **written**:

As a rule, Man's a fool

When it's hot, he wants it cool.

And when it's cool, he wants it hot,

Always wanting what is not.

This Commandment/Word (20:17) **speaks to the sanctity of contentment**. Your wants matter...your wants affect you and me more than we'd like to admit. **Like fish that don't think about the water in which they swim, we can be so immersed in covetousness that we don't even notice it.**

Let's dig in. First, please note...

I. The _____ of the Commandment –

What does it mean?

Two ideas emerge as to its meaning, namely...

A. You shall not desire what rightfully belongs to _____ else (Exodus 20:17)

What does it mean to covet? *To covet is to crave, to yearn for, to obsess after something that belongs to someone else.* We covet whenever we set our hearts on anything that is not rightfully ours. **Coveting refers to an illegitimate desire. Not all desires are selfish, of course.** God made us to be creatures of desire. Our desire for food reminds us to eat. Our desire to do something useful motivates us to work. Our desire for friendship draws us into community. Our desire for intimacy—including sexual intimacy—may drive us to get married. We have many healthy desires, including the deepest of all desires, which is to know God. But like everything else about us, our desires are corrupted by sin. We often want the wrong thing, in the wrong way, at the wrong time, and for the wrong reason, and this is what the tenth commandment rules out.

The second idea is that...

B. You shall not desire something _____ (Deuteronomy 5:21)

We see this in **Deuteronomy 5** where we find the commandment repeated with one slight modification. The command in **Deuteronomy 5:21** reads this way: "*And you shall not covet your neighbor's wife. And you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, or his male servant, or his female servant, his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.*" Here the word "*covet*" is repeated with reference to "*your neighbor's wife*," but then a different word is used with reference to your neighbor's belongings. The **NIV** translates it

“You shall not set your desire.” Other translations (NASB, NKJV) do the same. The Hebrew word here means *“to desire excessively, to long for or lust after something.”* Excessive longing takes place when we desire things that are not wrong in themselves, or when we desire good things, but to the exclusion of God – in other words, when I want something so badly, that I forget about God in the process. The command *“You shall not covet”* means not only that you shall not desire something that belongs to someone else, but you shall not desire something excessively either...this leads to idolatry. The NT states that much when we read **Colossians 3:5**: *“Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”*

So, if I see something you have that I like, is it okay for me to go out and buy one for myself? Sometimes yes, and sometimes no. A lot of the time there would be no problem with this. Let’s say for example, I need a new tool, and you’ve got one that works great, you recommend it to me, I can afford it, and I go out and buy it. No problem. But if I am being driven by desire for something that I don’t really need and am forgetting about God in the process, then I have crossed the line to coveting. We need to learn the difference between genuine needs, legitimate wants and covetous “must have’s”.

By way of application, let me share with you...

5 truths about coveting

1. This is an _____ sin

2. The breaking of this commandment is the _____ to the breaking of all of the other commandments.

3. It begins close to _____

4. It springs from an _____ heart

5. It _____ life

What does it mean? Next, please note...

II. The _____ of the Commandment

– How is it violated? In what ways?

Let’s talk next about how we break this commandment.

A. _____ of money

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____ desires

E. _____

Well, I don't want to end on a negative...so, let's consider,

III. The _____ cure for lying -

Is there hope for the lawbreaker?

The Bible teaches **contentment**. The antidote to **covetousness is contentment**. **Diagnostic Question:** "If only I had _____, I would finally be happy." What's in that blank? A nicer house? A newer car? A spouse? Children? Grandchildren? Good looks? A successful career? Spotless health? **For most of us, the blank is our functional god.** That's the person, place, or thing we think we can't live without. Coveting, at its root, is idolatry. When we covet, we are believing a lie about who God is and how He loves us. We must fight this temptation with faith.

We must remember two things in particular:

A. We must remember how the story ends _____

B. We must remember Who is with us _____

CONCLUSION

What can we take with us this morning? Here's some practical steps you can take to cultivate contentment and not covetousness in your life:

- Be _____ for what others have
- Be _____ for what you have
- Be _____ with others who don't have

The Gospel makes the difference. And so, we come to the end of our study on the Ten Commandments. **Remember, the Ten Commandments are not an entrance exam to get into heaven.** We are all sinners, and we all break the Ten Commandments in our lives, again and again and again. Rather, the Ten Commandments show you your sin and your need for a Savior. And then, once you come to Christ for salvation, God's Holy Spirit will help you to grow in your obedience to God's commands. But don't try to do it on your own. You can't. I can't. That's why God sent Jesus for us.