

The Ten Commandments
Exodus 20:1-17
Message #9 – Greener Grass

We are continuing the series on the Ten Commandments. This morning I am taking the last two out of order. We are considering 10th Commandment.

❖ **To covet is to fix *one's desire* upon what belongs to another.**

Covetousness is a passionate illicit craving to possess what belongs to someone else. There is no condemnation for desiring to legitimately have things of your own, Proverbs 18:22. The Bible commends diligence, Proverbs 10:4, Covetousness lurks in the heart of every person, Mark 7:22. Advertisers play upon this continually.

➤ Covetousness is a ***subtle sin*** which nobody sees.

Every person here today has been guilty of this sin. God listed it last because coveting involves breaking most of the other nine. There is a deceitful element to coveting as seen in Paul's description "a cloak of covetousness", 1 Thessalonians 2:5. Covetousness in our hearts comes cloaked. Sometimes it comes disguised as fairness. Someone received or has something I don't have, that's not fair.

➤ Covetousness is the companion of ***materialism***.

Materialism occurs when the physical takes precedence over the spiritual. Materialistic people define themselves by their possessions. Materialism is focusing one's desire upon gaining more things. The trap is that the more one gets they are never satisfied with what they have. These are people who have more money than they've ever had but are more miserable than they've ever been. Solomon learned this firsthand, Ecclesiastes 5:10. The more you gain the more you want. Jesus' clear warning concerning this sin came with the parable of the rich man. Luke 12:15, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses." The rich man's sin was not his preparations for the future. The word Luke used for "life" refers to all that makes life worth living. The rich man's sin was that he so focused upon the material that he forsook the spiritual. Luke 12:21, "So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." Covetousness has the potential to send your soul to hell. Mark 8:36, I can tell if I am covetous if I am willing to compromise my character to gain material things. One of the cures for materialism is the recognition that we don't own anything. We are simply stewards of what belongs to God.

▪ ***Covetousness is an attack upon the character of God.***

Paul declares that "covetousness, which is idolatry", Colossians 3:5. When I covet I am saying that God is not enough. Also when we as Christians become covetous we doubt God's provision. We are saying that God is holding out on us. We are also disbelieving His Word. Psalm 84:11, "For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly." Matthew 6:33, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

The antidote for covetousness is *contentment*.

Contentment does not preclude working to better one's self. Contentment means being at ***rest*** with what I have and where I am ***until*** God gives me something else.

The word "contentment", Hebrews 13:5, means to be sufficient, to be enough is the idea, Philippians 4:19-20, God doesn't promise to give us all of our wants. Some of those would be more harmful than beneficial, 1 Timothy 6:6-10. The reason we can be content with what we have and with where we are because of God's personal promise. Hebrews 13:5. God is saying that He has us in His care so we don't need to worry.

➤ Contentment is a spiritual ***discipline***, Philippians 4:11-13.

Godliness means God likeness. The word means to be devout. A person who is dedicated to God has a biblical value system.

❖ **The key to contentment is *thankfulness*.**

Thankfulness is an evidence of the filling of the Holy Spirit, Ephesians 5:18-21. Thankfulness is the essence of a regenerated heart just as thanklessness is the essence of an unregenerate heart.

➤ Thankfulness is an ***acknowledgment***.

To give thanks is to recognize and appreciate God's blessings in our lives. We give thanks "to God the Father". The English words "think" and "thank" come from a common root. Thankfulness counters the habit of worry, Philippians 4:6-7. We become unthankful because we are forgetful of what Jesus has done, is doing and has promised to do

for us. This is the essence of the Gospel. Christians become joyless because they become unthankful, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-19

▪ ***Thankfulness is a spiritual discipline.***

A spirit that is "giving thanks always" and "in everything" can only be generated by the Holy Spirit in the believer's heart. Paul is not speaking about some kind of religious ritual. Paul connects thanksgiving with the heart, Colossians 3:15. An unthankful Christian is a living paradox.

➤ The true indicator of an unthankful heart is a ***complaining*** mouth, 1 Corinthians 10:9-10.

Paul uses the Exodus generation as an example for believers today. , The Psalmist says of these people that they "complained in their tents, and did not heed the voice of the LORD", Psalm 106:25.

▪ ***Constant complaining reflects a spirit of ingratitude,***

Philippians 2:14-15.

For the Christian the antidote for covetousness is contentment. The key to contentment is thankfulness. If you are here today without Christ you cannot cure your covetous heart. Paul reveals in Romans 7:7-12 that it was when he heard the commandment "You shall not covet" the sinfulness of his heart became clear to him. He realized that all of his outward religious zeal could not make him right before God. Romans 7:24-25, "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God — through Jesus Christ our Lord!" The Ten Commandments reveal to us our innate sinfulness. Our only hope for salvation is the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

• ***Contented Christians Experience the Best of Both Worlds***