

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

“The Lord’s Provision”

Ex 20:17

"You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor." (NIV)

Simply put, coveting is desiring to have something that doesn't belong to us. If one is homeless, a desire for a new home would not be coveting. But if that homeless person began to desire to own the house next to the field he was sleeping in and that house was owned and occupied, then that would be coveting. Again, it is wanting the property of another or that which we are forbidden to have.

Covetousness made an early appearance in the history of man.

Gen 2:9

And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground — trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (NIV)

Of all these trees (a garden full of them), the Lord brings our attention to the two most important with regard to the fate of mankind (they were in the middle of the garden): the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Gen 3:6

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. (NIV)

*The Hebrew word translated “pleasing” in Genesis 3:6 is the same word translated “covert” twice in Exodus 20:7. Its appearance in Genesis 3:6 is its second use in Scripture and already we see the disastrous effects of covetousness. The woman looked at the tree with her eyes (lust of the eyes) and no longer saw all the provision God had given her (the whole Garden, **including the tree of life!**). What she desired now was the one thing she was forbidden to eat. She wanted what she felt was being kept from her: wisdom. (The tree was of **knowledge.**)*

The Hebrew word translated “desirable” in Genesis 3:6 is ta'avah (Strong's # 8378) which comes from the root word 'avah (Strong's # 183), which is also translated as “covet” or “lust” in the King James Version.

Check out this ricochet:

Deut 5:21

"You shall not **covet** your neighbor's wife. You shall not set your *desire* [SN 183] on your neighbor's house or land, his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor." (NIV)

In the Deuteronomic recap of the tenth commandment, is a form of the very word used in Genesis 3:6 (desired to make one wise)! Covetousness was the first sin step on the slippery slope leading to the downfall of man!

Mic 2:1-2

- 1 Woe to those who plan iniquity, to those who plot evil on their beds! At morning's light they carry it out because it is in their power to do it.
- 2 They covet fields and seize them, and houses, and take them. They defraud a man of his home, a fellowman of his inheritance. (NIV)

Coveting is at the heart of sin because it happens in the thinking stage. If we bring every thought captive when tempted to covet, then we will not commit the crime. Of all the Ten Commandments, this is the only one with no real outwardly measurable sign (it is obvious in the tangible if someone has another god besides God, has a graven image, uses the Lord's name in vain, breaks the Sabbath, dishonors parents, commits murder or adultery, steals or lies). Though all the commandments have to be followed from the heart, this is really the "heart" commandment. It involves something we do internally. The moment we act on it is the moment we break the other commandments.

The root position of covetousness to sin is shown in Romans 7.

Rom 7:6-8

- 6 But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.
- 7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "You shall not covet [SN 1937]."
- 8 But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead. (NKJ)

Matt 5:28

But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman *lustfully* [covetously, SN1937] has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (NIV)

Coveting is committing the sin in your heart by mentally doing that which God has forbidden.

I want to share with you five ways that coveting ensnares us and propels us to further sin. I want to do this by looking at two notorious incidents in the history of the universe: the fall of Lucifer and the fall of man.

I. How coveting affects us-

1. It blinds us to God's supply.

Gen 2:16 "You are free to eat of any tree in the garden;"

Ezek. 28:14 "You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones."

Is. 14:14a "I will ascend above the Heights of the clouds;"

Not only in the fall of Lucifer and the fall of man, but in the Exodus we also see covetousness blinding people to God's supply.

Num 11:4-6

4 The rabble with them began to *crave* [SN 183] other food, and again the Israelites started wailing and said, "If only we had meat to eat!

5 We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost — also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic.

6 But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!" (NIV)

God was raining bread down from heaven, but because the rabble were coveting after other food, they began to complain about the angels' food (Ps. 78:24-25)! Like all other sins, coveting is a death sentence.

Num 11:34

Therefore the place was named Kibroth Hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had *craved* [SN 183] other food. (NIV)

2. It defies God-given boundaries.
Gen 2:17 "thou shalt not eat of it"
Is. 14:13 "I will ascend into heaven,"
3. It promotes dissatisfaction with our God-given station.
Gen 5:2 "Male and female created he them... called their name Adam."
Gen 3:5 "You shall be as gods ('elohiym)."
Ezek. 28:14 "You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you."
Is. 14:14 "I will be like the most High."
4. It promises false satisfaction.
Gen.3:6 "A tree to be desired to make one wise." (It didn't.)
Is. 14:13 "I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation," (He didn't)
5. It compels us to draw others into our sin.
Gen. 3:6 "She...have also to her husband...and he did eat."
Is. 14:13 "I will exalt throne above the stars of God:"
Rev. 12:4 "His tail drew out a third part of the stars of heaven,"

Knowing this, how do we find the way of escape to overcome the snare of covetousness? I present five things we must recognize or do to combat covetousness.

1. We need to recognize God's supply.
Gen 22:14
So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided." (NIV)

Phil 4:19 (NIV)

And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

2. We need to recognize God's boundaries.

1 Cor 6:12-13

12 "Everything is permissible for me"-but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me"-but I will not be mastered by anything.

13 "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food"-but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. (NIV)

1 Cor 10:23-24

23 "Everything is permissible"-but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible"-but not everything is constructive.

24 Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others. (NIV)

Rom 7:12 "So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good." (NIV)

Heb 12:5-6 (NIV)

5 And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, 6 because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son."

3. We need to walk in the power of contentment.

1 Tim 6:6-10

6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.

7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it.

8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

9 People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.

10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. (NIV)

Phil 4:12-13

12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (NKJ)

1 Cor 12:12-20

12 The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.

13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body-whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free-and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

14 Now the body is not made up of one part but of many.

- 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body.
- 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body.
- 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be?
- 18 But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.
- 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be?
- 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body. (NIV)

1 Thess 5:16-18

16 Be joyful always;

17 pray continually;

18 give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (NIV)

4. We need to stand firm in the hope (of reward).

Gal 6:9-10

9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. (NIV)

Heb 11:24-26

24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

25 He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time.

26 He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. (NIV)

5. We are to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Matt 22:39 "And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" (NIV)

Rom 13:9-10

9 The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

10 Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. (NIV)

Heb 10:24-25

24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (NIV)