

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **James 4:1-3.**
- B. The 10th commandment (Ex. 20:17).
“You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”
- C. We conclude our series with a commandment that could be part of the other nine. One so important it was this one that the apostle Paul chose to use to illustrate about his own sinfulness (Rom. 7:7-9).
What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, “YOU SHALL NOT COVET.” [8] But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead. [9] And I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive, and I died;...
- D. The principle of the first commandment gives the motivation for obeying all the others. The principle of the last commandment gives the explanation why we disobey all the others.
- E. Take King David for example. When he became involved with Bathsheba:
 1. David ignored the 8th principle when he stole another man's wife.
 2. David ignored the 7th principle when he committed adultery with her.
 3. David ignored the 9th principle when he lied, trying to cover up his affair.
 4. David ignored the 6th principle when he arranged for the murder of Uriah.
 5. David ignored the 1st principle because through it all, God was not the center of his life.

I. WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

- A. The problem with coveting is that once you start, you are never satisfied. Contentment slips out the back door of your life like an unloved child. And contentment is the bottom line of this final commandment.
- B. God intends for us to be content with:
 1. Who we are.
 2. With what we have.
 3. And with Him.
- C. A covetous person is someone with a severe craving for the possessions or life circumstances of others. It's not just a casual “wouldn't it be nice if...”; it is strong. It is: “I want what you have, because I feel that is what will satisfy me and make me happy.”
- D. I wonder how much it pains God when He sees us eaten up with envy, as to say, “What I have isn't good enough. What You have provided is something less than what I deserve.”
- E. Some sobering thoughts on coveting from Heb. 13:5.
Let your character be 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,”
- F. The problem is resentment. The root of coveting is our dissatisfaction with God's allotment of things. We resent what we think is the unfairness of God, and in turn covet that which God does not give us.

II. COVETOUSNESS.

- A. Why would the Lord say, “You shall not covet?” Why would He make that the last item of His Decalogue? Because God knows a few things about coveting.
- B. First, **He knows that what we covet will not last.**
 1. The very things people long to possess and hold in their hands will eventually slip between their fingers (2Cor. 4:18).
...while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

2. Ecclesiastes 5:11 says that money and material things that aren't properly stewarded will slip away.
When good things increase, those who consume them increase. So what is the advantage to their owners except to look on?
- C. Second, **He knows that what we covet will be a burden to us.**
 1. If you don't believe that, read Psa. 51. David had coveted his neighbor's wife (Psa. 51:3,4).
For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me. [4] Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned, And done what is evil in Thy sight, So that Thou art justified when Thou dost speak, And blameless when Thou dost judge.
 2. The rest of the his days, David endured the wrenching emotions of a man who watched his family sink into heartbreak and ruin. Rape, murder, incest, disgrace, betrayal, rebellion... it never stopped.
- D. Third, **He knows that covetousness is destructive.**
 1. Money unwisely spent becomes a breeding ground for arguments and fights. Covetousness brings about destruction, divorce, and death.
 2. See 1Tim. 6:6-10.
But godliness *actually* is a means of great gain, when accompanied by contentment. [7] For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. [8] And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. [9] But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. [10] For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang.
- E. Fourth, **He knows that covetousness is deceptive.**
 1. See Lk. 12:15.
And He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not *even* when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."
 2. We live in a consumer society, and today's sophisticated marketers spend billions of dollars and work around the clock for one purpose: *to make you unhappy and dissatisfied with what you have*. With all their considerable skill, talent, and training, they seek to convince you and I that if we would just buy *this* or possess *that*, we'd find a greater measure of happiness and security in this old world.

III. VALUE.

- A. Our value does not lie in what we possess.
- B. Our value doesn't spring from what we wear, what we drive, or where we live. Our value is wrapped up in the amazing fact that JC, the mighty Son of God and Creator of the world, loved us enough to die for us. He is the One who gives worth and value to our lives.
- C. Don't play the great comparison game (2Cor. 10:12).
For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves, and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding.
- D. What great words of counsel.
 1. Don't compare yourself with others.
 2. Don't toy with those thoughts in the back of your mind.
 3. Don't look at the guy in the next office or the couple in the house next door.
 4. Don't measure yourself by the things others have.
 5. Don't compare yourself with what someone else has accomplished or attained.
 6. Don't go around with a measuring tape seeing how much they have or how far they've gone compared to how much you have and how far you've gone.

- E. If you have more, it'll just make you proud. If you have less, you'll become envious and begin to covet.

IV. CONTENTMENT.

- A. First, **contentment is a process.**
1. Attitude is everything, because if we don't learn to be content with our present situation, then we'll face the same circumstances again and again. Again and again until we realize that contentment is something *learned*.
 2. See Phil. 4:11; 3:7,8.
(Phil 4:11) Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.
(Phil 3:7,8) But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. [8] More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ,...
- B. Second, **contentment brings peace.**
1. Is it wrong to want success in your life? Is that a problem? No, you can be as successful as you want to be. But if success is the aim or goal of your life; when you get there (wherever that is), it won't be enough.
 2. Contentment brings peace of mind (Psa. 73:23-26).
Nevertheless I am continually with Thee; Thou hast taken hold of my right hand. [24] With Thy counsel Thou wilt guide me, And afterward receive me to glory. [25] Whom have I in heaven *but Thee?* And besides Thee, I desire nothing on earth. [26] My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.
- C. Why shouldn't I covet my neighbor's house or wife or the things that he has? Because God knows that once we begin to walk down that road, we will never, never get enough. No matter how much it is, it won't be sufficient.
- D. Third, **contentment is powerful.**
1. What we think about is what we desire, and what we desire is what we become.
 2. G.K. Chesterton put it this way, "There are two ways to get enough; one is to continue to accumulate more and more. The other is to desire less and less."
 3. Contentment does neither, it is happy with what it has.
- E. Fourth, **contentment knows the difference between wants and needs.**
1. If you have food, clothing, and shelter, Paul says you can consider yourself rich.
 2. "Contentment is not the fulfillment of what you want, but the realization of how much you already have."
- F. Fifth, **contentment knows the difference between temporary and eternal.**
1. The song says, "This world is not my home, I'm just a passing through..." Do we really live or think that?
 2. People of character do not envy others' temporal blessings. People of character desire eternal blessings, so they are willing to face internal issues. God knows our hearts, and he wants our hearts to belong only to Him.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. God's 10th commandment is the only law in history against coveting. How could mere men police such a law?
- B. But God can because He knows your heart.
- C. Let's come back to the principles of the Ten(der) Commandments.
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.