

“3AM” MINISTRIES



THE TENTH COMMANDMENT OF GOD



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**THE TENTH
COMMANDMENT OF GOD
EXODUS 20:17**

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Wednesday May 9, 2018
The Ninth Commandment of God
Exodus 20:17

¹⁷Thou *shalt not covet* thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

What is to covet?

The bible gives us a clear meaning of the word “covet.” We find this in Deuteronomy 5:21

“²¹Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or anything that is thy neighbour's.

From the above scripture, the bible tells us that “to covet” is “to desire.”

More references:

Apostle Paul uses the word “covet” 1 Corinthians 12:31. He says; “But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way.”

What did he mean by this word ‘covet’?

He uses another word in 1 Corinthians 14:1 which is the same or synonymous to ‘covet.’ He says; “¹Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.”

He first said, “**covet** the best gifts” and now he says, “**desire** spiritual gifts.” Thus to covet is to desire or wish for, with eagerness; to desire earnestly to obtain or possess something either in a good sense or a bad sense.

To covet also means to lust.

The bible says in Romans 7:7 that,

“⁷What shall we say then? is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: *for I had not known lust*, except the law had said, *Thou shalt not covet*.

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Also consider the scripture below where we have a synonymous parallelism of the words “lust” and “desire”

James 4:2

“*Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.*”

Lust = Desire

Have not = cannot obtain.

Since “To covet” = “To Desire and “To Desire” = “To Lust”

Then “To covet” = “To Lust”

The two forms of covetousness.

The 10th commandment forbids us from a certain form of covetousness but as we have read, Apostle Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 12:31 and 14:1 that we should covet best spiritual gifts.

Hence covetousness has two form.

1. The godly covetousness
2. The evil covetousness.

The godly covetousness

1 Corinthians 12:31

“But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way.”

If we love Jesus, we shall love to live for Him, to present our thank offerings to Him, to labor for Him. The very labor will be light. **For His sake we shall covet pain and toil and sacrifice.** We shall sympathize with His longing for the salvation of men. We shall feel the same tender craving for souls that He has felt. {COL 49.3}

Every soul that accepts Jesus as his personal Saviour will pant for the privilege of serving God and will eagerly seize the opportunity to signalize his gratitude by devoting his abilities to God's service. He will long to show his love for Jesus and for His purchased possession. **He will covet toil, hardship, sacrifice.** He will think it a privilege to deny

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self, lift the cross, and follow in Christ's footsteps, thus showing his loyalty and love. His holy and beneficent works will testify to his conversion, and will give to the world the evidence that he is not a spurious, but a true, devoted, Christian. {TM 394.2}

This why Apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians 12:10 that
“Therefore *I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake...*”

Evil covetousness

Habakkuk 2:9

⁹Woe to him that *coveteth an evil covetousness* to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil!

Hebrews 13:5

⁵Let your conversation be *without covetousness*; and *be content* with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

From the above scripture, we realize that discontentment with what we have or the things that God in his mercy has bestowed upon us is a violation of the tenth commandment. It is sin.

Let us see how discontentment is a sin- A breaking of the the tenth commandment. This was the case of Lucifer.

The covetousness in Lucifer.

Little by little, Lucifer came to indulge the desire for self-exaltation. . . . Though all his glory was from God, this mighty angel came to regard it as pertaining to himself. Not content with his position, though honored above the heavenly host, he ventured to covet homage due alone to the Creator. Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of all created beings, **it was his endeavor to secure their service and loyalty to himself. And coveting the glory with which the infinite Father had invested His Son, this prince of angels aspired to power that was the prerogative of Christ alone. . .** {CTr 9.3}

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Isaiah 14:12-14

¹²How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! ¹³For thou hast said in thine heart, *I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: ¹⁴I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.*

...Had Lucifer really *desired to be like* the Most High, *he would never have deserted his appointed place in heaven;* for the spirit of the Most High is manifested in unselfish ministry. ***Lucifer desired God's power, but not His character.*** He sought for himself the highest place, and every being who is actuated by his spirit will do the same. Thus alienation, discord, and strife will be inevitable. Dominion becomes the prize of the strongest. The kingdom of Satan is a kingdom of force; every individual regards every other as an obstacle in the way of his own advancement, or a steppingstone on which he himself may climb to a higher place. {DA 435.2}

While Lucifer counted it a thing *to be grasped to be equal with God,* Christ, the Exalted One, "made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Philippians 2:7, 8... {DA 436.1}

Luke 12:13-15

¹³And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. ¹⁴And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you? ¹⁵And he said unto them, Take heed, ***and beware of covetousness:*** for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

Coveting Neighbour's house and field

Habakkuk 2:9

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⁹Woe to him that ***coveteth an evil covetousness to his house***, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil! I kings 21:1-11 King Ahab covets Naboth's vineyard.

Coveting or lusting after Neighbours wife.

Matthew 5:27

²⁷Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: ²⁸But I say unto you, *That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her* hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

The covetous man becomes more covetous as he draws near his death.

The man who all through his life is accumulating earthly treasure, cannot readily withdraw himself from his accustomed pursuits. Shall not he who is seeking a heavenly treasure become more earnest, more zealous, and more intensely interested in seeking the treasure which is above? Shall he not covet the best and most enduring substance? Shall he not seek the crown of glory that is imperishable, the riches which moth and rust doth not corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal? The more ardent his hopes, the more strenuous are his efforts and the more determined he is not to fail of the immortal treasure. . . . His business on the earth is to secure eternal riches. He cannot, will not, consent, after tasting of the heavenly gifts of God, to be a pauper, left in destitution for eternity. The soul passion is more, more. This is the real want of the soul. We want more of the divine grace, more enlightenment, more faith. . . . {OHC 188.2}

The great extent of the tenth commandment.

Psalm 119:96

⁹⁶I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceeding broad.

How broad is the tenth commandment?

The tenth commandment *strikes at the very root of all sins*, prohibiting the selfish desire, from which springs the sinful act. He who in obedience to God's law refrains from indulging even a sinful desire for

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that which belongs to another, will not be guilty of an act of wrong toward his fellow creatures. {PP 309.5}

The last commandment condemns covetousness. Every selfish desire, every degree of discontent, every act of overreaching, every selfish gratification works to the strengthening and developing of a character which will destroy the Christlikeness of the human agent, and close the gates of the city of God against him. {SD 65.2}

This is the last commandment, completing the circle of the law, which ends where it begins, for covetousness is idolatry (Colosians 3:5) A covetous man is an idolater (Ephesians 5:5), because his longing for earthly possessions shows that he does not trust wholly in God. He is trusting in uncertain riches instead of in the living God "who giveth us richly all things to enjoy." 1 Tim. vi. 17. {July 3, 1902 EJW, PTUK 420.6}

The tenth commandment embraces the whole, and indicates, more than any other, that "the law is spiritual." The Apostle Paul said, "I had not known sin but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, "Thou shalt not covet." Rom. vii. 7. So whoever keeps this one commandment is sure to keep the whole law. It may truly be said, therefore, that the whole law is summed up in the words, "Thou shalt not covet." The one who really keeps this can say to God, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none on earth that I desire beside Thee." Such an one loves God with such supreme, all-absorbing love that there is no room for any other love. This love to God is but the working of His "everlasting love" that draws us to Him, and makes one with Him. "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous." 1 John v. 3. We are not made members of the Royal Family by keeping the law; but, being by the love of the Great King made members of His family, we as a matter of course keep the Royal Law. {July 3, 1902 EJW, PTUK 420.7}

This commandment, more than any other, shows the spiritual nature of law of God. All the other commandments may be violated openly, as well as in the heart, so that men may see the sin; but the violation of this

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commandment can be detected by no one but God. When the sin of stealing is committed, we may know that it has been preceded by covetousness; but no man can know that the tenth commandment has been violated until the sin of covetousness results in the open violation of some other commandments. {January 4, 1894 EJW, PTUK 6.4}

From this we may learn the folly of the idea that it can ever rest with men to enforce the law of God. The law of God is not kept while the tenth commandment is broken; but no power on earth can tell when it is broken or when it is kept. "The law is spiritual," and eludes the grasp of earthly rulers. {January 4, 1894 EJW, PTUK 6.5}

But this is not all. That which is true of the tenth commandment is true of them all, for the tenth contains all the rest. The first commandment forbids idolatry. Now read two verses: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, and **covetousness, which is idolatry.**" (Colossians 3: 5). "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, **nor covetous man, who is an idolater,** hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." Ephesians 5:5. Thus we see that law of God is a perfect circle, ending just where it begins. The violation of the tenth precept is the violation of the first; and this means the violation of all the others, because to reject God is to reject His whole law. {January 4, 1894 EJW, PTUK 6.6}

Very emphatic testimony to the comprehensive nature of the tenth commandment is given by the Apostle Paul, in Romans 7:7 "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." {January 4, 1894 EJW, PTUK 6.7}

Here the last commandment is put for whole law. It was the tenth commandment that convicted the apostle of sin. As a Pharisee, he had from his childhood been a strict observer of the law, so far as it concerned outward actions. He could appeal to all the Jews, who knew his life from his youth, with no fear that they could convict him of any wrong doing. But "the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man look on the outwardeth appearance, but the Lord looketh upon the heart" (1 Sam. xvi. 7), and so when Christ was revealed in Paul, he found that he had

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never kept a single precept of the law. Evil desire had been in his heart, although unknown to him; and that made the things that he had counted gain, nothing but loss. {January 4, 1894 EJW, PTUK 6.8}

How does covetousness or lust strike at the root of every sin.

Lust, or unlawful desire, precedes every open sin. "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts, and enticed. Then when lust conceiveth it bringeth forth sin; and sin when it is finished, bringeth earth death." James i. 14, 15. The lust of the flesh, when denied, is not sin; but as soon as it is cherished it becomes sin, for "the thought of foolishness is sin." Prov. xxiv. 9. {January 4, 1894 EJW, PTUK 6.9}

What are the lusts/desires of the flesh?

Galatians 5:19-21

“¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, ²⁰ Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,²¹Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

And so it is that the violation of the tenth commandment lies at the bottom of the transgression of every other commandment. The law in plain terms forbids covetousness, or evil desires; so that in every case the plain letter of the law is violated before anything is ever done that men can see and recognise as sin. Well might the Psalmist exclaim and pray, "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse Thou me from secret faults." Ps. xix. 12. And may every heart echo this language. Only the life of Christ can cleanse from all unrighteousness. {January 4, 1894 EJW, PTUK 6.10}

Lust- The starting point of sin.

James 1:13-15

¹³Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: ¹⁴But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

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¹⁵Then *when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin*: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

When one is tempted, he feels the desires and the inclinations of the flesh. All this, Jesus could experience without sin; because to be tempted is not sin. It is only "when lust hath conceived," when the desire is cherished, when the inclination is sanctioned,—only then it is that "it bringeth forth sin." *And Jesus never even in a thought cherished a desire, or sanctioned an inclination, of the flesh.* Thus, in such flesh as ours, he was tempted in all points as we are, and yet without a taint of sin.

Where is the victory?

Galatians 5:16-17

¹⁶This I say then, *Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.* ¹⁷For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

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**come and we worship God every
Sabbath starting from
8:30am to Sabbath sundown**

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