



WE VALUE CONTENTMENT

Genesis 4:1-16 Philippians 4: 12-13 Matthew 20:1-15

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One of the theological words for the **10 Commandments** is the word “**Decalogue**”. It comes from the Greek language and means the “**Ten Words**”; it’s one way the Old Testament refers to the **10 Commandments**. The exact order of the **Ten Words** has been debated through the years.

Some Christian traditions break the first commandment into two, so the first commandment is “*Thou shall have no other gods*” and the second commandment is “*Thou shall have no graven images.*” They then combine the two “coveting” commandments into one. This is an Eastern church tradition which most Protestants today follow¹.

As Lutherans, our tradition is from the Western church. The first commandment is “*Thou shall have no other gods*”, and the verses about graven images helps to explain the First Commandment. The word order of the commandments about coveting indicate that they are separate, so we keep them separate and have the 9th and the 10th commandments -- both about *coveting*.

The Bible is not concerned about the numbering of the Commandments; the Bible is concerned that you follow them as you live your life in Christ!

Today we are at looking at the last two commandments, both that deal with “coveting.” **Coveting** is a **strong desire** for something that is not your own; it is a **sinful yearning** and **longing** for something someone else has. Coveting is **sinful ENVY**.

THE NINTH COMMANDMENT

You shall not covet your neighbor’s house.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God, so that we do not craftily seek to gain our neighbor’s inheritance or home, nor get it by a show of right, but help and serve him in keeping it.

¹ During the turbulent Reformation days, and as an overreaction, many protestant reformers jettisoned anything that appeared to be associated with Roman Catholicism. The western, Augustinian numbering of the Commandments appears to have been one of those things. Lutherans retained the western numbering of the commandments, because the numbering of the commandments did not threaten the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; and the western numbering is a legitimate interpretation of the Old Testament Ten Commandment texts.

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his cattle, nor anything that is his.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God, so that we do not tempt, force or coax away from our neighbor his wife or his workers, but urge them to stay and do their duty.

Coveting is a dangerous sin! Coveting is a deep-seated “**envy**” of something that someone else has.

Envy is a dangerous sin to get tangled up in. Like a weed, it will grow and grow and take over your heart and mind and influence your words and actions. Once envy takes root in your heart, it is hard to get it out. It can easily consume you. Envy is **even more dangerous** because it is a **secret sin** that lurks in your heart.

- † **Envy** leads to rivalries & dissension; it leads to gossip, slander, and resentment;
- † **Envy** leads to theft, murder, hatred, strife and malice.
- † **Envy** creates rivals out of friends; pits one brother against another; one worker against another; it divides nations
- † **Envy** is a denial of God's generosity and goodness in your own life.

Coveting and Envy is a sin of your heart; a corruption of your attitude; and a lack of love toward your neighbor: it's a rejection of God and His good gifts to you.

Envy is a **strong desire** that you benefit more than your neighbor; a **secret wish** that your neighbor will fail and you will succeed; Envy **actually rejoices** when something bad happens to someone else --- especially if that person is perceived to have “more” than you.

**COVETING AND ENVY are serious sins
and they leads to all kinds of other sins.**

Here is a sample of how the Bible talks about it:

- **ENVY** is an act of the sinful nature– one of those sins by which those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of Heaven. (Galatians 5:19ff)
- Jesus said that **ENVY** comes out of your heart and makes you unclean (Mark 7:20ff)
- The Proverbs say that **ENVY** rots the bones (Proverbs 14:30)
- And James says that where you have **ENVY** and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. (James 3:16)
- **ENVY** is what led Cain to kill his brother Abel (Genesis 4)
- St. Paul says that **ENVY** comes from a depraved mind. (Romans 1:29)

COVETING AND ENVY are serious sins!

If you are an envious person, then you need to get on top of it. The **NINTH AND THE TENTH COMMANDMENTS** are how you do! The **NINTH AND THE TENTH COMMANDMENTS**

condemn that desire within you, call you repent, lead you to confession. These commandments teach you to turn away from coveting and envy and confess them to God.

Christ forgives all sins; even these deep seated sins of covet and envy. He took them all to the cross, when He suffered and died to set you free from sin – Christ sets you free from envy; He releases you from coveting. **They are forgiven and they no longer have power over you.**

Through the forgiveness that we have in the Lord Jesus Christ, we learned to be **CONTENT** with the good gifts that God has give to us. We focus on what we have, not on what we don't have. *We thank God for His blessings to us rather than covet our neighbor's blessings.* **WE VALUE CONTENTMENT!** Here is how St. Paul taught it:

I have learned to be **content** whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned **the secret of being content** in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. **I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.**
Phil 4: 12-13

WE VALUE CONTENTMENT! Contentment comes from a *Latin word* that means to be “*satisfied*”. Contentment acknowledges God’s generosity and goodness in your life. Contentment trusts that God the Heavenly Father is caring for you and providing for you. Contentment means that you are *satisfied* with what you have, and that you are not wanting more; it’s a peace of mind about your life; it is humbly accepting who you are and what you have.

God’s will for you is that you do not covet, but that YOU ARE CONTENT.

Keep your lives free from the love of money and **be content with what you have**, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." Hebrews 13:5
But godliness with **contentment** is great gain. 1 Timothy 6:6

The basis of CONTENTMENT is the belief that *everything you have and everything you are is a gift from God’s good hand.* Who you are and what you have is God’s gift to you ... personally. God deals with you as an individual; He knows your name and your circumstances; He has provided for you and is at work in your life!

If you are **not content**, and are filled with covet and envy, then you are telling that God has not given you enough; that you are not satisfied, that you are lacking something; that your Heavenly Father has failed to properly provide for you. **Discontentment is sin.**

Coveting and Envy break the Commandments of God.
Coveting and Envy lead to all kinds of sin, shame and evil.

Sometimes the world we live in can make us forget God's blessings, and create discontentment in our hearts. We are bombarded by advertising and commercials that tell us that we need more and more, they create discontent within us; they tell us that we need all the latest and the greatest things. We are told to shop more; to buy more; and that having more and more is a good thing. **We are so overwhelmed with these kind of messages that it is easy to lose sight of all the blessings that you really do have!**

The way to combat envy, coveting and discontentment in your life is to rehearse God's care for you. Remind yourself of God's rich blessings to you.

Through faith in Christ, God has given you a new and clean heart; a mind that knows God's goodness; eyes that see God's blessings; hands that are grateful to God, and a spirit that is content with who you are in Christ and what you have from God the Father! In Christ, you are satisfied! You are content! By faith, you know and believe that God is very good, kind and generous to you:

- God has promised to provide your **daily bread**;
- He always **forgives** your sins
- He has given you **a body and a soul** and He preserves them
- He **protects** you from danger
- He **guards** you from evil
- He sends His **angels** to help you
- He has given you **family and friends**
- He has given you **vocations**: duties and responsibilities in life
- He has promised you a **home in Heaven**
- You live in a **country** that is Free!
- You have more **physical blessings** than almost all the people who have ever lived throughout history!
- The list could go on and on!

They way to combat covet, envy, and discontentment is to take time to think through God's blessings to you!

The 9th and 10th Commandments warn us of the dangers of envy, coveting and discontentment. These are serious sins that always lead to other sins; if you get tangled up in them they will ultimately destroy your faith.

Rather than envy, coveting and discontentment, the Lord teaches us to **VALUE CONTENTMENT!** The Lord knows you, has blessed you, and is at work in your life.

What else could you possibly want? AMEN!