

The Adventure of Not Coveting
“I’d Rather Have Jesus”

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Deuteronomy 5:21

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Need introduction . . . like eating just one potato chip . . .

The 10th commandment differs greatly from the other nine in that it has to do with an inner disposition more than an outward act . . .

That is, it has to do with the desire, and not the practical steps to satisfy those desires . . .¹

There is a progression from violence . . . to not breaking wedding vows . . . to not stealing . . . to not slandering another and ruining his/her reputation . . .

What has been manifested in the actions and words is now hidden in thoughts and cravings . . .

To covet another’s wife, and in the context, Moses is addressing the men, so this is directly applicable to men, but it does apply to women, to wives, also . . .

To covet another’s spouse is tantamount to adultery . . .

To covet another’s property is akin to theft . . .

God is raising the issue of sin and disobedience from the level of mere act to that of attitude, thought, desire . . .

“But I only thought about it . . .” does not lessen the sinfulness . . .

¹Merrill

Word for “covet” = same used in Gen. 3:6 for Eve’s desire for the fruit . . . an object that did not belong to her . . .

The sin of Eve was not just eating the fruit, but her heart’s desire for the fruit that led her to eating it . . .

She willingly decided to dwell on something that did not belong to her . . .

And she sinned . . . not only because Satan was there tempting her . . . but also because she coveted what did not belong to her . . .

And, of course, Satan was there . . . and tempting her . . . and he got her to dwell on the fact that it didn’t belong to her . . . and that it should have belonged to her . . .

So she took it, and ate it, and gave it to Adam and he, also, did eat . . .

But that sin did not begin with the taking and eating . . .

Her sin began the same place your sin and my sin begin . . . in our heart . . .

She coveted something that did not belong to her . . . and was not her’s to take . . .

Jesus said that all sin begins in the heart . . . But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person.

For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.

(Mat 15:18-19)

the issue is our hearts . . .

And that is what God is addressing here . . .

In fact, all the other 9 commandments are wrapped up in this . . .

That is the root of the problem . . . is in our hearts . . .

We want to lie . . . we want to steal . . . we want to disobey God . . .

And maybe its premeditated over a long time . . . or maybe it's a split-second decision . . . but however it's done, we have decided in our hearts to act a certain way . . . before we act that way . . .

No one accidently steals . . . no one accidentally commits adultery . . . no one just accidently disobeys a parent's direct instructions . . .

No, the truth of the matter is, you sin because **you want** to sin . . . and that desire begin in your heart . . .

So God says . . . REREAD v. 21 . . .

Jesus warns us of this desire to take and to have what does not belong to us . . . And he said to them, "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

(Luk 12:15)

Paul echos that same idea in 1 timothy, when he addresses people who strive to be wealthy . . .

But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

(1Ti 6:9)

In his day, John D. Rockefeller was one of the richest men in the world. For all practical purposes, his money was virtually limitless. Once, an interviewer asked him, "How much money is enough?"

Rockefeller replied, "Just a little bit more!"

Like any human appetite . . . love of money never satisfies . . . it always need more . . .

Down thru the pages of the Bible, we are told time and again about men and women who broke the 10th commandment . . . and were ruined because of their sin . . .

Achan confessed that he saw the beautiful treasures of Jericho, that when I saw among the spoil a beautiful cloak from Shinar, and 200 shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels, **then I coveted** them and took them. And see, they are hidden in the earth inside my tent, with the silver underneath."

(Jos 7:21)

The wealthy and unjust oppressors in Israel during the time of Micah so desired the property of their neighbors that they "**covet** fields and seize them, and houses, and take them away; they oppress a man and his house, a man and his inheritance. (Mic 2:2)" in direct violation of the 10th commandment . . .

The inner feeling of envy and greed in the heart leads to breaking any or all of the 10 commandments . . . wether it is killing, adultery, stealing, false witness.

May I remind you of King Ahab who **coveted** Naboth's vineyard and thru buying off two witnesses, he had Naboth killed and seized the vineyard . . .

King David committed adultery . . . after **deciding** to commit adultery . . . and then decided to commit cold-blooded murder in an attempt to cover up his adultery . . .

King David's son Amnon violated his ½ sister Tamar after deciding and planing to do it . . .

Tamar's brother, Absalom, killed Amnon in premeditated cold-blooded murder . . . after deciding in his heart to kill Amnon without a trial, without a jury . . . it was Absalom's decision alone . . . and he made the decision in his heart . . .

On and on the Bible records for us the most awful crimes and sins . . . and lays the blame for those on our sinful hearts . . . hearts which are never satisfied . . . and always want more . . .

The Bible is extremely clear . . . we sin because we want to sin . . . We are not victims, we are not basically good people with a few flaws . . .

The Bible message screams the exact opposite . . . we sin because we want to . . . and we want to because inside of us is wickedness, evil, sinfulness . . .

Our hearts are sinfully wicked . . . The heart is deceitful above all things . . . Jer 17:9

The truth of the matter is . . . that is the state of our hearts . . .

And there is nothing you can do to stop it . . .

In fact, in the book of Romans, Paul says specifically that this is why salvation is a gift from God . . . never earned nor deserved . . . b/c we could never earn it or deserve it . . .

God is holy . . . He never wants what is wrong . . . He never breaks His Word . . .

And He demands from us that very same thing . . . that we walk before Him in purity . . .

And we can't do that . . .

In fact, Paul says that the Law of God showed him his sin . . .

Paul uses this 10th commandment to confess, "What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet. But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. (Rom 7:8)"

God says, "don't do this . . ." and the first thing we start to do is try to figure out how we can get away with it . . .

That ought to tell us something . . . we have a major heart problem . . .

We want what doesn't belong to us . . .

We want what someone else has . . .

And if the truth is told, when we get that shiny new thing . . . it won't be long until we are not satisfied with that . . . and start looking for the next thing . . .

Left to ourselves, we are condemned to utter failure . . .

B/c God says, "do not covet . . ." and if we are honest, we cannot stop . . .

The issue is not the new shiny thing . . .

The issue is our hearts . . .

That's the truth . . . you are completely, utterly powerless to obey this command in and of yourself . . .

And there is a solution . . . from scripture . . . but you may not

like it . . .

I'm serious . . .

Here it is . . . all you need, all you ever need, all you will ever need . . . is Jesus Christ. . .

That's it . . .

And I know it sounds like a no-brainer . . . but it really is quite difficult to grasp . . .

In fact, the apostle Paul tells us he had to LEARN this . . .

As he tells us in the book of Philippians . . .

Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. (Phi 4:11-12)

Paul says . . . "this didn't come easy . . . I wasn't zapped with this one day out of the clear blue skies . . ."

"And then I had times when God was giving me an abundance . . . I had food . . . and money . . . and friends . . ."

"And then there were those other times, when God put me in situations where I was brought low . . . and no money . . . had no food . . . had no where to turn for help . . . and I was starving . . . and praying to God for food . . . and he didn't answer me . . . He gave me hunger . . . and lack . . . and want . . . and I prayed and I prayed and I prayed for deliverance, and help, and food . . ."

And God gave me nothing . . . so I might learn that He is all I need . . .

Not that I go to him to get things from Him . . .

But rather, He Himself is all I need . . .

If I have Jesus . . . and food . . . wonderful . . .

But if I have Jesus and no food . . . that is also wonderful, b/c He is all I need . . .

Listen, if you wanted to today, you could go home, turn on your TV and see people telling you that you can use Jesus to get things in life . . .

Get money . . .

Get health . . .

Get out of debt . . .

Get perfect little angels as children . . .

Get the perfect marriage . . .

As if God was the gray-headed grandfather in the sky who wants to dote on you and give you your best in life now . . .

Don't you see, that if you had that health . . . and money . . . and all that, it wouldn't satisfy you at all? You're not content now . . . you won't be content then . . .

B/c the issue is not the things . . . the issue is in your heart . . .

And your heart is wicked above all things . . . and it is never satisfied . . .

How on earth does that line up with the Scripture demands of having only food and clothing, we are content?

How on earth can we delude ourselves with the idea that Jesus came to make us happy, and healthy, and answer all our prayer . . .

When He told us time and again in His Word . . .

And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."
(Mar 8:34-38)

what on earth are we doing thinking that Jesus came to meet our physical needs . . . and make our life comfortable . . . and make us happy . . .

When He told us from the get go that He was going to do the exact opposite . . .

If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.

For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of

the Father and of the holy angels.
(Luk 9:24-26)

Jesus is not offering any of us a life of enjoyment . . . of ease . . . or perfect health . . . of marriages and children w/o problems . . .

But what He offers us, instead of all those things WHICH DON'T SATISFY ANYWAY is a relationship with Him . . .

And that is the only thing that really does satisfy . . .

The book of Proverbs tells us . . . One who is full loathes honey, but to one who is hungry everything bitter is sweet.
(Pro 27:7)

Its like you go to Shady Maple . . . and are really hungry . . . and Shady Maple has this neat all you can eat buffet . . . and you ate until you were full . . .

One who is full loathes honey . . . even the sweetest thing is just unappetizing . . .

But to the one who is hungry, everything bitter is sweet . . .

Paul said that he would gladly take any situation in life . . .

Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith-- **that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,**
(Phi 3:8-10)

just to know Him . . .

Really know Him . . .

Give me Jesus . . . that is enough . . . have enough food . . . have not enough food . . . doesn't matter . . . as long as I have Jesus . . . and really know Him . . .

Wonderful marriage . . . great . . . marriage that is difficult? As long as I am learning more about Jesus, and the power of His sufferings, so be it . . . I want Him . . .

Regardless of the cost . . . b/c He is worthy any loss I have to suffer . . .

Be in good health? That's nice and all . . . but I want Jesus . . . & if knowing Him takes Him breaking my body down so I learn to rely on Him? So be it . . . I want Him . . . I want to know Him . . .

to the full, even honey is bitter . . . but to the hungry, even bitter tastes good . . .

If you had a walk with Jesus, you would not be tempted to go after all these other things in the first place . . .

To find your purpose and meaning in life in Jesus Christ . . .

To be so walking with Him . . . to be so filled with Him . . . that the trinkets of life offer us nothing . . .

That is the only way to keep the 10th commandment . . .

Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"

(Heb 13:5-6)

the Lord is my helper . . . if God be for us, who can be against us?

"I asked God for strength, that I might achieve;
"I was made weak, that I may learn humbly to obey."
"I asked God for health, that I may do great things;"
"I was given infirmity, that I might do better things."
"I asked for riches, that I may be happy."
"I was give poverty, that I may be wise."
"I asked for power, that I might have the praise of men."
"I was given weakness, that I might feel the need of God."
"I asked for all things, that I might enjoy life."
"I was given life, that I might enjoy all things."
"I got nothing I asked for but everything I hoped for."
"I am, among all men, most richly blessed."

My friend, all you & I need is Jesus . . .

To know Him . . . to walk with Him . . . to love and adore Him . . .

That relationship must be the priority . . . b/c it is the only one that can satisfy . . .

So, Christian, just how much time did you spend with Jesus last week?

Or did your Bible remain unopened, unread, and ignored?

How much of His Word showed up in your life?

If any will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me . . .

Salvation . . .