

Deliverance From the Spirit of Covetousness

The **Ten Commandments** are not fictitious. We are never given the option to pick and choose our way through the Bible and decide what suits us and what does not suit us. **God's Word** is true and infallible in every way, and every word is inspired by the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16). This is why nothing in life can be acceptable if it is not biblically correct. Way back in the beginning, **almighty God** spoke to His people and issued a solemn warning—a warning so important it is spelled out in detail as we read it in His Word.

Perhaps a closer look at the word **covet** will help us realize why God would consider it so vital and so important in His set of commands to His people. The transliteration of the Hebrew word sounds like *khaw-mad*, which makes me think of an animal clawing madly after something it desperately wants to have. The direct meaning of the word carries with it the idea of **lust**. Ironically, the word itself speaks to taking delight in something—but in the wrong way.

A similar thought could concern the issue of **money**. God's Word never condemns the making of money nor the ability to have money. It is the **love of money** that is “the root of all evil” (1 Tim. 6:10), because when we love money, it can occupy an unhealthy and sinful place in our hearts to the point that it takes the place of our **love for Christ**.

God is making it abundantly clear that the thoughts and desires of the heart do not escape attention. A strong longing to have what belongs to someone else is wrong and sinful. This 10th commandment also serves as a reminder that the previous nine commandments are not simply just a list of external acts that stand by themselves. God looks on the **heart**. He sees us, He knows us—and, praise God, He really loves us!

Writing to the church at Rome, in Romans 7:7, Paul made it clear that his understanding of the seriousness of coveting came from God's clear statement that it is sin. Jesus certainly did not beat around the bush when a man asked Him to demand that his brother divide his inheritance with him. The man must have recoiled as Jesus told the parable of the rich fool (Luke 12:13-21) and warned him to "take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses" (Luke 12:15).

When God created man, He did so with **divine purpose**. Every person was formed according to God's design, with the very image of God etched into each life. The couple we see in the Garden of Eden were originally made to look like God, to love like God and to live with God. Their sin shattered every semblance of fellowship between themselves and a righteous and holy God. Sin, in fact, made it impossible for them to look like God and love like God, and it certainly prevented them from ever living with God.

But God provided the way for man to have peace with Him and be reconciled once again. He loved them so very much that He gave His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to come to this earth and take on Himself the sin of all who would believe in His name.

This is my hope. This is our hope. This is your hope. Without our risen Savior, we would be lost in our trespasses and sins. When we confess our sin to Jesus and repent of that sin before Him, God, by His grace and through the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross, enters our hearts and lives by His Spirit and saves us.

And yet the **war** between the flesh and the Spirit goes on. Paul knew this and spoke of the **battle** between the lust of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5. Perhaps this is why the sin of covetousness represents the climactic expression of the Ten Commandments. The propensity of sinful man is to desire anything and everything that has not been

given by God. Speaking to the church at Philippi, Paul implored believers to be content with what they have and with who they are (Phil. 4:12).

This commandment given to Moses on the top of Mount Sinai was designed to help us realize just how unique we all are in His eyes. In a viciously competitive world, where so many people jostle for position and power, it is so wonderful to remember that God made us unique to His design. Is it not too wonderful to know that God loves us just the way we are? His strong command here really ought to encourage every believer. So many spend years trying to be someone else. Thousands of dollars are spent trying to look like another, and the heart of all people has such a propensity to make heroes out of others. Even the church can so easily be caught up in covetousness. When this happens, jealousy arises, competitiveness seeps into the body of Christ and many end up losing their focus on Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Perhaps you may be suffering from the sin of covetousness. May I suggest you consider eight simple steps? These steps will help you respond to all the Holy Spirit is convicting you about—and you will be set free.

First, confess your sin to Jesus. Just like that!

Second, take inventory of your life before God. Perhaps write down any areas of discontent.

Third, determine to be satisfied.

Fourth, refresh your vision—to be all you can be before God as He made you.

Fifth, develop a new strategy built around full acceptance of the blessings with which God has blessed you.

Sixth, strive to open and explore all opportunities. Remember, ambition is a good thing when given to God.

Seventh, accept God's decisions for your life.

Eighth, move forward in contented action.

In short, be satisfied with who you are. Be content with what God has given you. Be grateful in all things for your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

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Scripture quotations are taken from The Holy Bible, New King James Version.

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