

WORD

"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 is your neighbor's." **EXODUS 20:17**

Coveting is an intense lust or longing for something that belongs to another person. The tenth commandment warns against such wrong desires, which disregard the rights of others. Other commandments prohibit certain actions, such as theft or murder, but the tenth focuses on the state of our hearts and minds. Covetousness is a result of envy, which "makes the bones rot" or destroys us from the inside (Proverbs 14:30). If we allow covetousness to dwell in our hearts and minds, it can lead to hatred and resentment towards others who have what we desire, rather than looking to God for all we need and desire. In this lesson, we will learn about what it means to covet and, by the grace of God, how we can overcome it.

1 Covetousness is idolatry.

For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

EPHESIANS 5:5

Covetousness distracts us from focusing on God. God commanded the Israelites not to lust after and set their hearts on their neighbor's possessions, because they were to set their hearts on God alone (Exodus 20:2,3). He is the only One who can satisfy our desires. What is an idolater? How can a strong desire for possessions lead to idolatry?

2 Covetousness can be overcome through Christ.

⁵Keep 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." ⁶So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"

HEBREWS 13:5,6

Jesus' sacrifice assures us that God is willing and able to provide for everything we need. Our hope and security are not in money or anything else we covet, but in Jesus Christ who gave His life for us. We can overcome covetousness because we know that God is the only One who can ultimately satisfy us. His grace helps us overcome sin. According to Hebrews 13:6, why can we confidently say that God is our helper?

3 Contentment is an antidote to covetousness.

¹¹Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. ¹²I 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. **PHILIPPIANS 4:11,12**

Covetousness shows that we aren't content with what God has given us. When we covet, we are placing our sense of fulfillment on what we don't have, always wanting more and never being satisfied. In contrast, the Apostle Paul was content in every *circumstance*. He was confident that in Jesus, he had all he could ever need. According to Philippians 4:11, what did Paul learn to do in every situation he faced? Is it possible for us to do the same? Why?