

Purity of the Heart

Chapter 42

I. The tenth commandment

17 **“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male slave, or his female slave, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”**

A. The meaning: Old Testament

1. “Covet” = *hamad* (Heb.) = to desire (can be positive or negative).
 - a. 10th Com. = the negative: selfish, ungoverned desire contrary to God’s will.
 - b. Example: Gen. 3—Eve saw the forbidden fruit and *hamad* it.

B. The meaning: New Testament

1. “Covet” (in the Septuagint) = *epithymeo* = to have a strong desire for; a longing.
 - a. Used two times in the N.T.
 - Romans 7:7

7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? Far from it! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, “You shall not covet.”

-- Romans 13:9

9 For this, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

C. The bottom line meaning.

1. To desire and long for something that is not rightfully yours.

Hamad can be used to describe one’s great desire and recognition for and of beauty...or as a desire to desire something sinful. Why is *hamad* in that negative sense so harmful? What does “coveting” do that is so damaging?

D. Ethical decision making when it comes to desires.

1. Is this desire based on morally right planning for the future acquisition of some

item, or is it based on morally wrong longings? **Examples?**

2. Is this desire for something God wants you to have and has given you the ability to obtain it? **(Examples both right and wrong)**

Buying a house, a position in church leadership,

3. Can you take some morally right actions to begin to move toward obtaining the thing you desire, or are there no morally right initial actions?

You have \$50.00 to your name, your credit is bad, your monthly bills exceed your income by 25%, you don't have a car but you "need" one.

II. The opposite duty

If negative coveting is a prohibition by God and harmful to your life and to your relationship with God, what is the antidote?

A. Contentment

When God prohibits something because it is wrong, there is an opposite responsibility that is then morally right which is what we should seek to do.

1. Philippians 4:10-20
2. 1 Timothy 6:6-8

6 But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. 7 For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it, either. 8 If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.

III. The broader implication of the 9th commandment.

Why is this commandment key for a "pure heart"?

A. **Where your treasure is, so shall your heart be...**(Matthew 6:21)

God wants our hearts, and the only way He can receive them is if they are pure!

1. Psalm 24:3-4

Who may ascend onto the hill of the Lord?

And who may stand in His holy place?

4 One who has clean hands and a pure heart,

Who has not lifted up his soul to deceit

And has not sworn deceitfully.

2. Mathew 5:8

8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

3. Revelation 2:23

23 And I will kill her children with plague, and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.

IV. Reasons for the command.

- A. Coveting implies that we do not trust God.
- B. Coveting implies that we disagree with God's laws.
- C. Coveting implies that we dislike God's provisions for our lives.
- D. Coveting implies that we want something more than God.
- E. Coveting implies that we are missing the purpose of our possessions.
- F. On a human level, coveting is horribly destructive.

Consider the tragic sin of coveting by David regarding Uriah's wife.

V. The wonderful benefits of this command.

- A. It nips sin in the bud.

If you do not covet your neighbors wife, you won't seek her!

- B. It draws us to God.

It teaches us to focus not on earthly things but on godly things. It really is an exchange of worlds

- C. It drives us to Christ for help.

- 1. Romans 7:7-8; 7:24-25

7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? Far from it! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "You shall not covet." 8 But sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead.

24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from [a]the body of this death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

- D.. It promotes peace, love and unity in the family of God.

All the definitions of love in 1st Corinthians 13 are absent of coveting.

- E. It reminds us that wealth does not itself produce happiness.

Closing Thoughts

Last week I listened to Francis Schaeffer in his classic *A Christian Manifesto* which was recorded back in 1982.

- Embryonic stage of humanism in our culture.
- The result of taking Christianity out of the culture: education, media, market place.
- Christianity was replaced with “*materialism*” or better, godlessness.
- Result?
 1. The removal of a “creator”
 2. Remove the creator you remove purpose.
 3. Remove purpose you remove absolutes.
 4. Remove absolutes you have moral relativity.
 5. Remove moral relativity you have no ethics.
 6. Remove ethics you have total chaos!

The million dollar question, *How then shall we live?*

What is the Christian to do?

How do we live in a world whose ethic is diametrically opposed to ours?

How do you see the future? Hope?