

## TEN COMMANDMENTS SERIES: COMMANDMENT TEN

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### A. INTRODUCTION

1. The days of my youth were a little different than people I grew up with.
  - a. Although we lived in middle-class suburbs, my upbringing was more poor-urban.
  - b. My father grew up in challenging circumstances and wanted to make sure that his kids understood the value of hard work and grit.
  - c. At young ages, my siblings and I were put to work; but these weren't ordinary chores.
    - 1) My father started his own construction business, so we worked on job crews.
    - 2) Inevitably, we were always taught to do work that no kids would do.
    - 3) I'll admit that there was an intentionality about teaching us to perform tasks.
    - 4) So if we were, say, learning to use a power tool, we were taught safety . . .
    - 5) " . . . wear goggles, use your work gloves, triple-check everything."
2. But I noticed that, whenever my dad taught us something, he wouldn't do the same.
  - a. He would throw caution to the wind—no goggles or glove and go way to fast.
  - b. Since I, like most kids, was a legalist when it came to adult actions, I brought this up.
  - c. "Hey dad," I'd say. "You're not using that tool like you told me I had to do."
  - d. He simply responded: "that's because I've been doing this for years."
  - e. And then there was this simple phrase he'd offer: "**Do what I say, not what I do.**"
3. This morning we arrive at the conclusion of the Ten Commandments.
  - a. I'll admit that I find this final commandment fascinating.
  - b. Even though it seems like it the ones before it, it's actually not like it at all.
  - c. In fact, it reminds me of my dad's words: the difference between "saying" & "doing."

### B. TEXT

**Exodus 20:17** *"You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."*

1. This command is often misunderstood because we ASSUME we know what it needs.
  - a. We need to make it clear at the beginning: this commandment is not about theft.
    - 1) This was already forbidden in commandment eight.
    - 2) We think it's about theft because the examples seem to imply taking.
  - b. This command is really about covetousness.
    - 1) Biblical scholar William Barklay defined it as:  
*"the unbridled longing to possess more, the uncontrollable desire to possess things forbidden, and which should not be desired at all"*
    - 2) While it seems basic, I believe it is actually one of the more complex commands.
2. This tenth commandment actually serves as the ultimate summary of the Decalogue.
  - a. This commandment is telling us to change our minds; it speaks to an internal change.
    - 1) The previous nine commandments speak of outward actions.
      - a) HAVE NO OTHER GODS, DON'T MAKE IMAGES, DON'T MISUSE GOD'S NAME
      - b) REMEMBER THE SABBATH, HONOR YOUR PARENTS, DON'T MURDER
      - c) DON'T COMMIT ADULTERY, DON'T STEAL, DON'T LIE
    - 2) Can you see the difference? Covetousness exists within your mind.
    - 3) The actions connected to covetousness can result in those previously listed sins.
  - b. So basically, the Lord is commanding us to guard our attitudes.
  - c. It makes sense: if I long to possess what another has (whether spouse or possession) ...
  - d. It reveals two things about the way I actually perceive the kingdom of God.
    - 1) First, I lack contentment with what God has allowed me to steward.
    - 2) Second, I question what God has permitted others to steward.
  - e. My WANTING is leverage that can pull me away from worshipping the Lord.

3. While it's helpful to see the covet command in Exodus 20, let's look at Jesus.
  - a. In his ministry, the Pharisees were always questioning Jesus' view of the Law.
  - b. While they were obsessed with the **actions**, Jesus wanted to discuss **motivations**.
    - 1) Remember Jesus talking about the commandment against murder? **Matthew 5:22**  
 "But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment."  
 \*Jesus made the murder commandment a means to look introspectively.
    - 2) When discussing the commandment against adultery in **Matthew 5:28**  
 "I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery w/her in his heart."  
 \*Again, Jesus is as concerned about the heart as he is the action.
  - c. Our outward actions are merely reflections of our inward thoughts.
    - 1) We are called to think preventatively, as it says in **Proverbs 4:23**  
 "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."
4. It's important to recognize that God cares not only about our actions, but our thoughts.
  - a. I've taught before about right actions (**ORTHOPRAXY**) & right thoughts (**ORTHODOXY**)
  - b. We need to find balance in how we view the way of the Lord.
  - c. We need to both *think* and *act* properly to become fully functioning Christ-followers.

### C. CONCLUSION

1. Again, this wraps up our months-long study of the Ten Commandments.
  - a. Reaching the end of our journey, I'm hoping you see the commands differently.
  - b. This study has helped me to think more deeply about how I relate to God.
  - c. Many of us prefer a libertarian approach to faith.
    - 1) There's a popular sentiment floating around the church today that speaks to this:
    - 2) "Christianity isn't about rules, it's about relationship."
    - 3) Though well-intentioned, I don't think it speaks well about true Christianity.
2. In **John 14:15**, Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commands."
  - a. So in order to have relationship (love), Jesus asks for obedience to rules (commands).
  - b. This ought to right-size any tension exists here.
  - c. Keeping the commandments is a response of love to Lord.