



The Righteous Shall Live By Faith

A Study of the Ten Commandments

Lesson 11

Coveting

REVIEW:

1. God gave the first commandment to teach He is to be our greatest treasure.
2. He alone is worthy to worship.
3. Our darkened hearts get things backward—Worshiping the creation instead of the creator.
4. We desire to worship anything more than we worship God.
5. We need a new heart that comes from God.

Matthew 6:19–24 (ESV)

¹⁹ “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. ²² “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, ²³ but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! ²⁴ “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

Thinking about the text

What kind of treasures do we lay up for ourselves on earth? (What do our darkened hearts love and serve?)

What is wrong with laying up treasures on earth?

What does it mean “to lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven”?

How is laying up treasures on earth instead of treasures in heaven getting things backward?

What does “where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” mean?

Why can’t we serve two masters?

The Tenth Commandment is about the heart that treasures the creation—the things that God has made—rather than treasuring God. It is about laying up treasures on earth rather than treasures in heaven.

Exodus 20:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ “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.”

Thinking about the text

What does it mean to “covet”? Give examples of “coveting?”



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Coveting Shoes Illustration

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To you want something that belongs to someone else very badly—to want something so much that it is the thing that you think most about and plan to get somehow.

Coveting is more than just thinking or saying, “I’d like a pair of sneakers like some of my friends have” but, “I MUST have a pair of sneakers like my friends have. I won’t be happy until I get them. I don’t want a different kind; I want THAT kind.”

It is begging your mom and dad for them and pouting if you don’t get them.

Coveting a certain kind of sneakers can cause you to break all other commandments.

FALSE WITNESS—How could coveting cause you to lie?

Answer... If you tell your parents that “all the other kids” have sneakers like that; if you tell them that the sneakers you have hurt your feet when they really don’t.

STEAL—How could coveting cause you to steal?

Answer... If you take someone else’s sneakers; if you beg and pout which steals your parent’s joy.

COMMIT ADULTERY—How could coveting cause you to be unfaithful?

Answer... If you only play with kids who have “cool” sneakers; if you make fun of a friend who doesn’t have the “cool” sneakers; if you tell your friends “My parents are mean because they won’t get you those sneakers.”

MURDER—How could coveting cause you to murder?

Answer... If you get angry at the kids who have those sneakers; if you are angry at your parents when they won’t get you those sneakers.

HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER—How could coveting cause you to dishonor your parents or authorities?

Answer... If you argue with your parents about the sneakers and be disrespectful in the way you talk to them; if you disrespect your parents’ advice when they tell you that the sneakers are too important to you.

SABBATH DAY—How could coveting cause you to disrespect the Sabbath?

Answer... If you sit through the church service thinking about how to get the sneakers instead of thinking about God; if you can’t rest your mind because you are constantly thinking about those sneakers.

NAME OF THE LORD—How could coveting cause you to take the name of the Lord in vain?

Answer... If you are angry at God because He did not give you parents who would buy you those sneakers; if you grumble about what you think is the unfairness of God.

A CARVED IMAGE—How could coveting cause you to worship God inappropriately?

Answer... If you decide that God is a God who does not care about little things; if you see God as mean and harsh rather than loving.



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Coveting is not Content

Having other gods is at the root of coveting. We covet because other things take God's place in our hearts—we love the creation rather than the Creator.

God's law reaches into the most secret parts of our souls, and into the desires of our hearts. The Tenth Commandment is really the same as the First Commandment. It tells us to love God most of all. It tells us to desire God as our greatest treasure rather than treasuring other things more than we treasure Him.

James 4:1–4 (ESV)

¹ What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? ² You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. ³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. ⁴ You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Thinking about the text

How does this passage show that what we want controls our behavior? Can you give an example of this?

Why does James call us "adulterous people?"

Why does friendship with the world make us an enemy of God?

PROCESS OF COVETING

DARKENED HEART—Because we have darkened hearts, our natural desires are for the wrong things.

WRONG DESIRE— A wrong desire "pops" into our heads. Satan brings these to us constantly, and our darkened hearts are inclined to embrace them.

DWELL ON WRONG DESIRE— We keep thinking about the wrong desire and the more we think about it, the more we want it.

SURRENDER THE WILL— We make a decision to "go for it." We make a decision to get what we want.

MAKE A PLAN— Make a plan to get what we want. Decide how we will get our desire.

ACT— Try to get what we desire. The desire becomes an action or a deed.

God is our greatest treasure—He who has God, has enough!