

INSIGHT

But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead.

Rom 7:8

When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; {14} but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. {15} Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

James 1:13-15

Selfish, self-gratifying, lustful, enticing desires. These desires are the center of what the tenth commandment warns about. This commandment strikes at the very core of the desires that entice and lead us to sin and to break all the commands of God.

The tenth commandment is the only commandment that does not deal particularly with an action or lack thereof. It deals more with attitudes of the heart. It is a command directed at the core of our desire for self-satisfaction. It addresses the sinful nature and condemns it. No one can escape the judgment of the tenth commandment because it basically tells everyone that they are selfish, self-seeking beings.

Every sinful act or thought can be traced back to covetousness. The nature of the flesh is to be covetous. The only time we are not being covetous is when we are loving. God's nature is to love. God IS LOVE. People, on the other hand, are covetous. The flesh IS covetous. This is the reason why Paul teaches:

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what

you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.

Gal 5:16-18

The Heart of God: The Tenth Commandment The Envy Trap

Key Text:

Exodus 20:17

"You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

Theme:

The Hebrew word for *covet* (*hamad*) refers to an enthusiastic desire. The word itself is morally neutral. That is, you can covet great things as well as bad things. You can have an overwhelming desire to serve God or a brother in need. However, when your desires turn toward serving self; when you are enticed by the flesh to gratify your sinful nature and you yearn to please your heart, then your *covetousness* leads you away from the Spirit and into sin. And the results of coveting in this manner are always morally wrong because they lead us away from God. The end result? DEATH.

Application:

Here are some helpful suggestions:

1. **Don't think about what you could HAVE...**
Think about what you do have and use it to glorify God. If you don't have it you probably don't need it. You're doing fine without it.
2. **Don't think about what you could DO...**
Think about what you are doing! What are you doing at this very time with your life? Are you using your life, or are you being used by it?
3. **Focus your energies on someone in need...**
redirect your steps toward brothers and sisters that need your company and your fellowship. Focus your energies on putting your flesh to work for the Kingdom instead of for yourself.
4. **See yourself as God's agent who manages blessings for the good of all...** Your business is to give, not to receive; to build up, not to destroy; to

make peace, not to divide. Know your place in God's Kingdom!

May the Lord richly bless you!

SERMON OUTLINE

"The Envy Trap"

Introduction: Last Week

1. The ninth commandment dealt with the importance of moral speech!
2. False testimony can lead astray a whole nation (*Nu 13:26-14:4*)
3. God's desire for His people to speak faithful words (*Mal. 2:4-9*)
4. Our speech should be that for building up (*Eph 4:22ff*)
5. The world glorifies lies and compromise: Do not fall in its trap!

I. Tenth Commandment: Moral Thoughts

Exodus 20:17

"You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

A. Root of the whole problem!

1. This command strikes at the root
 - a. Commands 5-9 deals with externals: forbids actions that injure your neighbor!
 - b. The tenth deals with the internal: pledging all of one's energies to self-gratification!
 - covetousness is the root of the malignant tumor known as "sin"
 - In it is the sting of death!
2. Jesus explains the root of the problem (*Matt. 15:17-20a*)
 - a. What proceeds from heart is polluted (*Jer. 17:9*)
 - b. The violation of the Law stems here!
 1. Murder, adultery, theft, falsehood, etc.

B. Examples of covetousness

1. Material Greed: King Ahab (*1 Kings 21:1-16*)
 - prior to murder and theft was covetousness
2. Lust: King David (*2 Sam. 11:1ff*)
 - prior to the adultery, murder and theft was covetousness
3. Leech: A sluggard (*Prov. 21:25-26*)

II. Conclusion: Paul's Personal Confession: *Rom. 7,8*

1. Covetousness made apparent by the Law
2. Plug into the power: Jesus Christ!

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Warm-up:

Name the form of success that is most attractive to you from this list: money, athletic ability, intelligence, physical attractiveness, fame, power, or some other. Why does it attract you?

See To It

Romans 7:1-8:6

Here's a test: *Until you get to question 1 of next section, no matter what happens, promise not to scratch your nose or any other part of your head. There is a purpose for this!*

1. **Read Romans 7:1-8:6.** What law was Paul referring to when he said: "Is the law sin?" How do you know? Explain from the Scriptures.
2. What did the law reveal to Paul? What does the law reveal to you personally?
3. Explain verses 9,10. What did Paul mean when said: "I was alive apart from the law"?
4. What does a "No Trespassing" or a "Wet Pain" sign promote us to do? What is Paul's point in Romans 7?

OK. Scratch your itch. Paul's point is proven!

Seeing It Closer

1. Is Paul saying that it is all right to continue to live the way we want to, since Law puts us to death?
2. What is the only solution to the problem of covetousness in our lives? Who can make a difference and how? Can our own strength change our hearts?
3. How has God's Holy Spirit worked to transform and renew your mind?

Getting It Together

Only those who follow Christ can be saved from this wretched thing called *envy*. But to follow Him is much more than being baptized, going to church, and having

people think well of you. It is emptying yourself, giving everything up for Jesus!