

Follow Up on Coveting Discussion June 19 Bible Study

1. There is nothing wrong with wanting nice things for yourself or those you love.
2. There is nothing wrong with praying for these things.
3. **Psalm 37:4 (KJV)** Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. – (Barnes) - The meaning here is, that we should seek our happiness in God - in his being, his perfections, his friendship, his love. And he shall give thee the desires of thine heart - literally, the "asking's," or the "requests" of thy heart. What you really "desire" will be granted to you. That is, (a) the fact that you seek your happiness in him will regulate your desires, so that you will be "disposed" to ask only those things which it will be proper for him to grant; and (b) the fact that you do find your happiness in him will be a reason why he will grant your desires.

90

Exodus - Exodus 20:17 (KJV) Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbour's.

The Tenth Commandment: —

I. IT FORBIDS COVETOUSNESS IN GENERAL: "Thou shalt not covet." It is lawful to use the world; yea, and to desire so much of it as may —

1. Keep us from the temptation of poverty: "Give me not poverty, lest I steal, and take the name of my God in vain."
2. As may enable us to honor God with works of mercy: "Honor the Lord with thy substance." But all the danger is when the world gets into the heart. The water is useful for the sailing of the ship; all the danger is when the water gets into the ship; so the fear is when the world gets into the heart.

Bibillus

91

Exodus - Exodus 20:17 (KJV) Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbour's.

What is it to covet? There are two words in the Greek which set forth the nature of covetousness —

1. *Pleonexia*, which signifies an "insatiable desire of getting the world." ...
2. *Philargyria*, which signifies an "inordinate love of the world." He may be said to be covetous, not only who gets the world unrighteously, but who loves the world inordinately. But, for a more full answer to the question, What is it to covet? I shall show you in six particulars when a man may be said to be given to covetousness.

1. When his thoughts are wholly taken up about the world. →

Bibillus

92

Exodus - Exodus 20:17 (KJV) Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbour's.

2. A man may be said to be given to covetousness when he takes more pains for the getting of earth than for the getting of heaven. The Gauls, who were an ancient people of France, after they had tasted of the sweet wine of the Italian grape, inquired after the country, and never rested till they had arrived at it; so a covetous man, having had a relish of the world, pursues after it, and never leaves it till he has got it; but he neglects the things of eternity.
3. A man may be said to be given to covetousness when all his discourse is about the world.
4. A man is given to covetousness when he does so set his heart upon worldly things that for the love of them he will part with heavenly; for the "wedge of gold" he will part with the "pearl of great price."

Bibillus

93

Exodus - Exodus 20:17 (KJV) Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbour's.

5. A man is given to covetousness when he overloads himself with worldly business. He takes so much business upon him that he cannot find time to serve God; he hath scarce time to eat his meat, but no time to pray.

6. He is given to covetousness whose heart is so set upon the world that, to get it, he cares not what unlawful indirect means he uses; he will have the world, "by right or wrong"; he will wrong and defraud, and raise his estate upon the ruins of another.

I shall prescribe some remedies and antidotes against this sin.

1. Faith: "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." The root of covetousness is the distrust of God's providence; →

Bibillus

94

Exodus - Exodus 20:17 (KJV) Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbour's.

faith believes God will provide — God, who feeds the birds, will feed His children, He who clothes the lilies will clothe His lambs; and so faith overcomes the world.

2. The second remedy is judicious consideration.

(1) What poor things these things below are that we should covet them.

(2) The frame and position of the body. "God has made the face to look upward towards heaven." Can it be imagined that God gave us intellectual, immortal souls to covet only earthly things? What wise man would fish for small fish with golden hooks? Did God give us glorious souls only to fish for the world? →

Bibillus

95

Exodus - Exodus 20:17 (KJV) Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbour's.

Sure our souls are made for a higher end — to aspire after the enjoyment of God in glory.

(3) The examples of those who have been scornful and despisers of the world. The righteous are compared to a palm-tree. Philo observes that whereas all other trees have their sap in their root, the sap of the palm-tree is towards the top: the emblem of the saints, whose hearts are above in heaven, where their treasure is. Covet spiritual things more, and you will covet earthly things less. Covet grace; grace is the best blessing — it is the seed of God, the angels' glory. Covet heaven; heaven is the region of happiness; it is the most pleasant climate. Did we covet heaven more, we should covet earth less. →

Bibillus

96

Exodus - Exodus 20:17 (KJV) Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbour's.

II. I shall speak of it more particularly: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife," etc. Observe here THE HOLINESS AND PERFECTION OF GOD'S LAW; it forbids the first motions and risings of sin in the heart: "Thou shalt not covet." The laws of men take hold of the actions, but the law of God goes further — it forbids not only the actions, but the affections. Though the tree bears no bad fruit, it may be faulty at the root; though a man does not commit any gross sin, yet who can say his heart is pure? Let us be humbled for the sin of our nature, the risings of evil thoughts, coveting that which we ought not. Our nature is a seed-plot of iniquity; it is like charcoal that is ever sparkling; the sparkles of pride, envy, covetousness, arise in the mind. How should this humble us!

Bibillus

97