

# The Big Ten: Can I Have That?

Who here has ever wished they could trade places with someone else, even if for just a moment? You wish you could have their looks, or their house or car, their job, their family, their money.....

Most people could look at every area in their life and wish for an upgrade. Isn't that what most people spend their life trying to obtain....upgrades?

Here are some things you don't hear people say often:

I wish I made less money like Bill.

I wish my kids behaved worse like the Jones'.

I wish my car was old and broken down like Alice's.

I wish my wife treated my like dirt like Bob's treats him.

I wish I was a little less attractive like Tim.

People are always in want, but they rarely want less.....they want more, but not only more....they want what someone else has, or more than THEM!

## **Exodus 20:1-2 (HCSB)**

1 Then God spoke all these words:

2 I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery.

## **Exodus 20:17 (HCSB)**

17 Do not covet your neighbor's house. Do not covet your neighbor's wife, his male or female slave, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

## What is coveting?

To covet means to desire. To desire means to long for, crave, or lust after.

So this word covet, it can have a positive and a negative meaning. It can be a positive thing to have strong desires. But often it's the negative effect of having a strong desire for something that you have no right to, or something that may even be forbidden. This is where the issue lies.

Coveting is the sin of selfishness. There is a major reason this is revealed to us in the law. Here's what Paul says about it:

## **Romans 7:7-8 (HCSB)**

7 What should we say then? Is the law sin? Absolutely not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin if it were not for the law. For example, I would not have known what it is to

covet if the law had not said, Do not covet. 8 And sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind. For apart from the law sin is dead.

The law can not give life, all it can do is expose sin. Jesus gives life by forgiving that sin and making us new. But through the law, the Holy Spirit brings conviction, makes us aware of our sin and the dire need for repentance.

See coveting goes deep. This is a serious issue of the heart. Once revealed to us, it's not that we will necessarily covet "More" but that we will be awakened to the frequency and severity of our coveting.

A part of our sinful nature is wanting what we can't have. That is what sin is, we violate the law by saying, doing, desiring what we "can't have".

What ways do we covet?

**Exodus 20:17 (HCSB)**

17 Do not covet your neighbor's house. Do not covet your neighbor's wife, his male or female slave, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

God lists some pretty specific things here. He could have just said "Don't covet anything"

Notice He focuses on your neighbor here. Neighbor's house, wife, servants, animals. Now the word neighbor means friend, companion, or another person. So it means any other person but it really starts with your literal neighbor or friend because we covet what we see every day.

I don't sit around and covet a Dodge Challenger. But ask my wife, every single time I see one I say I want one, or I'd trade them! Now if one of you in this room had one and I had to look at it every week or my neighbor had one parked across the street and I saw it every day, that would be much harder to deal with.

We rarely covet the things that are far away from us. It's what we see frequently, what our neighbor has, not strangers, that's what we want.

That's the whole "keeping up with the Joneses" thing. Seeing someone else as the benchmark for your success, desiring what they have or more.

God mentions your neighbor's house. This means household, the actual dwelling place but also their family. Don't spend your life wishing you had another home to the point that you miss the beauty of the moment you are in. Some of the best years of my life were in a trailer with a hole in the floor. That's where my family started. A part of me misses those simpler times!

Don't spend your time wishing your family was like someone else's, if you do you will miss the beauty of who they are, who God has created them to be.

This happens a lot with husbands and wives. It's what often sparks affairs and adultery. Wishing they were like someone else or wishing they WERE someone else. You focus on being the best spouse you can be and be thankful for the one you have! Make them be thankful for the one THEY have!

If you spend your life wishing you had someone else's job or provision, you will never be thankful for the provision God has placed in your own life. It may not be ideal, it may not be where you pictured yourself or what you want, but you will be miserable if you spend your life wanting what someone else has.

There is a difference between wanting to better yourself and wanting what someone else has. Again, I DO think it is a great thing to have goals and vision for your future. YOUR FUTURE....not someone else's present.

### **Why would you want what someone else has instead of what God has for you?**

People often tie happiness to what they have. They move from one thing to the next seeking happiness. It's a good thing to have goals, hopes, and dreams for your life. I believe in planning. You should know what you are trying to accomplish. I've even shared before that I believe we should dream big because we have a big God.....just make sure you are including Him in these goals, hopes, and dreams.

When we don't include God we get the "If I just had \_\_\_\_\_" mindset. If I just had a newer car, a bigger house, a nicer spouse, kids that behaved, a better job.....then I'd finally be happy. I'd feel content.

Some of these may be good goals to have, but they are not our path to happiness.

### **Happiness doesn't come by getting what you want; happiness comes by wanting what you've got.**

Things will never be enough, we live in a time that has more stuff, is more advanced and has more privileges than any generation before us. If this did the trick, we'd be the happiest people in history! We have it all but it's still not enough.

### **Ecclesiastes 5:10 (HCSB)**

10 The one who loves money is never satisfied with money, and whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with income. This too is futile.

## What are the results of coveting?

We covet because of our own evil desires. It's not because of what our neighbor has, it's because of what our wicked heart wants.....

### **James 1:14-15 (HCSB)**

14 But each person is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own evil desires. 15 Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is fully grown, it gives birth to death.

In the land of the free, we are free to get what we want. You can find a way, and people do. You can work overtime, borrow money, or just not pay your bills and you can get what you want if you want it bad enough.

This is why people are in the financial situation they are in. They can't tell themselves "NO!". Some people can't tell their kids "NO!".

You are enticed by your evil desire (coveting) and that will give birth to sin. hmmmmm .....not being able to tell yourself "NO!" can be a sin. If you plot and scheme to get what you want you are fulfilling the desires of your dying flesh. You are worldly minded.

This shows spiritual immaturity.

Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. There are some people who cannot talk about spiritual things. It cannot come out of their mouths. All that they talk about is earning money. All that they talk about is things, things, acquiring, acquiring, and who has what and how much.

### **Colossians 3:2 (HCSB)**

2 Set your minds on what is above, not on what is on the earth.

Why work so hard at building a kingdom that is going to burn? Your worth and value is not in things. Your happiness will not be found in things. Peace....not in things. Comfort....not in things.

You'll only find temporary satisfaction in things because they are temporary. You'll find eternal satisfaction in Jesus' Kingdom because He is eternal. We've got to learn to take the focus off of us and put it on Him.

### **Colossians 3:5 (HCSB)**

5 Therefore, put to death what belongs to your worldly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and **greed**, which is idolatry.

Coveting is idolatry. We worship things. We are devoted to getting more things. This is coveting. Coveting is at the root of all sin because we are wanting something that we can't or shouldn't have.

**We will be covetous as long as we possess.**

So what do we do about coveting?

**Stewards** - The first thing we need is the revelation and understanding that if we belong to Jesus, we don't own anything. It's a lot harder to want what someone else has if you truly view what they have and what you have as God's.

Whatever you have is His, you are just managing it anyway. And a good manager does what the owner would want, not what they want. A good manager manages what he oversees and isn't concerned with taking away from other managers. Do your best with what you have been given.

We will be covetous as long as we possess, but if we are stewards then we are no longer owners but managers. Talk about taking the power right out of the devil's hands!

**Contentment** - If we can change our mindset on what we possess, we will find contentment. And if we view life not as a competition but instead as people each doing their own part that they have been trusted with, we will find happiness for others!

**Philippians 4:11-12 (HCSB)**

11 I don't say this out of need, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. 12 I know both how to have a little, and I know how to have a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content—whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need.

See Paul had times of abundance and times of need. But the reason he was content is not just that he didn't care or was used to the ups and downs of traveling ministry. It was because Paul has his eyes on Jesus and not on this world. He trusted God to provide what he needed (Paul had a job) and he didn't spend his life seeking "things"

**Generosity** - Be a good steward, be content, then GIVE. It is very hard to covet when you are more concerned for others. Be a giver.

People will work overtime and sacrifice family time, serving God, and anything else in life to save money to buy the "new toy" or go on vacation. Or pay off debt from doing these things before they could afford them.

When is the last time you heard of someone working overtime or a second job to help a family whose home burned down, or to send it to a missionary, or to give it to a local church or ministry or to bless a person or family.....when is the last time you heard of that?

That is the kind of generosity that will change your life! It's hard to covet when all you want is to bless other people!

**Acts 20:35 (HCSB)**

35 In every way I've shown you that by laboring like this, it is necessary to help the weak and to keep in mind the words of the Lord Jesus, for He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

We are to be good stewards, we are to be content, we are to be generous! That is the antidote for the coveting heart.

The things we should have a strong desire for, the "good coveting" is for the Kingdom of heaven.

We have something that is greater than any possession on this earth.....

**Hebrews 13:5 (HCSB)**

5 Your life should be free from the love of money. Be satisfied with what you have, for He Himself has said, I will never leave you or forsake you.

He is truly all that we need. Jesus is enough. His presence is the one thing we should continuously seek for more of. Be careful, don't seek to have what someone else has.....it's not about comparison. YOU seek Jesus for yourself. YOU pray for your family, your church, your city, nation, world.

When God provided manna from heaven. He instructed them to go out each day and gather what they needed for that one day. (2 before the Sabbath). If they went and gathered all they could and stored it up they wouldn't need to trust Him the next day.

If we seek Him first, all of our needs will be provided for. Do you believe it? Do you trust Him?