

# 'Do Not Covet' – Exodus

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## 1. Introduction

- Covet: Wish, long or crave for (something, especially the property of another person)
- Pretty clear. Going to have some time to think about what this could mean for us as individuals, but before we do here are a few points for us to think about.
- This is the only one of the 10 commandments that deals with thoughts and not actions. It's important we control our thoughts – while not all thoughts turn into actions, all actions stem from thoughts.
- And it's hard not to covet – we live in a society where we are encouraged to covet – by advertising. Something we should be aware of

## 2. Why Shouldn't We Covet?

- Inherently it makes us unhappy. To covet is to acknowledge a lack of something – implies an unfulfilled desire. Some of the most unhappy people seem to be those who are rich/famous...
- Coveting can lead to actions which are wrong and those actions have consequences. Those who coveted in the bible:
  - Eve Gen 3: She took what wasn't hers to take
  - David 2 Samuel 11-12. Child died and David's son Absalom leads rebellion
- It doesn't work – there is always something else. Lottery winners are still playing!
- All of the above are incompatible with God's will for our lives. I have come that they may have life in all its fullness – how can we possibly be full if we let ourselves be ruled by always wanting the next thing?

## 3. What should we do?

- Control our thoughts. Often said grass is greener...but it's because we've been watering the other side!
- Develop an attitude of gratitude. Something Paul did – Phil 4:12

*'I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want...'*

- Do not covet = Be satisfied with what you have. We all have things of be grateful for – do we spend enough time thinking about them and thanking God for them?
- Impacts our worship...
- Be generous in our giving.

## 4. Where is our security?

- Perhaps the root of covetousness is insecurity. The need to have things as a badge to show our worth.
- And while some may not have a desire for 'the next thing' and covet as such, many of us allow our confidence (security) to be placed in what we already have – our job, the money we already have, in our own work.
- I believe God wants us all to find our security in him. Rather than lusting after the next thing, God wants us to trust him to provide for our needs.

**Exodus:** The people Moses was talking to had just taken gold from the Egyptians and had food and water provided for them. But some people still tried to collect on the Sabbath. Ex.16:16-27

- Our God is a generous God. Matt 7:7-11
- 2 Samuel 12:7-8

*'I anointed you king over Israel and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave your master's house to you and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if all of this had been too little, I would have given you even more. Why did you despise the word of the Lord by doing what is evil in his eyes?'*

- David had been given so much. But he wanted more, took it for himself and caused pain and suffering (for him and for others) as a result.
- I think God wants us to put our trust in him to provide for what we need. Physically & spiritually.
- Thinking about it, in my life God hasn't just magic-ed up everything I've asked for, but I can remember many occasions/patterns of God being really generous to me.

## 5. Summary

- Do not covet.
- Do not allow your happiness to be determined by what you have or do not have.
- Be satisfied with what you have and cultivate an attitude of gratitude. Be generous in our giving.
- Where is our security. Let's trust God to provide all that we really need.