

Exodus – Our Journey – The 10th Commandment – “Will it make you happy?”

1. Prayer
2. Joke/Story
 - a. Philip Parham tells the story of a rich industrialist who was disturbed to find a fisherman sitting lazily beside his boat. “Why aren’t you out there fishing?” he asked.
 - i. “Because I’ve caught enough fish for today,” said the fisherman.
 - ii. “Why don’t you catch more fish than you need?” the rich man asked.
 - iii. “What would I do with them?”
 - iv. “You could earn more money,” came the impatient reply, “and buy a better boat so you could go deeper and catch more fish. You could purchase nylon nets, catch even more fish, and make more money. Soon you’d have a fleet of boats and be rich like me.”
 - v. The fisherman asked, “Then what would I do?”
 - vi. “You could sit down and enjoy life,” said the industrialist.
 - vii. “What do you think I’m doing now?” the fisherman replied as he looked placidly out to sea.
 1. Our Daily Bread, May 18, 1994
3. Background/overview – we have been looking at the 10 commandments as a part of our study of Exodus.
 - a. Every few weeks I take a moment to remind you of the purpose and timing of the 10 commandments.
 - b. I want you to know that the 10 commandments were not given to *make* you right with God.
 - i. If they were, they would have been given as a condition to be kept BEFORE God delivered the Israelites from bondage in Egypt.
 - ii. Instead, God delivered the Israelites from Egypt despite their faults, their idolatry, and their sin.
 - iii. He chose them, they didn’t choose Him.
 - iv. The 10 Commandments were given to show them how to live a life of thanksgiving in *response* to God’s graciousness.
 - c. Similarly, God doesn’t wait for you and I to get our lives cleaned up before He loves you. In fact, He sends Jesus to take your sin and mine while we were still messed up and full of rebellion. The bible says, “that while we were still sinners, Christ died for the ungodly.”
 - i. It is in response to God’s gracious love that we begin to live lives that conform to His will. We don’t earn His love, we receive it as a gift and we respond to it.
4. Exodus 20:17 "*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 belongs to your neighbor.*"
 - a. Covet (def) – means to greedily desire to have or possess something that someone else has.
 - i. Grk: Pleonexia - greedy desire to have more, covetousness, avarice
 1. Prefix – Pleon - greater in quantity, the more part, very many
 2. Echo - to have (hold) in the hand, in the sense of wearing, to have (hold) possession of the mind, to possess.
 - ii. Heb: Betsa - profit, unjust gain, gain (profit) acquired by violence
 - b. In the Lord of the Rings...you might remember a pathetic person reduced to a near animalistic existence named Gollum? The ring –tempting all who see it to wanting to possess it so that they might become something they are not – encompasses the 10th commandment.
 - i. Look at all of the characters as they spy the ring...
 1. Bilbo won’t let go of it
 2. Gandalf struggles with the temptation
 3. Sam tries to steal it
 4. Every person who comes to see it is overwhelmed by the temptation to possess it.
 - ii. The temptation to covet is one we all struggle with.

- c. There are two messages our culture whispers in our ear that lead us to be drawn toward violating this commandment.
 - i. **You won't be happy until you get "it."**
 - 1. Advertising creates a covetous atmosphere that tells us that we should want more and more and more.
 - 2. It tells us that we will not be happy or satisfied with what we got unless we have the next best and greatest version. They tell us that...
 - a. We *need* the newest and fastest computer.
 - b. We *need* the newest home with all the gadgets
 - c. We *need* the best palm pilot
 - d. We *need* the newest I-pod
 - e. We *need* the latest fashion
 - f. We *need* the biggest, coolest LCD or Plasma Digital Television.
 - 3. We take this message, hook, line and sinker.
 - 4. When it comes to material things in America, I see very little difference between Christian families and non-Christian families.
 - a. The reason this occurs is because we have bought this lie of our culture.
 - b. We have built our lives on the lie that somehow "something" will make us happy.
 - ii. **You won't be happy if someone else has got it.**
 - 1. If someone else has something we don't have, it isn't fair.
 - 2. Either we got to have it or somehow they ought to lose it.
 - 3. This is evidenced by our taxation system that says we need to TAKE (ie redistribute) the wealth from those who have it and give it to those who don't have it.
 - a. I am not speaking here of social justice issues such as survival, education and basic health care. Our country has done incredible things to ensure these things and our churches and social service agencies do wonderful things with food banks, health clinics, meals on wheels, etc.
 - 4. I am speaking of how some in our society want to punish someone whom God has blessed or who has somehow worked hard to earn a good living.
 - a. The 10th commandment addresses the heart that says "It isn't fair that my neighbor has been blessed with a new oxen and I haven't."
 - i. Somewhere we hear "life needs to be fair."
 - ii. I got bad news for you...it isn't fair.
 - 1. I don't know why some parents have to raise a child who will never walk or go to school.
 - 2. I don't know why some children have to be raised in a home where the father blows the money on alcohol and drugs and leaves the children to grow up malnourished.
 - 3. I don't know why some people are born rich and others are born poor,
 - 4. I don't know why some discover an operating system for something called a IBM 8086 processor before anyone else does and becomes the worlds richest man.
 - 5. I don't know why life isn't fair, but it isn't.
 - iii. God dishes out a different portion to everyone. And it isn't based on merit or how good they are.
 - 5. In the midst of this mystery is this commandment. "Don't covet...don't desire to have what someone else has."
 - iii. Do you know why this command states this?

1. Because God is the ultimate source of all wealth and prosperity.
 2. To despise your neighbor's good fortune or to feel as if you deserve it is to insult God who in his wisdom has for some reason held it back from you.
 3. Coveting...to ache for what you do not have, is to question or even to defy God's provision for your life.
 4. **On its most basic level, coveting is to question God's providence.**
5. **Using debt to meet your needs can be a covetous act.**
- a. When we borrow to buy "stuff" we want, we are breaking this commandment.
 - i. I have been there and I have tasted the bitter bondage of debt. I have learned the hard way.
 - ii. If you don't have the money to buy something, don't buy it.
 - iii. **If you can't trust God to provide it, you don't need it!**
 - iv. Is there anyone who wishes they could get out of debt (other than perhaps owing on a car or a house?).
 1. Your interest you pay is as much or more than the monthly payments you can afford to make.
 2. Do you have less and less to spend and owe more and more?
 3. Would you like to learn how to break free?
 4. Joe is willing to take a group of you through a class on Sunday evenings on how to do break the bondage of debt.
 - b. Lets talk about the credit card trap:
 - i. Look at the furniture stores, the appliance stores, the electronics stores, even the clothing stores. They say, "save 5% on your first purchase by signing up for our credit card."
 - ii. They know that the average person spends 25% more when they buy with credit than with cash.
 1. There are two reasons why paying with plastic often causes people to spend more. First, using a credit card is psychologically different than using cash. Let's say I buy groceries costing \$37.88. The cashier takes my credit card and puts a receipt in front of me. I sign it and walk out the door.
 2. In a cash transaction, I receive very tangible evidence that the money is no longer available to me. I see the money go from my wallet to the cashier. Writing a check is somewhat similar. If I subtract the amount and see my new balance there will be some awareness that I now have less than before.
 3. The other reason people tend to spend more when they use a credit card is they have no record of the total charges until the end of the month.
 - a. Have you ever opened your credit card statement and been surprised at how high the balance was?
 - b. You quickly scan through it looking for a billing error only to find you really did make all those purchases.
 4. The principle of paying with cash is that when you are out of money you stop spending.
 - a. But with a credit card, you can rationalize it by thinking about how you will pay for it with FUTURE earnings.
 - c. Debt Relief
 - i. In a very real way, using credit to purchase stuff is to refuse to trust God's provision.
 1. Now some of you will say, "I will trust that God will help me make another \$50.00 a month to pay for this new dishwasher."
 2. You know what I say? If you don't have the money, then use the two hands God gave you to wash the dishes! If God wants you to have a "worksaver" or luxury, He will provide.
 - d. Questions we ought to learn to ask ourselves.

- i. Do you need it? Has God provided for it? Have we asked God for it?
- ii. Here a key principle for getting out of debt.
 - 1. Tear up your credit cards and only pay cash.
 - 2. You only buy what you need not what you want.
 - 3. By doing so, you shut down the covetousness spigot that is running your financial well dry.
- e. Remember what we said about coveting? It is a sin against God's provision.
 - i. To buy what you cannot afford is the same sin. You refuse to look to God.
 - ii. When you try to meet your own needs, your own way, and refuse to wait for God to do so for you, you end up in a mess!
 - iii. Some of you remember the definition of sin I have given in the past which is "settling or choosing less than God's best for us."
 - 1. When we do so, when we reject God's best, we reject Him. We put ourselves in His place and say, "I know better."

6. A lottery ticket will cost you more than your dollar.

- a. Lottery and gambling will cost you far more than the cost of the ticket.
 - i. It will cost you peace.
 - ii. It will cost you years of regret
 - iii. And it will not solve your money problems.
- b. I have bought a lottery ticket 2 or 3 times since becoming a Christian 25 years ago. I can't really explain why I bought it but I certainly learned a great deal about myself after buying it.
 - i. I found in the hours and days following purchasing the ticket, I thought about what I could do with the money should I win. Actually, I started getting cold sweats from thinking about it. My pulse quickened and my adrenalin ran for a few seconds when the thought came in my mind.
 - 1. I even thought about making a deal with God. Hey Lord, I will give you 50% of it...ah heck, I'd give you 90% of the 250 million!
 - 2. It is easy to promise 90% of something you don't have.
 - 3. And then I read about Jack Whittaker who became an instant celebrity on Christmas Day 2002 after winning a \$314.9 million Powerball jackpot in West Virginia. He took his winnings in a lump sum of \$113 million after taxes, and at a news conference in which he came across as a jolly saint, he promised to donate one-tenth to his church and contribute to other causes. He gave away over 20 million dollars to charity, although some of the churches to which he gave it struggled with the windfall and with the members stopped giving because the church now had money in the bank.
 - 4. Just a short 2 years later, his wife, Jewel Whittaker said. *"I wish all of this never would have happened, I wish I would have torn the ticket up."*
 - ii. Money problems are rarely the result of not enough money but rather the result of our flesh coveting and seeking its fulfillment in what we own.
 - iii. When you gamble, you will think about what you could do with all that money (that you don't have)
 - 1. That is like injecting covetousness into your veins.
 - 2. We all have to deal with covetousness from time to time, but why pump yourself full of it?

7. the 10th Commandment strikes at the heart of materialism.

- a. Luke 12:15-21 *"Beware! Don't be greedy for what you don't have. Real life is not measured by how much we own." 16 And he gave an illustration: "A rich man had a fertile farm that produced fine crops. 17 In fact, his barns were full to overflowing. 18 So he said, 'I know! I'll*

tear down my barns and build bigger ones. Then I'll have room enough to store everything. 19 And I'll sit back and say to myself, My friend, you have enough stored away for years to come. Now take it easy! Eat, drink, and be merry!' 20 "But God said to him, 'You fool! You will die this very night. Then who will get it all?' 21 "Yes, a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God."

- i. Materialism makes a god of the things of this world.
 1. Col 3:5 *"Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry."*
 2. Eph 5:5 – *"For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God."*
 - ii. **Covetousness is equated with idolatry in the bible.**
 - iii. Greed is "the logical result of the belief that there is no life after death. We get all we can and can all we get."
 - iv. Jesus viewed money or wealth as having a sort of spiritual power over people. (Matthew 6:24). He identified wealth as an object of worship, as a rival to God.
 1. For this reason Jesus often asked people to turn away from it (Matthew 19:21; Luke 12:33-34). Zacchaeus offered to give half of his possessions to the poor and restore four times to any one that he had cheated (Luke 19:8). This was a sign of his desire to follow Christ.
 2. **The only way to defeat the power of money is to give it away** (Acts 20:35).
 3. Most of us here would probably say, "I don't worship my belongings" And most of us are pretty fortunate we haven't had the kind of encounter that the rich young ruler had with Jesus who when asked to sell all he had and come and follow Him couldn't do it.
 4. If you were to get a call on the phone from another Christian who you respected, (Billy Graham, or someone of his stature) and they lived in a foreign country as a missionary...and they asked you personally for help...not financial help but for your help- to drop all you are doing, sell all you have, put aside all your dreams, lay aside all of your belongings, your memories and your collectables, and come work with them wherever they are...would you or could you do it?
 5. Consider some of the reactions...
 - a. But I have grandkids here, I wouldn't get to see them...
 - b. I just retired!
 - c. But I am remodeling my home...
 - d. But what will I do with my 'Precious Moments' collection?
 6. How attached are you to what you have? More than Jesus?
 7. **How does what you have define who you are...and what you do?**
8. Covetousness and greed are incompatible for a Christian
- a. Eph 5:3 *"But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints;*
 - b. 1Co 6:10 – *"...nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God"*
 - c. **Christians are to learn to possess money and not be possessed by it.**
 - i. Wealth should be given to ministries that serve people and spread the gospel.
 - ii. The pursuit of wealth as an end in itself, or the desire for luxury are evidences of materialism.
 - iii. Christians must take a stand against the persistent idolatry of materialism that focuses on the material stuff of this world and not God.

1. We don't think about this being one of the BIG SINS like adultery or murder, but it possesses the power to destroy just as much as them.
- d. Remember what I said about observing that there isn't much difference between how Christians and non-Christians spend their money?
 - i. The truth be told that a Christian ought to be so busy giving and helping others that they neither have time or the taste for the so called luxuries that hypnotize and transfix the rest of the world.
 - ii. Did you know that over 6million plasma tvs will be sold this upcoming year, many of them this week before the super bowl?
 1. A plasma tv might sound cool, but if you have a tv already, why would you buy it? I walked into Walmart and noticed how much cheaper the lcd tv's were this week. And then I imagined if Jesus walked in and saw me gawking at the 40" plasmas lcd tvs, I believe He would repeat the parable of the rich farmer that we just read.
 2. It would probably sound like this: *There was a man who had a good job and he got a promotion and a raise. So he looked about and said, I better increase the size of my IRA and I will go out and buy a few things I have always wanted. ' 20 "But God said to him, 'You fool! You will die this very night. Then who will get it all?'21 "Yes, a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God."*

9. The antidote for covetousness is Contentment

- a. 1 Timothy 6:6-12 *But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.(are you content with these basics?) But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.*
 - i. Are you wandering away from the faith because of wanting stuff?
- b. Contentment is only found in Christ
 - i. **Jesus alone truly satisfies.**
 - ii. John 4:13-15 "Jesus replied, "*People soon become thirsty again after drinking this water. 14 But the water I give them takes away thirst altogether. It becomes a perpetual spring within them, giving them eternal life.*" "*Please, sir,*" the woman said, "*give me some of that water! Then I'll never be thirsty again*"
 1. A new car, a new home, a better place to live, new appliances, remodeling, a gameboy...all of the toys and new gadgets will not quench the thirst inside of you.
 2. That thirst may be for a relationship, that thirst may be for a thing or some goal you have always wanted to attain.
 3. But as long as Jesus isn't your first love, your first choice, your true satisfaction, you will be empty, even when you get what you want.
 - iii. **If you seek satisfaction in anything of this world, you will be disappointed.**
 1. Nothing lasts and nothing truly satisfies.
 2. There is an emptiness that follows any time you "get what you want."
 3. Superbowl winner and losers will look back and see an accomplishment and a trophy and a ring. But there will be a "what now" feeling that will follow.
 - iv. Hebrews 13:5 "*Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,"*

1. He is all we need.
 2. Contentment isn't found by some mystical, trance induced experience. Contentment comes from finding and building your life upon something that lasts forever.
 3. Jesus lasts forever. He will never leave you or forsake you. He alone satisfies... if you will let him.
- v. Philippians 4:11-14 *“Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”*
1. We so often quote v 14 *“I can do all things through him who strengthens me”* without paying attention to the previous 3 verses.
 - a. *Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need*
 - b. The SECRET is found in Jesus Christ. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.
 - c. Replace that “I can do” with “I can live in any circumstance in life”
 2. Cast yourself today completely upon Jesus.
 3. Let Him meet your ache and your deepest need.
 4. Your health will fail you. Your home will someday crumble. Your job will someday come to an end. All the prestige you live your life for will fade away.
 5. Your satisfaction is found in Christ alone.