



The Ninth and Tenth Commandments

by Pastor Glenn Huebel

The Ninth Commandment:

You shall not covet your neighbor's house

The Tenth Commandment:

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

The prohibition of coveting was the commandment that opened the eyes of the Apostle Paul and led him, eventually, to find his peace in the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Rom 7:7). If unholy desires are counted as sin, who can escape the condemnation of the Law? We can, to some degree, curb our desires and

force ourselves to act properly. We can, for instance, discipline ourselves to smile and shake hands with a person we desire to punch in the face, but we can't force ourselves to actually like him. Who can possibly discipline himself to the THINK properly or to have only holy DESIRES?

says, "You shall BE holy, for I, the Lord your God am holy" (Lev 19:2). Jesus emphasizes this inner righteousness in the Sermon on the Mount, where He condemns anger as well as physical killing, lust as well as physical adultery, etc. God's command that we have only holy desires puts the nail in the coffin for any hope of gaining our righteousness before God through the Ten Commandments. With this in mind, we could probably say that the ninth and tenth commandments primarily serve as a mirror to bring us to a full knowledge of our sinfulness.

This commandment overthrows the legalistic spirit which confuses politeness with righteousness.

Righteousness does not consist in our ability to manage anger or to restrain greed or lust from shaming us through impulsive actions. The Law of God is not satisfied with holy deeds, but requires a holy heart; that is, holy desires. God

These two commandments are also useful for guiding us in our Christian walk through this world. In the first place, we should not be deceived by the foolish philosophy of the world that exalts natural desires as good and urges us to indulge them. I have dealt with this issue in

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Rembrandt, *Moses With the Ten Commandments*. 1659. Oil on canvas, 168.5 cm x 136.5 cm. Gemäldegalerie, Berlin

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That you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name. —John 20:31

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some of the previous commandments, but these commandments makes it crystal clear that sin permeates our fallen nature and corrupts us to the core of our being. The idea that we can set men free by removing all restraints to curb natural desires is not only asinine but exceedingly dangerous. Unrestrained fleshly desires ruin individual lives and destroy communities. We are beginning to see that in our declining culture, and the worst is probably yet to come. Detroit may be a microcosm of a fleshly “utopia.”

As parents, we can learn from these commandments the importance of the heart in raising our children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. Covetousness is rampant in our culture. Marketing assumes its presence and stokes the fires of it in our hearts. It is very difficult to sell something to someone who is quite satisfied with what he already has. He or she must be made to feel empty and poor without the product – whatever it may be. How can you possibly be satisfied with an old car or an outdated phone or inferior pizza? How can you be satisfied with your body when you can buy a product to whiten your teeth, grow your hair, surgically remove your fat or increase your breast size? Most advertizing campaigns are geared to make us dissatisfied with things we didn't even know we were lacking! And they work! The result is that the richer we get and the more we accumulate, the more dissatisfied we are because we never ever get to the greenest pastures. We forget that contentment with what God has given us is a virtue (Heb 13:5) and that covetousness is a vice (Luke 12:15).

This brings us back to child raising. What happens in homes where the

natural covetous desires of children are indulged rather than challenged? What happens to children who grow up in an environment where they are never or rarely ever denied a “want”? Are they “blessed” or are they “cursed”? Sometimes wealth is a curse in disguise. Wise parents will imitate their wise heavenly Father who is well able to give anyone anything, but does NOT satisfy all the wants and whims even of His beloved children. He supplies us with what we “need” and teaches us to be content with that, knowing that He will never leave or forsake us. Should parents deny wants of their children even when they have the ability to provide them? Of course! Stoking the fires of covetousness does not help your children grow in faith even if you do it with the best of intentions. Jesus tells us to “beware of covetousness,” not feed it.

Another application of this commandment is learning the value of contentment. If we are always looking to the next green pasture, we just travel from place to place, always expecting our joy and happiness in life to be just down the road – the next job, the next house, the next car, the next spouse, but we never actually reach it. That's like always eating but never satisfying our hunger. Solomon found this out in his own experience. He called it “striving after wind” (Eccl 2:26). He says, “There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God, for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment?” (Eccl 2:24). What good does it do us to gain the world if we cannot enjoy what we have? There are very many today in our culture who are striving after wind because in spite of all they gather they never find

contentment. They are ever learning but never coming to the knowledge of the truth that life does not consist in the things we possess. Solomon wisely observed, “Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble with it” (Prov 15:16). Even today many poor people enjoy life more than the wealthy who are consumed with covetousness. Contentment does NOT come naturally for us sinners, but the Spirit begins to work it in us through Christ. Our new nature discovers that Christ fills the void in our hearts that can never be filled with the stuff of this world. Thus, the writer of Hebrews counsels us to “be content with what you have because he has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’” In Christ we can take our eyes off of the greener pastures, and begin to focus with thanksgiving on the gifts God has given us. We begin to learn that in every condition and circumstance of life we have HIM, and if we have Him, we lack nothing. We begin to focus our hearts upon Him who opens His hand and satisfies the desire of every living thing (Ps 145:16).

What stage of life are you in? Are you a young person just getting started with a minimum wage job, trying to finish college so that you can get a real job and really start living? Stop, and savor the blessings God gives right now in your life. The green pasture of your new career will have new anxieties to struggle with anyway. Are you a young parent struggling with the endless task of changing diapers or cleaning up messes or preparing meals or losing sleep with teething children? Are you waiting for the day when the children can dress themselves and pour their own cereal for breakfast rather than wake you up at

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5:00 am? Stop and savor the blessings you have right now in your life. Hold that baby in your arms and love him. Treasure the moments of play and laughter and having your children want to be with you, for those days will pass quickly enough and you will face new and greater challenges with your growing family.

Learn **to stop, to focus, and to enjoy** what God has given you in whatever vocation or condition you may find yourself. Imitate St. Paul who imitated Jesus. He writes,

“I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every

circumstance I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.” (Phil 4:11-13)

Blessings in Christ,
Pastor Huebel

The Elders' Corner by Edward Conaway

God is great. God is good. For many Christian children, these words represent the first true introduction to who God is. Although it is a simple saying, it is also simply elegant. It is a child's first experience with evangelism, hearing the good news. But as adults, we can lose sight of the elegant simplicity of the Gospel. “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God not by works, so that no one can boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

In evangelism, we can be tempted to focus on data and charts to see how “we” are doing. How many visitors did we have on Sunday or at Sunday School? How many visitors have we called back? How many participants are in the Pastor's class or how many people have joined the church at the conclusion of the Pastor's class?

These are questions that can be asked and answered. But none of them are more important than the following questions about evangelism: Are our Pastors preaching God's Word correctly? Is

the Holy Spirit working faith in us, so that we can go out and “proclaim the Gospel to all nations” (Mark 13:10)?

I believe that at Messiah both of these questions can be answered “Yes”.

With that in mind, let's take a look at some of the churches in our area. The websites have pictures of hundreds, or even thousands, of people in their auditoriums listening to their preacher, the parking lots are full, the youth programs seem to flourish and the facilities are state of the art. If we allow our human nature to dominate, it can make us wonder if we are doing something wrong. I don't think we are. Don't look at the pictures. Instead, read their statement of belief and their mission statement and listen to the sermons.

The websites for these churches do not mention God nor the Gospel on their homepage. Unlike Messiah's, where the homepage is strictly about God and what we at Messiah believe.

The sermons from the websites run a gamut of topics, but here are a few examples:

God wants you to get ahead in life, to not be poor, to succeed and the Bible can show you how to do that.

Discussion on the possibilities that life holds for you when you are aware of God.

That if you give to the church, God will financially reward you.

In contrast, the liturgical sermons on Messiah's website deal with God's truth, how faith in Jesus saves and how the Holy Spirit works that faith in our hearts.

We at Messiah are truly blessed to have the Word preached by such dedicated men.

I listened to the sermons at these other church websites and in speaking to people I know that attend these churches, I realized something very important. For these individuals this “preaching” is God's word. That is all they know. It

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Early Childhood Center: (817) 431-6139

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Sunday Worship: 8:00 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.

Sunday School & Adult Bible Class: 9:30 a.m.

Rev. Glenn Huebel, Senior Pastor

Rev. Dennis Kitzmann, Assistant Pastor

Mrs. Ellen Malzahn, Principal, Academy

Mrs. Vicki Main, Kantor

Mr. Joseph Sustrik, Financial Director

www.messiahkeller.org

Elders' Corner, cont.

seems that they believe that the Bible is a self-help manual for this world, not the Word of God that leads to Salvation.

What can we do?

The most important thing that we can do is pray. It is amazing how prayer lifts our spirit and energizes our mind. "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18) Pray for this fallen world, for our Pastors, Church and Synod.

Love your neighbor and reach out to them. This goes not just to the people who live next to you. Everyone is our neighbor, from the friendly person who says "Hi" to you in the park to the guy who cut you off in traffic. Remember that "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16) Listen to what they have to say, about how their lives are going, what their dreams are. The Holy Spirit will work faith when and where He will. Be present to experience this joyful transformation.

Remember that it is not just the Pastors and the church workers "job" to Evangelize to the nations. This is the great commission from our Lord and Savior to each and every one of us. Allow the Holy Spirit to work in you and through you for the glory of God.



Are your children in SUNDAY SCHOOL? How about YOU?

Many of us gather here each Sunday morning at 9:30am to hear and learn the Holy Scriptures. If you are not part of that number, you are cordially invited to begin a new habit today. Classes are available for 2 year olds through adults.

Parents, it is your divinely mandated responsibility to bring your children up in the "fear and admonition of the Lord." In addition to the Bible stories taught, by bringing your children to Sunday School, and staying yourself, you are teaching them volumes about priorities and commitment! Children learn from watching what we do and don't do.

Youth, confirmation was not graduation! Come, build on the foundation that you worked so hard to lay in those two years.

Adults, you're never too old for Sunday School! We have classes for you, too!

Blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keep it.