

The Tenth Commandment

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BIG SANDY, Texas—We as believers are thankful that we are saved by grace. In fact, we should reflect our appreciation by giving much thought and attention into recognizing God's expectations for us.

We can reflect back to the time in the Old Testament when the children of Israel were brought out of the land of Egypt—the house of bondage (Exodus 20:1-2)—and remember that God gave them instructions about how to live (verses 3-17).

Let's spend some time considering the Tenth Commandment.

Exodus 20:17—"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."

Susceptible to lust

It is interesting to note that God made mankind in a way where we are susceptible to lust.

The psalmist wrote: "I gave My people up unto their own hearts' lust" (Psalm 81:12).

The apostle Paul made similar comments in Romans 1:24-29.

Paul acknowledged that God gave mankind up to "vile affections" (verse 26). And then Paul went on to explain what he meant by that (verses 26-27).

Escaping past lusts

One of the goals of a believer is to escape corruption.

In 2 Peter 1:4, the apostle Peter mentioned that believers were given precious promises. And he especially noted the great promise that would help believers escape corruption.

He identified the promise of being "partakers of the divine nature."

Self-discipline and effective habits are beneficial. But people need the divine nature.

This divine nature can help people escape the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Coveting is a trigger

Whenever you try to overcome a bad habit or whenever you try to help someone else overcome a bad habit, it is important to identify the trigger.

What influences a person to eat too much? What influences a person to drink too much alcohol? What influences a person to use a harmful drug? What influences a person to look at pornography?

During the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus explained that sin begins in the mind. His specific example was sexual lust (Matthew 5:27-28).

Lust is often the trigger that unleashes damaging behavior.

Pattern of sin

If you ever spent time analyzing some of the sins in the Bible, you may have discovered that a certain pattern of sin unfolds in some of the stories.

Eve saw and desired before she took the fruit (Genesis 3:6).

Achan saw and coveted before he took the physical possessions (Joshua 7:21).

David saw and inquired about the naked lady before he sinned with her (2 Samuel 11:2-4).

Simon saw and desired power before he offered money in the misguided effort to try to buy the ability of giving God's Spirit (Acts 8:18-19).

Did you recognize the pattern? Sin begins in the senses. It takes root in our desires (lusts). It progresses to bad behavior.

Hidden sin

Coveting is dangerous because it can develop into unseemly behavior that brings damaging consequences.

But coveting is also dangerous, even when no one else knows about it. The danger of coveting is that it is sin in early stages.