

“Tenth Commandment”

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BIG SANDY, Texas—At our Bible study on Wednesday night, I continued with our series. The topic is the Ten Commandments. The presentation was titled “Tenth Commandment.”

I decided to mention six main concepts in the presentation.

Foundational scripture

■ Exodus 20:2—“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.”

Then, the Lord proceeded to remind the children of Israel about the Ten Commandments.

Old Testament lesson = After God delivered them from Egypt, He reminded them of His expectations from them.

New Testament lesson = When God offers His bountiful grace to New Testament disciples, He still has expectations of them (Romans 6:1-2, Ephesians 2:8-10 and Titus 3:4-8).

Tenth Commandment

■ Exodus 20:17—“You shall not covet . . . anything that is your neighbor’s.”

Two different verbs

Before I launched into my six main points, I briefly mentioned an interesting fact about the Tenth Commandment in the King James Version of the Bible. Notice the two major listings of the Tenth Commandment.

■ Exodus 20:17 (in the King James Version): “You shall not covet . . .”

■ Deuteronomy 5:21 (in the King James Version): “You shall not desire . . .”

■ In Exodus 20:17, the Hebrew word is *hamad* (from *Strong’s* No. 2530, meaning “to covet, lust, desire; delight in”).

■ In Deuteronomy 5:21, the Hebrew word is *awa* (from *Strong’s* No. 183, meaning “to crave, desire, yearn for, long for”).

Some study papers describe the difference between the two Hebrew words this way: "Two different verbs, the same desire."

While I didn't spend much time talking about the situation, I mentioned it to the audience and suggested that they might want to research it.

Now on to the six points.

Susceptible to lust

I read some of Paul's writings in the first chapter of the book of Romans to show how God created people to be susceptible to lust. While Paul understood that lust is a factor in many aspects of life, he focused his attention at that point in his Romans letter to the lust associated with homosexuality.

Later in the presentation, I covered Christ's words in Matthew 5:28 that show that sexual lust is a sin (adultery)—even when people do a good job of not making it worse by proceeding to the sinful action.

In Romans 1:24-28, Paul described lust in unflattering terms.

When I was reading Romans 1:24-28, I mentioned how my comments about homosexuality generally draw criticism from people on both sides of that subject.

■ On one hand, some people criticize me for being too easy on people about this subject.

This would include people who think that I don't speak forcefully enough about the topic. In their view, I should follow Isaiah 58:1 which says: "Cry aloud, spare not; lift up your voice like a trumpet; tell My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins."

While I do not seek to "cry aloud" about this subject like many religious people, I do endeavor to read what the Bible says.

Romans 1:24—"Lusts of their heart, to dishonor their bodies among themselves."

Romans 1:26—"God gave them up to vile passions" and "exchanged the natural use for what is against nature."

Romans 1:27—"Burned in their lust for one another" and "committing what is shameful."

Romans 1:28—"Debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting."

■ On the other hand, some people criticize me for being too hard on people about this subject—and even being too judgmental toward people about this subject.

While I seek to uphold my belief about what the Bible says about subjects, it is my intent to do so in a loving fashion.

In the presentation on Wednesday night, I told about a male member of a congregation where I was pastoring many years ago. He was struggling with homosexual feelings and came to me for help to not let the lust become action.

For the record, pastoral counseling is quite different from professional counseling. I was his pastor trying to help him. It would be easy to theorize that part of his life included needing love from God and love from people. (Don't we all?)

I did not consider excommunicating him (as some pastors would have done).

I tried to help him avoid letting the lust become action.

■ I asked him: Are you wearing clothes and cologne to attract other homosexuals? He admitted that he was, and I recommended that he stop doing so.

■ I asked him: Are you going to places where you know that you can attract other homosexuals? He admitted that he was, and I recommended that he stop doing so.

After our long discussion, he made the following comment to me: "You do love me, don't you?"

Yes, I had genuine Christian love toward him and was trying to help him avoid sinful behavior.

I have pastored in many cities since trying to help him. I have not kept up with his Christian journey. I truly pray that he has a strong relationship with the Father and Son and has found the peace that They offer to us.

Temptations of life

■ Mark 4:18-19—Here are three items—the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things.

■ 1 John 2:16—Here are three lustful qualities in the world (which are not of the Father)—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.

■ 1 John 2:17—The lusts of the world will pass away, but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Disciples overcome past lusts

■ Ephesians 4:20-22—We have been taught by Christ to put off the former conduct—corrupt behavior of deceitful lusts.

■ Titus 3:3—Remember some of our past behavior—we were foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.

■ 1 Peter 13-14—The revelation of Jesus Christ leads us to avoid the former lusts.

Coveting is a trigger

- Matthew 5:28—"Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."
- James 1:13—"God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone."
- James 1:14—"Each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed."
- James 1:15—"When desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin—and sin (when it is full-grown) brings forth death."

Pattern of sin

Here is the pattern of sin--senses, desires, actions and penalty.

- Genesis 3:6—Eve saw, desired (to be wise) and took.
- Genesis 3:16-19—Penalties for Eve and Adam.
- Joshua 7:21—Achan saw, coveted (physical items) and took.
- Joshua 7:25—Penalty to Achan.
- 2 Samuel 11:2-4—David saw, inquired (about Bathsheba) and lay with her.
- 2 Samuel 12:10-12—Penalty for David.
- Acts 8:18-19—Simon saw, wanted power and offered money.
- Acts 8:20-23—Penalty for Simon.

Pattern of obedience

- Hebrews 11:13—People of faith saw the promises, embraced [desired] the promises and lived as citizens of the Heavenly Kingdom.