

# The Gift of Contentment

Գոհունակ Ըլլալու Շնորհքը

## Exodus 20: 17

We have arrived to the Tenth Word or Commandment (*not Suggestion*).

**I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.** (Exodus 20:1)

**“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 is your neighbor's.”** (Exodus 20:17 ESV)

**“You shall not covet your neighbor's house”**

When am I going to buy a house like this one?

Boy, I wish I had a swimming pool like theirs.

Honey, when are you going to ask your boss for a raise so we can have a bigger house...?

**“You shall not covet your neighbor's wife”**

I wish my wife was beautiful as our neighbor's wife.

Why will my wife not age like my neighbor's wife?

If I married someone like our neighbor's husband, I would be happier.

**“or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey,”**

I love my neighbor's car. Man, I wish I had that car.

I hate my car.

Our neighbor goes to vacation so many times. When are we going to go to

Hawaii? Honey, we can go only to your mom's house for vacation.

I hate my job ... see how great they are doing... always buying new stuff and going to parties... what's wrong with me?

**“or anything that is your neighbor's.”**

I wish I was as smart and good looking as my neighbor.

How in the world they keep eating and not gaining weight?

When are we going to be a normal family?

Why my journey is hard, and everyone else's life is easy?

If only I have, if only, the **cruse** of if only....երանի այս ալ ունենայի

Ok, Ok, Ok, I get it, so many of you have questions. There is nothing wrong to notice that your neighbor has something new, different, better than yours. The issue is most of us don't stop just noticing. How come noticing leads us to sin?

Let me shift our eyes to look at ife a different way:

-Can you thank God for whatever you have?

-Can you thank God that God blessed your neighbor?

The question is, what do we do when we notice things?<sup>1</sup>

### **-What is the problem?**

The problem is **our heart**. We **keep asking for more** without contentment and satisfaction. Always wanting more and more and more... and whatever we want, it does not belong to us.

**To covet**, which means: "to crave, to yearn for after something that belongs to someone else."<sup>2</sup>

John L Mackay, OT scholar defines: "a consuming desire to possess in a wrong way something that belongs to another."<sup>3</sup>

Simple definition: "wanting something that it does not belong to you. **A selfish desire** that leads you to trouble."

- We have arrived at the 10<sup>th</sup> Word.

J.I. Packer says: "God's searchlight moves from actions to attitude, from motions to motives, from forbidden deeds to forbidden desire."<sup>4</sup>

The first Nine commandments have verbs describing an action, an outward action. This one, it deals with the inside, it deals with our heart.

"Idol making, Sabbath breaking, dishonoring authorities, murders, theft, adultery, all are identified from the outside....yet, covetousness, it is heart issue" says Jen Wilken. She adds : "the 10 words progress from "Don't do it" to "Don't say it" to "Don't even think about it."<sup>5</sup>

### **Let me give you biblical examples:**

-It all started in the garden of Eden. Before Eve taking the forbidden fruit, she coveted it. "**So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.** (Gen 3:6 ESV)

It was not that the beauty of the fruit made her to take from that tree; she was tempted by Satan to envy; she was deceived; she was told that by eating from the tree she would be like God. She took something that did not belong to her. Adam was part of this issue as well; it was not just Eve's desire. How about with Cain and Abel?

-Let us take from the life of King David. David sinned by taking Bathsheba. How many laws did he break?

It all started with David's covetousness (10<sup>th</sup> Commandment); he had an affair with her (7<sup>th</sup> Commandment); he stole the neighbor's wife (8<sup>th</sup> Commandment); he wanted to cover it by sending her husband Uriah to front line to be killed (6<sup>th</sup> commandment). (Read 2 Samuel 11). Tragedy...

-King Ahab had the desire to take his neighbor Naboth's vineyard. King Ahab had an eye on this land, thinking how he would develop it, he would use it to grow vegetables...(1 King 21). King Ahab wanted to buy the land. Naboth knew the OT laws, and it was forbidden to sell the inherited lands (Lev 25:23). Lands belonged to God, and they were given to the Israelites to use it. Everyone should hold the land belonging to their family (Numbers 36:7). Jezebel, Ahab's wife got involved and convinced her husband to pursue this desire. By bribing some people, they accused Naboth of blasphemy; they stoned the man and killed him. They took the land.

How many laws did they have break? False witness (9<sup>th</sup> Commandment); murder (6<sup>th</sup> Commandment); stealing the land (8<sup>th</sup> Commandment). It all started with coveting, a selfish desire to have more...(10<sup>th</sup>)

Imagine, because of a stupid land they killed Naboth. James says: **You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel.** (James 4:2,3 ESV)

Paul said it well: **"Put to death therefore .... evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry."** (Colossians 3:5 ESV)

Have you notices how Paul calls **coveting** and **idolatry**? Why?

Because the things we **covet become our new gods**. We start even "worshiping" them. These new gods control our mind and soul. No wonder Jesus said:

**For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.** (Matthew 6:21 ESV)

There is a reason the 10<sup>th</sup> Commandment came in the end.

If we break this commandment, we are breaking everything, all of the 9 Words.

"It is impossible to covet and love the Lord your God with all your heart and love your neighbor as yourself."<sup>6</sup>

Charles Swindoll quoted the following poem:

It was Spring, but it was Summer I wanted: the warm days, and the great outdoors.

It was Summer, but it was Fall I wanted: the colorful leaves and the cool, dry air.

It was Autumn, but it was Winter I wanted, the beautiful snow, and the joy of the holiday season.

It was a child, but it was adulthood I wanted: the freedom, and the respect.

I was 20, but it was 30 I wanted: to be mature, and sophisticated.

I was middle-aged, but it was 20 I wanted: the youth, and the free spirit.

I was retired, but it was middle-age that I wanted: the presence of mind, without limitations.

My life was over, but I never got what I wanted.<sup>7</sup>

How sad is the human heart which is never satisfied?

### **-Is desire sinful?**

Not all desires are sinful. Not all desires are selfish. We desire to work, it motivates us to do act, to plan, to draw, to invent, to create. We desire to serve God and each other; we have the desire to have a good lunch; we have the desire to make love to our spouse. **God created desires in us**, and they are healthy, especially when we the have desire **to Know God and have an intimate relationship with Him**.

-Desire can be corrupted by SIN. Desire leads us to covet, wanting more and more, and never get satisfied.

### **How should we approach this sin?**

#### **-The gift of being Content.**

God asked us to glorify Him in all circumstances. Do we trust God?

In coveting, we are rejecting that God knows our needs, and He can provide according this His will.

Thus "contentment means wanting what God wants for us rather than what we want for us."<sup>8</sup> Are you satisfied with God? Do you desire God?

Paul has seen so many good and bad days. In Philippians he says:

**"for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. <sup>12</sup> 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. (Phil 4:11b-12 ESV)**

How can Paul say this?

Where is the secret?

Jesus said:

**Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”** (Luke 12:15 ESV)

Do you see the issue? “For one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.” We are deceived when we think things (material) will give us contentment and satisfaction. They do not. It can give us a short, momentary enjoyment, then life goes on as usual, and nothing makes you happy.

“Paul has learned the secret of deep peace based on detachment from his outward circumstances. In whatever conditions of life he finds himself, he discovers the will of God for his situation.”<sup>9</sup>

The puritan Jeremiah Burroughs says:

“I find a sufficiency of satisfaction in my own heart, through the grace of Christ that is in me. Though I have not outward comforts and worldly conveniences to supply my necessities, yet I have a sufficient portion between Christ and my soul abundantly to satisfy me in every condition.”<sup>10</sup>

Gratitude is a great way to fight covetousness. Content heart is thankful heart. When I wake up the first thing, I usually say to myself: “thank you Jesus, it is new day.” Sometimes I have back pain and it is not easy to be thankful.

All we need is Jesus, literally Jesus.

We cannot keep these commandments without Jesus.

Through Jesus Christ we received forgiveness of my sins through his death and resurrection.

Through Jesus we received the promise of eternal life with God.

Through Jesus we received the promise that He will never forsake us and leave us.

This is my contentment.

**Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”<sup>6</sup> So we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?”** (Hebrews 13:7,6 ESV)

1. Kevin DeYoung, *The 10 Commandments*, p 157

2. Philip Graham Ryken, *Written in the Stone*, p 202

3. John L Mackay, *Exodus* P 354 from the book Philip Graham Ryken, *Written in the Stone*, p 202

4. J.I. Packer, *Keeping the 10 Commandments*, p 101
5. Jen Wilkin, *Ten Words to Live By*, p 140
6. Kevin DeYoung, *The 10 Commandments*, p 161
7. <https://marksanborn.com/blog/2012/02/21/the-poem-and-the-story/>
8. Philip Graham Ryken, *Written in the Stone*, p 212
9. Ralph Martin, *Tyndale Commentary*, Philippians p 182
10. Jeremiah Burroughs, *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment*, P18. from the book Philip Graham Ryken, *Written in the Stone*, p 213