

This week, as I was looking at Facebook, I saw where my first best friend received a great honor. He is now the head baseball coach at our high school and he was named Regional Coach of the Year. When I learned the news, I was so happy for him and my mind drifted back to all the time he and I spent in his yard practicing ball together.

As I searched my life for examples and illustrations related to this morning's message that same friend came to mind. One of the things we would play with at his house was one of those nets that you throw a ball into and it throws it back. Sure, I had a brick house that I could bounce a tennis ball off of, but I really coveted that net. He also had a really nice electronic football game that I coveted. And while we had an Atari, he had a Sega. I coveted that too.

I also distinctly remember coveting my cousin's baseball glove. All of my gloves were hand-me-downs. They were old and worn. My cousin had a Nolan Ryan model glove. Man, it was nice. I wanted it so bad.

As I pondered these instances of coveting, I started to actually feel pretty good about myself. Not because I had coveted those things but because I initially thought I had followed Paul's example and put away childish things like childhood coveting. Then I realized that that was only half true. Yes, I know longer coveted things like ball gloves and games. But I realized that now I coveted other things; adult things. I have coveted other people's financial situation, their success, or their lifestyle.

I realized that coveting is not something I had conquered. It is a sin that still creeps into my life. I believe that is the case for many of us. So this morning, as we begin our examination of our eyes we look at the 10th Commandment.

Scripture: Exodus 20:17

## I. Examining Our Eyes: Covetousness

### A. **Coveting**

1. What it mean to covet
  - a) Simply
    - (1) "To desire earnestly"
    - (2) Desires are not necessarily wrong
      - (a) God
        - (i) Ps. 68:16
        - (ii) Hos. 6:6
      - 2) Man
        - a) Ps. 42:1-2
        - b) Rom. 10:1
    - b) Sinfully
      - (1) To desire something that belongs to another
        - (a) Ex. 20:17
        - (b) Mk. 4:19
  2. What coveting looks like

- a) Coveting is not desiring something similar to what another has, it is desiring what they have
  - (1) “I wish I had their life.”
  - (2) “I wish I had their marriage”
  - (3) “I wish I had their money”

**B. Connection to the Heart**

- 1. Where coveting comes from
  - a) While covetousness begins with the eyes, it is rooted in the heart
    - (1) The heart is the governing center of desires
  - b) Covetousness occurs when we transition from admiring what others have with our eyes to wanting what they have within our hearts
- 2. What makes the 10th Commandment unique
  - a) The first nine Commandments deal with outward actions while the 10th deals with inward attitude

**C. Contentment is the Cure**

- 1. What to do about coveting
  - a) Align your desires with those of the Lord
    - (1) John 14:13-14
  - b) Accept your role in God’s plan
    - (1) Rom. 9:21; 2 Tim. 2:20-21
  - c) Attire yourself in Christ
    - (1) Rom. 13:14
  - d) Allow yourself to be content in the Lord
    - (1) 1 Tim. 6:6
    - (2) Phil. 4:11
    - (3) 2 Cor. 12:10
- 2. Where to focus our coveting eyes
  - a) Jesus
    - (1) Heb. 12:2
    - (2) Eph. 1:18

We’ve all heard the saying: “Life is always greener on the other side of the fence.” This speaks to our perception that others have it better than us. In 1976 humorist Erma Bombeck wrote a book that my parents had. It was entitled *The Grass Is Always Greener Over the Septic Tank*. I never read that book but I never forgot the title.

While I don’t know the exact content of the book, I know the lesson of the title. All we see is the grass and how green it is. It’s attractive and alluring. We want that grass. What we don’t take the time to do is ask ourselves why the grass is so green. What lies underneath that makes the soil produce such green grass? We don’t see the hard work that went into making the soil so fertile. We don’t see the feces that fertilize the ground and produces such green grass. We just covet the grass.

We look at another person’s marriage and covet it. We don’t see the effort to communicate that can be poignant and painful at times. We see another person’s financial

situation and want it. We don't see the sacrifices that were made to save. We observe someone's success and long for it. We don't see the work ethic that led to it.

Desire is not a bad thing when we desire God's glory and godliness. Desire becomes coveting when we long for what belongs to others. And such desire reveals that our eyes need refocusing and our heart needs fixing.

So do your eyes need to be refocused this morning? Do you need to stop looking at and longing for what others have? Do you need to focus your gaze upon God and long for his glory and the advancement of his kingdom?

If so, our invitation is your opportunity to confess and repent of your coveting and seek contentment in Christ.