

Exodus 20:17

The challenge of contentment



All of the earlier Commandments have an inward application, as well as a literal physical expression. This final one stands alone in being entirely about the heart – where our desires originate. Are we content simply to let desires well up into our feeling and thinking? Or should we set ourselves to do what the Bible says is possible (though clearly none too simple): “I have *learned* in whatever situation I am to be content” (Philippians 4:11)?

➤ What doesn't it ban?

Why ever did that strange use of the word “covet” happen?

Desire or ambition are not necessarily evil. They can be exceedingly good and totally appropriate (Psalm 73:25, Romans 15:20). But “covetousness” needs to be opposed. Notice Jesus' warning in Luke 12:15.

➤ Don't be limited by the literal

Think back to the early chapters of Genesis, and see how the Serpent and the woman handled “desire”. Was it wrong to desire to be “like God, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:5)? But was it wise to pursue this desire without reference to God himself (Genesis 3:6)?

Is the problem of our desires that we can refuse to search out *God's* take on those objects of our desires? Do we desire what is wrong? Or do we simply *not* sufficiently desire what is far better?

So do we really take to heart words like Psalms 34:10 and 84:11-12?

Which of this Commandments prohibitions are you most tempted by? Have you ever considered *why* these particular items trouble *you*?

➤ Flip it over

Instead of *capitulating* to covetousness, let us *cultivate* contentment. But *how*?

Consider: 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, Philippians 4:11-13, 1 Timothy 6:6-10, Romans 8:31-32, Hebrews 13:5-6.

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