

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Lesson Twenty

The Tenth Commandment (1): You Shall Not Covet

Burden to Impart:

Coveting is the inward source of many serious sins (lying, stealing, adultery, murder, (James 1:14-15)). Coveting not only destroys our love toward others, if it is not resisted and confessed to the Lord as sin, it will make our heart completely sad and miserable (1 Kings 21:4). It is "more blessed to give" (and will make us happier) than to receive (Acts 20:35), or to covet and take from others.

Memory Verse: 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.

Exodus 20:17

Facts to Teach:

1. To covet is to greatly desire something that you do not have, or that someone else has. This is not limited only to material things but may also be other qualities (beauty, intelligence, strength). (Have the children illustrate with some things they have coveted.)

2. The other nine commandments mainly deal with wrong and sinful actions; this commandment deals directly with our heart and thoughts. Though Paul could boast that he was able to keep all of the outward commandments (Phil. 3:6), he realized that before God he (as we all) was a sinner because in his heart he was covetous (Rom. 7:7).

3. Covetousness in the heart eventually leads to sin in the action (James 1:14-15). The first sin in the human race was caused by Eve's coveting the fruit that God had forbidden her to eat.

4. Examples of serious sins and problems caused by coveting are as follows:

a) Achan's sin of taking forbidden spoils from the enemy caused Israel's army to be defeated (Joshua 7:20-21).

b) King David forsook righteousness and committed adultery and murder due to coveting a neighbor's wife (2 Sam. 11:2-27).

c) King Ahab coveted his neighbor's vineyard so much that he became completely miserable (1 Kings 21:1-4). Eventually, his wife had the neighbor, Naboth, killed so the vineyard could be given to her husband.

(It would be sufficient to use only the story about King Ahab to illustrate how coveting corrupts us and makes us miserable.)