

BE CONTENT

Small Group Study Guide | July 14, 2024

GRACE
FELLOWSHIP

Discuss: How would you define the term “idolatry”?

Key Text: *“You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife. And you shall not desire your neighbor’s house, his field, or his male servant, or his female servant, his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.”* (Deuteronomy 5:21)

In Commandment #10, God forbids covetousness—the heart-attitude of lusting after another person’s possessions (or people in the person’s life) that does not rightfully belong to the desirer and is not rightfully his to long after. Setting your heart after anything that belongs to someone else with the attitude of “I want it, and I don’t want them to have it” indicates idolatry: *“Put to death therefore what is earthly in you...covetousness, which is idolatry”* (Col.3:5). It also indicates a heart of a malcontent: an individual who is dissatisfied with God’s plan and provision for their own life.

Discuss: According to Colossians 3:5, how does covetousness indicate idolatry?

Discuss: How can covetousness be a root cause behind disobeying the other nine Commandments?

Discuss: How can Jesus’ words in Matthew 5:28 about the heart and lust relate to Commandment #10?

1. Revelation – What is God teaching us about Himself in Commandment #10?

In Commandment #10, God is teaching us that His plan for our lives is good, and He wants us to be satisfied with it, not to lust after what others have. Commandment #10 is intended to encourage us to pursue the only thing that will ever bring us contentment and happiness: God Himself.

Matthew 6:33 assures us: *“Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”* God will provide everything we need to fulfill His plan for our lives if we will set Him, His righteousness, and His kingdom purposes first in our lives. When we desire Him first and foremost, which includes desiring His plan for our lives and the provisions He lovingly and wisely chooses to provide us, we won’t give in to temptations to covet what other people have.

Discuss: According to 1 Timothy 2:4 and 2 Peter 3:9, what is God’s plan He wants you to follow? How can following this prevent covetousness?

Discuss: According to 2 Peter 3:18, what is God’s plan He wants you to choose to follow? How can following this prevent covetousness?

Discuss: According to 1 John 3:24, what is God’s plan He wants you to choose to follow? How can following this prevent covetousness?

Discuss: According to Romans 8:29, what is God’s plan He wants you to choose to follow? How can following this prevent covetousness?

Discuss: According to Ephesians 2:10, what is God’s plan He wants you to choose to follow? How can this prevent covetousness?

2. Introspection – What is God teaching us about ourselves in Commandment #10?

God is teaching us in Commandment #10 that we struggle with being content with what God, in His good plan for our lives, chooses to provide. This dissatisfaction leads to covetousness—this is why Commandment #10 is necessary. The apostle Paul wrote these words in Philippians 4:11-12 while he was suffering difficult circumstances in prison for preaching the gospel: *“I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. 12 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.”* Note the following:

- The basis of Paul’s contentment was his internal commitment to Christ, not his external circumstances: *“I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content”* (v.11).
- The basis of Paul’s contentment was his spiritual security, not his material prosperity: *“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”* (v.12).

Discuss: Paul describes his contentment as something that he *“learned”* (v.11) over time and was a *“secret”* (v.12)—something that not many people know or experience. Why do you think contentment is reached through a learning process, and why do you think so few people seem to know and experience this *“secret”* of true contentment?

3. Transformation – How does God want us to live per Commandment #10?

1 Timothy 6:6-8 says, *“But godliness with contentment is great gain, 7 for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. 8 But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.”*

Discuss: Take a closer look at 1 Timothy 6:6-8 and discuss these questions:

- What do you think is meant by *“godliness”* (v.6)?
- What do you think is meant by *“great gain”* (v.6)?
- The word *“with”* (v.6) indicates that *“godliness”* (v.6) and *“contentment”* (v.6) must be combined to experience *“great gain”* (v.6). Why do you think godliness must be combined with contentment to experience great gain?
- Why does Paul specify that we *“brought nothing into the world”* (v.7) as a necessary perspective for experiencing great gain through godliness and contentment?
- Why does Paul specify that *“we cannot take anything out of the world”* (v.7) as a necessary perspective for experiencing great gain through godliness and contentment?
- Do you find it difficult to be *“content”* (v.8) with simply having *“food and clothing”* (v.8)? Why or why not?

For Further Study:

Free online study tools (commentaries, dictionaries, etc.) at blueletterbible.org

Ten Secrets of Successful Living: A Perfect 10 for Families That Win by Adrian Rogers

“What the Life of Jesus Teaches Us about Contentment” article at crosswalk.com