



The Ninth Commandment— A Heart Condition

WISH LISTS

In the box, list 10 things you wish you could have.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

How would you feel if you received all 10 things on your wish list?

How long do you think you'd be happy if you got the 10 things on your list?

How soon do you think you would be making a new wish list?

Read the parable in Luke 12:16-21.

1. What was on the rich man's wish list? (v. 19)

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

2. What did God call this seemingly successful man?

3. What was missing from his life?

A THIN LINE

Wanting something isn't necessarily wrong. What does Jesus tell us in **Matthew 7:7** about the things we want?

Wanting does become a problem when we yearn for something that is not God-pleasing. We cross over that thin line between acceptable and unacceptable wanting when we covet. We cross over that thin line when we want something that is not intended for us or is available only at someone else's loss or expense. Coveting makes us greedy for more, and discontent with what we have. When we covet, our will displaces God's will for our lives.

The Ninth Commandment

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not scheme to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, or get it in a way which only appears right, but help and be of service to him in keeping it.

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Coveting involves sinful thoughts and feelings. It is not a behavior that can be seen. It starts in the heart, and often leads to sinful actions. Draw a line between each covetous thought and the sinful action it led to.

B.J. wanted the basketball Dad bought for his brother.

B.J. took a new jacket from the *Lost & Found* and said it was his.

B.J. had to have all the music of his favorite rock group.

B.J. told dirty jokes to make his friends laugh.

B.J. was jealous of the nice clothes the other guys had.

B.J. made illegal copies from a friend's tape.

B.J. wanted to be popular no matter what he had to do.

B.J. lied, saying his brother was going to quit the team.

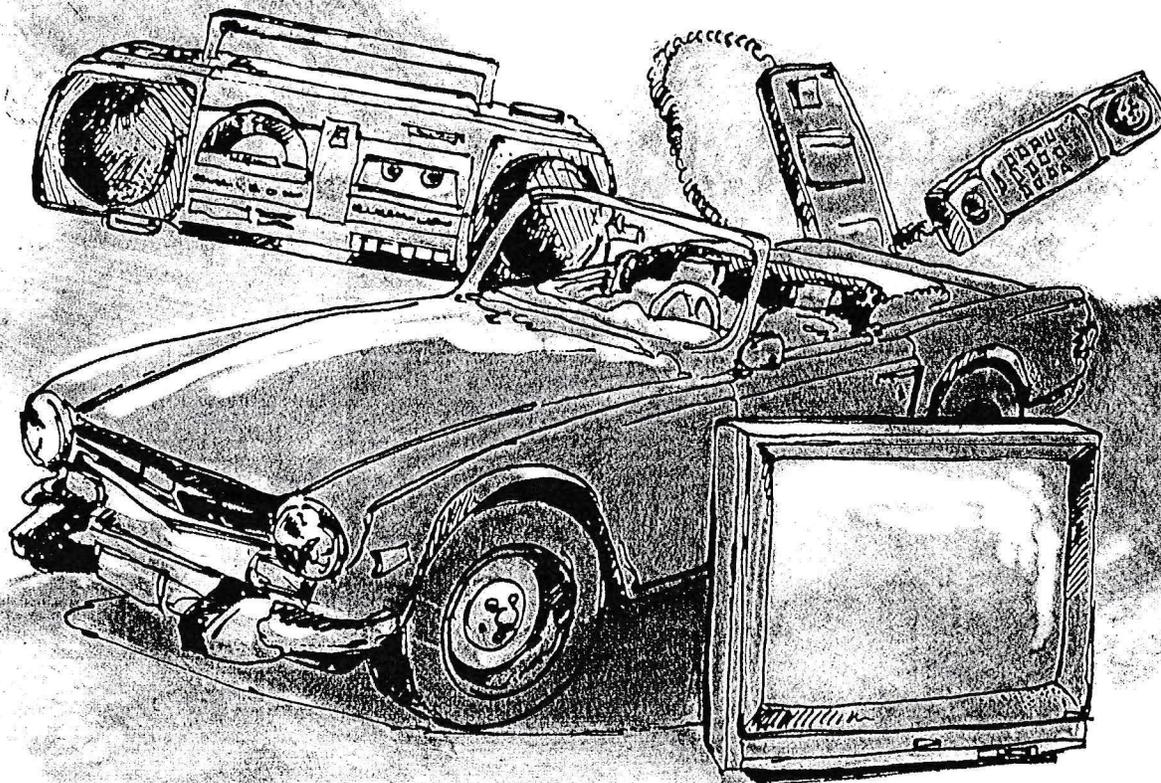
A CHANGE OF HEART

It's hard to be content because often what we want and what God wants are two different things! What does that tell us?

Only Jesus can turn us from following our own will to follow God's will. He calls us to repentance. He offers us forgiveness through His death on the cross. He offers us a clean heart through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Bible tells us that as God looked for a new king for Israel, the Lord "sought out a man after His own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14). God's choice was David—a sinner, but one in whom God created a clean

heart and renewed a right spirit (See Psalm 51:10 RSV). Because the Lord redeems you and sanctifies you, you too can be a person "after His own heart." What is it like to be that kind of person?



FIRST THINGS FIRST

With the help of Holy Spirit,

- when our priorities are in order,
 - when our will aligns with God's will,
 - when we realize that God wants what is best for us,
 - when we recognize that God will provide for us,
 - when we are thankful for all God's gifts to us,
- we will be satisfied!**
What does Jesus say about this? (See **Matthew 6:33.**)

SATISFIED, AT LAST

Read catechism question **89** and the accompanying Bible texts. Then write a paragraph telling what you have learned about being content.

Make a list of things you have that make you happy. As you write, silently thank God for these things.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

TO REVIEW AND REMEMBER

Hebrews 13:5b: Be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

The Ninth Commandment and its explanation.



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The Tenth Commandment— Encourage Faithfulness

COVETING, AGAIN?

The Tenth Commandment

You shall not covet
your neighbor's
wife, or his manser-
vant or maidservant,
his ox or donkey, or
anything that
belongs to your
neighbor.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love
God so that we do not
entice or force away our
neighbor's wife, work-
ers, or animals, or turn
them against him, but
urge them to stay and do
their duty.

The Ninth Commandment refers to coveting possessions, while the Tenth refers to coveting living things. The Tenth is about relationships and faithfulness and responsibilities. It is not wrong to like someone's pet, or to want a friend's friend to be your friend, or to try to win business away from the competition. But it is wrong if this is accomplished by lying or cheating. And it is wrong if it destroys someone else's relationship.

ANOTHER THIN LINE

In each of the following situations, draw a large X to indicate the point at which an ordinary interest becomes sinful coveting and sinful action.

a. Natalie, Jacklin, Whitney, and Shanika were all friends. Natalie wanted Shanika to be her best friend. So she started a rumor saying, "I wouldn't trust Jacklin and Whitney, if I were you. I heard they've been laughing at you behind your back."

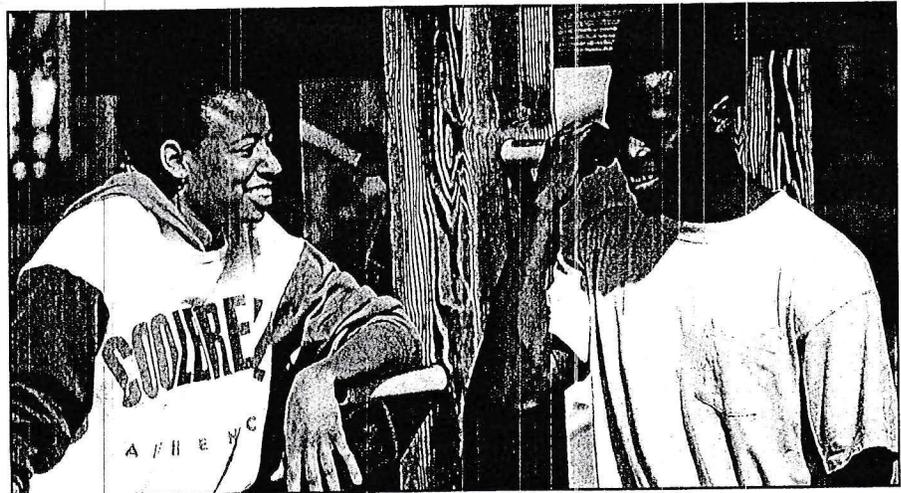
b. Mr. Arkin slashed prices at his store, hoping to bring in new customers. But most people continued to go to Mr. Jenkins' store. Finally Mr. Arkin found a plan that worked. He falsified an order under an assumed name and sent it to Mr. Jenkins. Soon customers flocked in because the Jenkins store was busy processing a large order and had no products available for them.

c. More than anything Kelvin wanted to be elected class president. He worked hard mak-

ing posters and putting up banners. He also made an important deal. He knew that Jarret, the most popular kid in school, had a lot of influence and had been backing Maria for president. So he slipped Jarret two \$20 bills so he would tell the other kids to vote for Kelvin.

d. It was the afternoon of the neighborhood block party. Mrs. Chen was sitting by the pool complaining that her husband was out of town, working again. Mr. Romano tried to cheer her up, saying, "You're right, he really is a jerk. I'd never treat you that way. We'll probably have a better time at this party without him anyway."

e. Whenever she was at Cassie's house, Michelle would watch TV and hold Cassie's cat Puffer in her lap. Michelle would never try to "kittynap" Puffer. That would be stealing. However, if Puffer came over to eat the kitty-snacks Michelle always put on the porch (and eventually decided to stay at Michelle's), that was Puffer's choice.



CROSSING THE LINE

Too often we do not recognize or want to admit when we have crossed over the line from wanting something to coveting (wanting what belongs to someone else, and even plotting to get it). So God has given us the Law to show us His will. St. Paul writes in **Romans 7:7**, "Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the Law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the Law had not said, 'Do not covet.'"

We need help—and help we have, through the cross of Christ. God is ever faithful, even though by sinning we have been unfaithful. What does God's Word promise to us? (See **1 John 1:9**.)

God calls us to repentance—to confess and turn from our sin and live as His people. We are enabled to do this through the power of the Holy Spirit working in us.

EVER FAITHFUL

Using a dictionary and a thesaurus as a reference, tell what the word *faithful* means.

What do these Bible verses tell you about the faithfulness of God?

a. **Lamentations 3:22–23.**

b. **Psalm 33:4.**

c. **Psalm 145:13.**

d. **Psalm 146:6.**

God is our example of faithfulness. And He desires that we be His faithful people. In doing so, and led by the Holy Spirit to be faithful to God, we will be faithful in our relationships with others, and we will encourage them to remain faithful in their own relationships.



