

The Ten Commandments
Covetous or Content?
Exodus 20:17

There is a sense in American law that while motive matters in criminal activity, only the act of the crime is prosecuted. The legal system has tried to include motive in matters of so-called hate crimes in order to inflict greater sentencing, but still, criminal activity must occur before the motive can be attached to it. What the legal system has discovered, is what most of us have known all along, that we are ill-equipped to know what is in a person's heart.

1. Covetousness is a violation of the heart.
2. Covetousness is inherently tied to idolatry.
3. Covetousness is remedied by contentment.

Hebrews 13:5 says, "Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have." What is most important is that we do whatever we do for the glory of the Lord and His kingdom and be content in Him. Our hearts are naturally inclined towards covetousness. The good news is that the gospel promises a new heart, one that finds contentment, value, and meaning not in the things of this world, but in the finished work of Christ and His cross.

For further consideration:

How do you evaluate your desires? Do they reflect a covetous or a content heart? Is it wrong to desire things? How do you find the balance between self-denial and self-indulgence? What are some of the things (stuff, relationships, circumstances) that you are most likely to covet? Are there people in your life that cause you to envy or stir jealousy in your heart? What can you do to change that envy? How does this tenth commandment build into the Old Testament law those matters of the heart that Jesus pointed out in His Sermon on the Mount? How do we keep our hearts and display in our actions a contentment that glorifies God and His kingdom?