

DO NOT COVET

Scripture used: Exodus 20:17 (NLT), James 4:1-3 (NIV)

OVERVIEW

This week's sermon wraps up the ten-week series on the Ten Commandments. These laws, handed down by God to the Israelites, are blessings that should help us shape our daily lives. This week we turn to covetousness, the desire for what others have based on fear that we do not have enough. Exodus 20:17 (NLT) Coveting begins with our hearts, so we must carefully guard them. As a direct contrast to coveting, Jesus offers us the example of deep, loving relationships. These relationships are the only dependable source of the things that we need. Each of us will be blessed when we love God first and our neighbors second, as commanded in the Scriptures. James 4:1-3 (NIV)

KEY POINTS

- 1) **Covetousness is relational, but not measurable**
 - Unlike the other relational Commandments (such as stealing or murdering), coveting cannot be measured. Instead, it is experienced purely in our own hearts. That means covetousness can only be addressed by guarding our hearts, as we read in Proverbs 4:23 (NLT).
 - Covetousness is based on a blend of three forces:
 - Desires that are unfulfilled
 - Perceptions that are broken
 - Fears that are unfounded
- 2) **Covetousness driven by fear helps explain the recent tragedies across the United States**
 - We are tempted to see these incidents as racially motivated, but they are actually driven by fear.
 - Fear pulled the trigger, not a white police officer. He was afraid that he would be killed by a large black man who had a gun.
 - Fear pulled the trigger, not a young black man. He was afraid that the injustices against the African-American community would continue.
- 3) **Jesus offers us a different example**
 - Jesus wants us to transform each aspect of our daily lives so that we become more like Him in:
 - Our character
 - Our conduct
 - Our capacity to love others
 - Jesus demonstrated how love can be applied through mature relationships to cast out unhealthy desires, broken perspectives, and groundless fears.
- 4) **Each of us has a responsibility to break down covetousness**
 - As a part of His church, we need to live His example. Each one of us can help others move past surface level diversity into true relational love.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** It's easy to blame "others" when we think about the recent episodes of violence. With all these temptations, how are you guarding your heart? How are you trying to speak and act from love?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** Our desires, perspectives, and fears often drive covetous behavior. When do you let your brokenness have the last word before you act?
- 3) **DO & PRAYER** God doesn't want fear to rule our lives. He wants us to be free from sin, and to develop mature relationships based on love. Prayer is a great first step, but we also need to "Be the hope!" that others are looking for. Commit now to break down racial boundaries by sharing your stories with at 10 others over the next three months, and asking them to do the same.