



The final commandment states: “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbors wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor” (Exodus 20:17). While the other commandments addressed outward actions, this one focuses on the inner attitude.

To covet something (as addressed in this commandment) is to desire that which is not one’s own and which belongs to someone else. Another way to look at it is a legitimate desire gone wrong or out of proportion. As Barclay observed, “Desire cannot be eradicated from the heart of man. Man will always covet something. And it is only when Jesus Christ reigns within his heart that the desire for the wrong will be eradicated and the desire for the good will be the dynamic of life.”

It is said that there are at least two ways to be rich. One is to have a lot of possessions, and the other is to have few needs! Pascal, the renown French philosopher and mathematician, put those needs in perspective, saying “There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every man that cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God the creator made known through Jesus Christ.”

1. What does it mean to covet and why would it be forbidden?  
(compare 1 Corinthians 12:31, 1 Timothy 3:1)
2. What reasons can you think of for including a list of specific examples?  
How does this relate to earlier commandments?
3. What are some of the things that people covet?  
Exodus 20:17, 2 Samuel 11 re. David  
  
1 Timothy 6:10, Joshua 6&7 re. Achan  
  
Matthew 23:5-7; Luke 22:24-27
4. Why is this commandment is placed last in the list? (Colossians 3:5, compare to Exodus 20:3-4)
5. When and why do we covet? (1 John 2:15-17)
6. What is the cure for coveting? (Matthew 6:33; 2 Corinthians 10:5; Philippians 4:4-12)

*“I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation.”*  
*Philippians 4:11-12*

Outward actions to inward thoughts

Achan covetousness Joshua 6,7 esp 7:20-26 brought disaster to nation, death to himself

Rom 7:7-12 that which is forbidden becomes desireable

Prov 21:26

To covet something is to desire something which is not one's own and which belongs to someone else. Not necessarily bad, because might desire great qualities. So, must add, "which one has no right to have or to possess.

To have more

(Barclar, p188)

Legitimate desires gone wrong or out of proportion

1. for material things (1 Tim 6:10)
2. for status; Pharisees (Matt 23:5-7) disciples (Luke 22:24-27)
3. for people, neighbor's wife
4. idolatry (col 3:5)

Why do we covet?

Believe that to get what we have not got will bring happiness

Be content with what you have phil 4:11-12, heb 13:5

Proper Relationship with self, others, God

Concentrates on unjustified interference in the life of the NEIGHBOR

Not a prohibition to appreciate the beauty of the neighbor's wife or to desire to have goods like the neighbor has

Coveting things that belong to God (sacrifices, tithes) or king (tax)

Eph 5:3

Not wrong for developing nations to want to goods or quality of life of developed countries

Clear misuse of Scripture for rich to impose this command on the poor

Benjamin Franklin: "Contentment makes poor men rich; discontentment makes rich men poor."

10<sup>th</sup> commandment summarizes the Law. "There is absolutely no way a person can break any one of the other nine commandments without first breaking the tenth. The tenth commandment lies at the root of all sin." Bill

Bright

Solution: Love your neighbor, & "Take thoughts captive to Christ"