

Our Thoughts Determine Our Action

The specific purpose of this article is to look at one of the Ten Commandments recorded in God's Word, the Christian Bible.

Exodus 20:17 [New King James] *“You shall not covet your neighbour’s house; you shall not covet your neighbour’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbour’s.”*

With this commandment we step out of the world of words and deeds into the inner life of thought and desires.

One commentator stated that all public crime would cease if this one commandment was kept.

This world’s society promotes coveting –

Isaiah 2:7-8 [NIV] *“Their land is full of silver and gold; there is no end to their treasures. Their land is full of horses; there is no end to the chariots. Their land is full of idols; they bow down to the work of their hands, to what their fingers have made.”*

Society glorifies physical prosperity.

People worship material things that their own hands have made.

Lust for desirable things is very powerful and difficult for a Christian to deal with.

We begin to gratify our desires from day one of our physical life, protesting when they are **not** satisfied.

At a young age society teaches us to compete with other human beings to be sure we get things before they do.

On the pretext of “getting more out of life” humans are constantly in a hurry.

A hurry to have a “good time.”

A hurry to gather more things.

The “get principle” reaches into every aspect of life.

Ecclesiastes 1:8 [New King James] *“All things are full of labour; man cannot express it. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.”*

Advertisers use this desire to sell us more physical things or experiences.

Ecclesiastes 5:10-11 [New King James] *“He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also is vanity. When goods increase, they increase who eat them; so what profit have the owners except to see them with their eyes?”*

If we love abundance we will never be satisfied.

Where does this coveting end up? –

Mark 4:18-19 [New King James] *“Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in **choke the word**, and it becomes unfruitful.”*

These desires for physical things will “choke the word.” **That is such a mind will not find time for the Word of God, the Christian Bible, so will become “spiritually unfruitful.”**

We become pre-occupied with the desire for physical things and physical experiences, all of which will end at death, [Ecclesiastes 2:18-19] and not allowing the Holy Spirit to develop the character of our Creator God in us, [Galatians 5:22-23] that we will take with us through death into eternal life.

What is your heart and mind set on?

Matthew 5:27-28 [New King James] “*You have heard that it was said to those of old, “You shall not commit adultery.” But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*”

Jesus Christ’s focus is not the physical misuse of another human being, but He gets right to the very heart of the matter, by insisting on pure thoughts.

If the thoughts are pure, there will be **no** adultery.

Jesus Christ sets the standard, sin lies first in the mind.

Matthew 5:29-30 [New King James] “*If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.*”

Jesus Christ is telling us that we need amputate the desires for sin.

Neither our eyes nor our hands cause us to sin, sin is caused in the mind.

Imagination or vision can be a wonderful gift from the Creator God. But if we feed them with sinful thoughts they become sin that in the end the Creator God will be forced to destroy, for there will be **no** place for such a mind in the Kingdom of God, the created family of God, [Malachi 4:1-3].

Temptation creates the desire to covet –

1 John 2:15-17 [New King James] “*Do Not Love the World: Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.*”

If our desires to possess, nurtures the imagination so it begins to influence our thoughts, somewhere in that process we will cross the line and covet which may well lead to a sinful act.

Proverbs 28:16 [New King James] “*A ruler who lacks understanding is a great oppressor, but he who hates covetousness will prolong his days.*”

Hate covetousness, don’t feed it. Do **not** allow a simple desire lead to its obsession. If certain books, pictures, magazines, places or people elicit wrong desires, stay away from these situations in your life.

Know your own weaknesses and avoid the problems they can bring.

Covetousness is really idolatry –

Colossians 3:1-5 [New King James] “*If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life*

appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”

Covetousness is an insatiable desire to have what belongs to others. It is arrogant and self-seeking, thinking things exist for your benefit. Such a desire is more than our desire for things of God so is idolatry.

Matthew 6:31-34 [New King James] *“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”*

If our thoughts are foremost on the Kingdom of God, that is becoming a created child of God, we will not be coveting what this world can offer us.

No physical thing can give us lasting joy, for joy is one of the “*fruits*” of the active indwelling of the Holy Spirit, [**Galatians 5:22-23**] physical things can **only** offer a limited period of happiness as long as circumstances that made them available do **not** change.

How do we defeat covetousness? –

Every human being is subject at some time to wrong desires.

Colossians 3:5 [New King James] *“Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”*

We have to put these thoughts to death, by instant rejection.

Colossians 3:9-10 [NIV] *“Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.”*

What Paul is saying under the inspiration of Jesus Christ, change. Identify all covetous thoughts, resist and reject them.

Hebrews 4:12 [New King James] *“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”*

God’s Word, the Christian Bible, is essential in our victory over coveting, for it helps us to discern our thoughts. Compare our thoughts with what the Christian Bible tells us what they should be.

Only the Word of God, the Christian Bible, can be the standard by which we can judge what is right or wrong.

Philippians 4:8 [New King James] *“Meditate on These Things: Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy, meditate on these things.”*

We need to feed our minds on the good things that the Creator God has given us and be thankful towards Him for them all, [Colossians 2:6-7; Colossians 4:2; Philippians 4:6; Ephesians 5:20].

If we are filling our thoughts and prayers to the Creator God with thankfulness we will find contentment, [**Philippians 4:11-13**] and our thoughts of coveting will fade.

Colossians 3:12-17 [NIV] *“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”*

If our lives are full of these things we will be so busy that we won’t have time for coveting sins, they will be crowded out.

Titus 2:11-14 [NIV] *“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.”*

Here is a summary of the Grace of God, that teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to be zealous for good works.

Jesus Christ has redeemed us from the power that causes us to sin and He has given the power of the Holy Spirit, to all who obey His Words, [**Acts 5:32**] who desire to overcome their old nature of lust and covetousness.

We have to do our part by guarding the door to our mind and realise that it is our thoughts that determine our actions.