

10th Commandment

The final commandment on the Stone Tablets expressly concerns itself with the hearts of men and women. The first nine commandments are concerned with the outward, physical expressions and actions but the last law of the Decalogue deals directly with the heart. "Do not covet" goes to desire, thought, and contemplation of both the heart and mind. The first nine laws of the Old Testament, as we have discovered in this series, have all been advanced to a higher level of responsibility by followers of Jesus in the New Testament, and this last law is no different. Perhaps the best example of God dealing with coveting in the NT, can be found in Acts 5.1-11 with the story of Ananias and his wife, Sapphira. This married couple is presumed to be Christian. As such, they have responded to the preaching of probably Peter, or another disciple, and committed their lives to service in the early church. Acts 2.45 records that after 3,000 were baptized on the day of Pentecost, the Christians sold their possessions and goods and gave to everyone who had a physical need. This story in Acts 5 is about one couple not quite convinced about this sharing project. They wanted to participate but only in a pretentious way. Selling their property was a big step for anyone to do, but Ananias and his wife conspired to falsify the proceeds and keep the difference for themselves. Peter, thru the Holy Spirit, is aware of the avarice and covetousness remaining in the hearts of these pretentious believers. He explains to the husband, that the land was his to keep or sell, and that he made a choice to sell. His coveting mind, along with that of his wife, however, made them both pretend to be all for Christ on the surface yet not all with Christ from the heart. Peter admonishes Ananias, "How is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit?" Ananias drops dead in front of Peter upon the exposure to this coveting plot. Shortly after, Sapphira arrives not knowing of her husband's fate, and is asked the same question by Peter. She is step-for-step with her husband in her answer and true to form she falls dead, as well, at Peter's feet upon hearing Peter's response to her. The news of these events caused great fear among all of the church members that day. This "fear", however, became a positive response in prompting a great increase in the number of believers to serve the Risen Savior, not in pretention, but with a whole-heart. There, in Jerusalem, 5,000 men, not counting women, had become followers of Christ, according to Acts 4.4, and now after God, thru Peter, dealt severely with a pair of coveting hearts, "more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number," Acts 5.14. The Church indeed had now started and the gates of evil and hell will never prevail against it!

Jesus declared in Luke 6.43-45, "The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks." Ananias (and his wife) spoke out of the overflow of his heart. His "evil" was coveting his old life and not fully embracing the new life, pretending to be someone he wasn't, demonstrating insincere actions to others as a sacrificial believer, and claiming to look like a Christian by what he outwardly did but not having a heart for God. "For where your treasure is there will your heart be also", Luke 12.34, rang sadly but powerfully true on the opening bell of Christian service in Jerusalem thru this pair of coveting "Christians". In view of this sobering message, two songs come to mind that should inspire us to uphold not only the 10th commandment but all 10 commandments as this series comes to a close---- "Purer in heart, O God, help me to be...May I devote my life wholly to thee...Keep me from secret sin...Reign Thou my soul within...Purer in heart...Help me to be" and "Give me thy heart,

says the Spirit divine, All that thou hast, to My keeping resign; Grace more abounding is Mine to impart, make full surrender and give Me thy heart” are lyrics of special songs that speak to our need for a 100% heart for God and God’s abounding grace of provision when we fall---- thru Jesus our Lord, our Redeemer, and our Savior, Amen. Friends, may we “show that we are letters from Christ, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of the human heart “

2 Cor 3.3

Sj—6/14