



Exodus 20:17

REDEEMING OUR DESIRES

The NT has lots to say about self-denial, but not about self-denial as an end in itself. We are told to deny ourselves and to take up our crosses in order that we may follow Christ; and nearly every description of what we shall ultimately find if we do so contains an appeal to desire. If there lurks in most modern minds the notion that to desire our own good and earnestly to hope for the enjoyment of it is a bad thing, I submit that this notion has crept in from Kant and the Stoics and is no part of the Christian faith. Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that our Lord finds our desires, not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.

—C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*

The Ten Commandments reveal God's righteous character. They also summarize the foundational principles for ethics and for life.

- A Relationship to God—Heart** (20:3-6)
 - B Relationship to God—Words (20:7)
 - C Relationship to God—Deeds (20:8-11)
 - D Relationship to Family—Heart, Words, Deeds** (20:12)
 - C Relationship to Others—Deeds (20:13-15)
 - B Relationship to Others—Words (20:16)
- A Relationship to Others—Heart** (20:17)

THE COMMAND

You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's. (Exodus 20:17; cf. Deut. 5:21)

Covet. What I have a strong _____ for; what my heart wants.

Neighbor. The one near me; any person that I may encounter in life.

House, wife, male servant, female servant, ox, donkey, or anything.
The life, spouse, family, position, work, wealth, possessions, social standing, or anything else that my neighbor has that is not mine.

Not. A strong desire for that which God has not intended for me is destructive to my relationship with God, with others, and to myself.

Surely this last word of the Decalogue must bring every soul who honestly faces it into the place of conviction of sin and...utter helplessness. —G. Campbell Morgan

The heart is the center of all the vital activities of body, soul, and spirit. It is the center of a man's personality. —Oswald Chambers

Covet. Heb., *chamad*, "to desire, covet, take pleasure in, lust for."

House. Heb., *bayit*, "house, household, family." Used 2055x in OT.

Desire is infinite partly because we were made by God, made for God, made to need God... We can be satisfied only by the One who is infinite, eternal, and able to supply all our needs... When we fall away from God, the desire for the infinite remains, but it is displaced upon things that will certainly lead to destruction. —Dallas Willard

O God, You are my God; earnestly I seek You; my soul thirsts for You. My whole being longs for You in a dry and parched land where there is no water. —David (Ps. 63:1)

THE REASON

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. —Genesis 3:6

- A right desire leads to _____ (cf. 2:18-25).
- A wrong desire leads to _____ (cf. 2:16-17).

THE PRINCIPLES

1. The desires of my heart _____ my true God/god.

God gave them over in the desires of their hearts to immorality ... who exchanged the truth of God with a lie, and worshiped and served the creation rather than the Creator. (Romans 1:24-25; cf. Matthew 6:24)

2. The desires of my heart _____ my focus in life.

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:21)

3. The desires of my heart _____ my actions.

Every good tree produces good fruit, but a bad tree produces bad fruit. (Matthew 7:17; cf. Prov. 4:23; Gal. 5:16-23; James 1:13-15)

4. The desires of my heart _____ my relationships.

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? (James 4:1)

5. The desires of my heart _____ my emotions.

Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? (Gen. 4:6)

6. The desires of my heart _____ my detection.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Who can know it? (Jeremiah 17:9; cf. Psalm 139:23-24)

7. The desires of my heart _____ God's complete redemption.

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you. (Ezek. 36:26)

A desire for a good thing becomes a bad thing when that desire becomes a ruling thing.

—Paul David Tripp

The desires of my heart will determine the direction of my life and ultimately my eternal destiny.

—Thomas A. Tarrants

The first and the great work of a Christian is about his heart.

—Jonathan Edwards (1703-58)

The heart is the rudder of the soul, and till the Lord take it in hand we steer in a false and foul way.

—Charles H. Spurgeon

If my heart is the source of my sin problem, then lasting change must always travel through the pathway of my heart. It is not enough to alter my behavior or to change my circumstances. Christ transforms people by radically changing their hearts. If the heart doesn't change, the person's words and behavior may change temporarily because of external pressure or incentive. But when the pressure or incentive is removed, the change disappears.

—Paul David Tripp

The heart must be the principal point to which we attend in all the relations between God and our souls. What is the first thing we need, in order to be Christians? A new heart. What is the sacrifice God asks us to bring to him? A broken and a contrite heart. What is genuine obedience? To obey from the heart. What is saving faith? To believe with the heart.

—J. C. Ryle (1816-1900)

Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.

—David (Ps. 37:4)