

Only Jesus!

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[0 : 00] Well, hey, good morning. My name is Ray Sweet from First Christian Church in Greensburg, Indiana. As always, you can go check us out at FCCGreensburg.com or you can go to the FCC Greensburg Facebook page.

But thank you for tuning in today. Our heart is simply this. We want to get into the Word of God, but most of all, let that Word get into us and transform these hearts into the image of Christ.

Now, the famous radio broadcaster Paul Harvey once said, fathers are what give daughters away to other men who aren't nearly good enough so they can have grandchildren that are smarter than anybody's.

I want to tell you a story that I wish were true. One make-believe day, my kids were at the park and there were other kids there playing and they get to talking and one boy just blurts out that his dad makes more money than all the other dads.

He said, my dad just types out a few words on a document, calls it a poem, and they give him \$500. A little red-headed girl says, well, that's nothing.

[1 : 05] My dad types words on a document, calls it a song, and they give him at least \$1,500. And that's when one of my kids speaks up and says, sorry, we got your beat.

Our dad types out some words into a document, calls it a sermon, stands up and gives his talk, and it takes six men to collect all the money in the plates. Hey, happy Father's Day to you dads, because man, you really do have a high calling to love and lead your family well.

But we also just want to say a big thank you to all the boys, married with children or not, because you are loved, appreciated, and so important here at FCC.

But I really like that fictional joke that we started off with, because it makes a great point. Even at a young age, we start to think that our worth, our value, is determined by the size of our paycheck, the newness of our vehicle, the amount of square footage in our homes, the cool name that I give to my boat or RV, how good-looking I or my spouse is, and even how my dad can beat up your dad.

And yet most of us have discovered the hard way that Blaise Pascal was right when he once said, there is a God-shaped vacuum or hole in the heart of every person, and it can never be filled by any created thing.

[2 : 25] It can only be filled by God made known through Jesus Christ. So today, let's talk about the last of the Ten Commandments. We're going to end our series today, our series called Ten.

It's been 11 weeks now. I love it. It's been awesome. But today is the last week, and we're going to talk about not coveting what belongs to others. Now, I've got to tell you, I didn't know what to expect when coming into this series.

But over the last almost three months, God has dealt with some things in my heart. Because what we may have seen before as just a moral list of do's and don'ts is now hopefully understood as what Alistair Begg calls a pathway to freedom.

For those of us on this side of history, this side of the cross, we stand before these commandments feeling the pressure of our guilt, realizing as Romans has taught us that all of us have sinned, and because of that sin, we fall short of the glory of God.

And the correct response to that separation from God is to come running home to Jesus to discover forgiveness, grace, and hope.

[3 : 35] See, God's Word says that He is the only name under heaven by which man must be saved. And once we experience and walk in the salvation of Christ, then we approach these commands no longer in shame, but now with a desire to be like Jesus.

To live my life pursuing the heart of God, being a willing vessel that says, just like the prophet Isaiah, here am I, send me.

And it's really cool. If you remember back to the first part of this series, we talked about how the very first commandment to have no other gods, that kind of sets the stage for all ten. If you can try to wrap your mind around how awesome your God is, and how anything else that we attempt to worship pales in comparison, because it's phony.

If you can obey this one, the very first one, and put Him on the throne of your heart, then you've laid that foundation of loving God with all your heart, soul, and mind.

Then we talked about how commandment number five kind of sets the stage for the last six commandments. If we can learn how to honor our parents, then we've laid a great foundation of respect, where we can truly learn how to love our neighbor well.

[4 : 49] And then today, we look at number ten in Exodus 20, 17, that simply says, you shall not covet your neighbor's house, you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, both of those people still do.

But listen to this, this fits their context a little more. Or, his male or female servant, by the way, the picture of slavery we may have in our minds, was very different from what a servant looked like in those days.

He says, or, his ox or his donkey. Now, I doubt any of us are going around saying, man, that guy's ox, pretty impressive. I wish I had it, right? But I love the last sentence of Exodus 20, 17, because this covers everything.

Or, anything that belongs to your neighbor. Do not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor. And you know what? This is a great bookend on these commands, because while you can sort of measure the first nine with more observable behavior, this last one makes it abundantly clear that God looks at the intentions of the heart that maybe no one else can see.

And he calls us to purity, not just in our outward actions, but also in our thoughts, our motives, and our desires. So, what does it mean for us to covet?

[6 : 03] MiriamWebster.com defines coveting as, to desire wrongfully or without due regard for the rights of others. In other words, it belongs to someone else.

Don't even let your heart get going in that direction where it takes over and leads you to unhealthy places. Or, to put a little bit of a positive spin on this, find your contentment in Christ and not in what others have.

Now, as Americans who obviously live in the wealthiest country in the history of the world, we are surrounded by so many lies. And it's easy to buy into the cultural beliefs that you're immersed in, even when they go against the heart of God.

So, I'm going to be what one of my Bible college professors jokingly encouraged us to be. He said, you guys got to be good spiritual thieves. And what he was talking about was just studying stuff well, learning from others, and quoting them and giving them credit.

And so, I'm going to do that right now. I'm going to give Chip Ingram some credit because I really like how he laid out this command. But he talked about contentment killing lies.

[7 : 12] And let me just share two of those with you. The first one is the lie that it's never enough. It's never enough. John D. Rockefeller, one of the richest men in the history of our country, was once asked, how much money does it take to be happy?

And this was his answer. Just a little bit more. And while we can point to the Elon Musk and the Bill Gates of the world and say, hey, don't look at me. I mean, those are the guys that got the private jets and the fancy cars and the mansions all over the world.

They obviously have the problem, not me. They're all about having more and more and more. And yet, there are people who could point to you and to I or to me and say, wow, they have a car.

They have a house with multiple rooms that doesn't have dirt floors. They have safe drinking water that runs into their home. They have a whole closet full of clothes.

They have multiple pairs of shoes they can wear depending on their outfit. They have a cell phone. And while we have to be grateful for what we have, it's easy to always want more, to never be satisfied.

[8 : 23] See, that's the heart behind this command. And Satan pushes us to always be comparing what we have to what others have. Just a little bit more. If they can afford a new car, why shouldn't I have one?

They drive a Lexus. Why can't you? They got a new house in that neighborhood. They get to go on those vacations. And where does buying into this usually lead?

We see this all the time. It leads to crazy debt. Did you know that the average American family spends \$13 to \$1,500 for every \$1,000 that they make?

Why? Because it's never enough. Because we compare ourselves to others and it's a death trap. And it doesn't matter if you make \$30,000 a year or you make \$300,000 a year.

That same statistic proves to be true. And you know what? There are great people, probably listening to this right now, who are immersed in debt constantly.

[9 : 21] You're exhausted as you worry about it all, not even able to enjoy what you've got. Maybe can't even give faithfully to the Lord and those in need because of the chains of debt that is wrapped around you.

Because even followers of Jesus can buy into this lie that it's never enough. And then here's the second lie. I call it, or actually Chip Ingram calls it, the when-then.

The when-then lie. So here's what that sounds like if our intentions were verbalized. When I graduate from school, then I'll be happy.

When I meet that special someone and get married, then I'll be happy. When I lose 25 pounds and become eye candy, when I have my child, then I'll be happy.

When I get that good job, when I get out of town and get moved into the country, when I can just get out of Greensburg or the state of Indiana, then I'll be happy. It can be good things that are even gifts from God, and yet your contentment isn't found in any of these things.

[10 : 25] We covet because we think that that thing will satisfy me when it can't. This may even look different depending on what you do because no one is immune to it.

I know in my world, many pastors struggle with the size of their church. We're often defined by how many people we have. And it's so easy to get caught up in it when we get to 200 people.

Woof! Then we'll be happy. And then it's, oh, we can hit 300. Oh, well, we better get to 500 or 1,000 or 5,000. And listen, I don't think anyone who's preaching God's word should ever feel bad when the Holy Spirit is moving and you're reaching the lost.

No need to apologize for growth, but those numbers, this is what you've got to realize, will never satisfy. There's always a new goal to achieve. And yet I can tell you that I have some pastor heroes of mine who I so admire and I want to be more alike.

And you know what? They're not the quote unquote big church preachers. But you know what? They love their wives and they disciplined their kids. They care for their church family and serve faithfully.

[11 : 31] They dig deep and present God's word to their people. They lead the broken to the cross to discover hope. And their greatest desire is to be found faithful to the Lord, not successful to a church culture.

And they have a godly joy. Guys, those are my heroes. So do me a favor for a second. Let down the guard and look in the mirror. If you're just exhausted by the rat race of life, maybe you're up to your eyeballs in debt, worry and stress overwhelm you constantly, there's plenty of conflict in your life, that emptiness is real and there's no contentment, those could be pretty good indicators that maybe we've bought into the lie and we're chasing after things to try to satisfy a hole that only Jesus can fill.

And this isn't just a message to rich people. In the words of the Prince of Preachers, Charles Spurgeon, he once put it like this. He said, it is so very easy a thing to be covetous that no class of society is free from it.

And the reason every one of us, this is not just for rich people. Listen, every one of us can fall into this trap to covet. The reason why is because there's no contentment in this heart.

So let's answer this. Let's answer this question. How do I learn contentment? How do I learn contentment?

[12 : 59] And here's the first answer to that. Be radical in your commitment to Christ. Be radical in your commitment to Christ.

Now, I remember as a newer Christian learning about the Apostle Paul, it just kind of shaking my head in disbelief. Because of his faith in Jesus, this guy was beaten many times, even to the point where they thought he was dead.

Okay? And I think God healed him, honestly, miraculously. That's kind of my interpretation of that. But he was shipwrecked. He was snakebitten. He was conspired against. He was lied about, falsely accused, imprisoned, and ultimately killed for his faith.

But before being martyred, with all he had endured for Christ, he could say these words from Philippians 4, starting in verse 11, that I'm not sure I can say yet, but this is my goal. And here's what Paul says. He says, I'm not saying this because I am in need, for 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.

[14:04] I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well-fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want, I can do all this through Christ, who gives me strength.

Now, I don't know about you, but sign me up for 10 helpings of that, right? Because I don't have to run to the next car, house, or spouse. I don't need to tip back the glass bottle or pour out of the plastic one.

I don't need to stand back and get jealous over everything my neighbor has and jeopardize what matters most to try to get it. And listen, I don't have to mortgage my future by running to a beach in Mexico.

I can know contentment and joy in one place. His name is Jesus. But it starts with a radical commitment to the Lord. And before you think that I'm against cars, houses, vacations, or any luxuries, I'm not.

And God's not. And God can choose to bless us with those things when we put Him first. But listen, if those things are what I run to to try to fill a void, if they are the source of my joy, then they will let me down every single time.

[15:14] You know, I'll never forget a pastor friend of mine telling me about a wonderful, sweet old lady in his church who passed away. It was a tough loss for the church because she was so loved, so faithful, but everyone knew that it was coming.

She had lived a long, graceful life serving Jesus faithfully. And now was her time to enter her rest in heaven. Well, a couple weeks after her funeral, this lady's probably 20 or so year old grandchild wanted to get baptized.

And I quote, because that's what grandma would have wanted me to do. And yet that young lady's life didn't change. And as far as I know, she's not stepped foot in a church since.

Now, let me read to you the kind of commitment that Jesus calls us to as His disciples. And it starts with repentance. Here's what Matthew 16, starting in verse 24 says.

Jesus says, Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.

[16:21] What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world and yet forfeit their very soul? See, to discover true contentment, it starts with a commitment to Christ that may even seem radical to some in the church.

You're going to go against the grain and you're probably going to seem weird to those who don't understand. And it's okay. Can you imagine the conversations that people had after observing the Apostle Paul?

It may have gone something like this. Wow. How can that guy take a beating like that, turn around probably 10 minutes later and go show love to that poor widow over there?

Or if you're one of the guards that were in Rome when Paul was basically under house arrest with the potential of being put to death for his faith, instead of finding this terrified man depressed by his circumstances, he was full of joy telling you about his Jesus who could forgive your every sin and offer you life on this earth and life in heaven someday.

To quote Charles Spurgeon one more time, he says, Listen, Your circumstances don't have to dictate your joy and your peace if you are radically committed to Christ.

[17:45] That's where contentment starts. And then second, Second, How do I learn contentment? Rejoice in what you do have. Rejoice in what you do have.

Back in October of last year, I got a phone call from my wife where she was clearly devastated and for good reason. See, that's when we discovered that we had a water leak under our floors for a while and we had no clue.

It spread through most of the house. So insurance got involved. The restoration people came in and tore everything up. And within a day, we found ourselves moving out. But I have to tell you that this wasn't a surprise to God.

He had been working behind the scenes to show his provision and his power the whole time. See, just a few months earlier, we had bought a pole barn off my brother that sits maybe 200 to 300 feet behind our house.

And part of that pole barn is what basically would be like a small apartment. Maybe 800 square feet, couple bedrooms, and as hard as it was to know that your house would now be a construction zone for a while, God had already taken care of where we would live.

[18 : 53] And we didn't even have to get a moving truck. We just had to make a lot of walking trips back and forth. And while it's been a little cramped with a family of five and we've probably had our woe is me moments, I still just stand in awe of how faithful God is to take care of those who belong to him.

And while I hope my wife doesn't hear what I'm about to say, this season has been helpful to teach us contentment by learning how to rejoice in what we do have. It's also a good reminder that houses and material possessions will fade.

But what matters in the end is your walk with Jesus. And what we're discovering every day is that our joy has nothing to do with whether we have a 2,000 or a 900 square foot house.

My contentment is found in Jesus Christ alone. See 1 Thessalonians 5 starting in verse 16 puts it like this. It says, Rejoice always, pray continually, and give thanks in all, all, not some, not just when you like it, in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

So take time every day to rejoice in God's faithfulness, in the provision he's given over your life. He has blessed you. Be thankful for it because he's got you under control.

[20 : 17] And then last, how do I find contentment? Well, this may sound crazy, but give it away. Give it away. The most joy-filled Christians that I've ever met were the most generous because first they learned that true contentment comes from a radical commitment to an amazing God who gave his sinless life in our place on the cross.

And then they learned how to rejoice and be thankful for what they had, plenty or little, to see that God will take care of his children when we're faithful to him. And then last, they learned the joy of generosity.

Listen to how Paul teaches a young pastor and the church about generosity in 1 Timothy 6. He says, Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

See, God's not against you having some things that you can enjoy. But the problem is when those things have you and that's what controls your life. Now look at verse 18.

Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds. Now listen to this. And to be generous and willing to share. In this way, they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

[21 : 46] One of my favorite things that we do here at FCC is something that Pastor Danny, who's going to be preaching here next Sunday, he implemented this just a couple years before he retired.

It's called Giveaway Sunday. And it's one way as a church that we acknowledge God's faithfulness to this ministry. Now, we are already big on missions even in our own community and a percentage of the offering every week goes to support ministries in Decatur County.

We believe in that wholeheartedly and not just Decatur County, but in our nation and across the world, just like we're taught in scripture. But we also take the first Sunday of December and every penny that comes into the offering goes directly back into our community to show the love of Christ, to meet needs.

And our church family gets so excited by this that honestly, last year, our offering was three to four times what normal offering is on that Sunday.

Okay? So God has blessed this. He's grown it each year. And one year, he led us to give to area nonprofits who are doing a great work for Christ.

[22 : 56] Another year, we pumped around \$15,000 in gas to people in the community, filled up people's gas tanks for free. One year, we were led to a kindergarten boy from South Decatur who needed a customized wheelchair for his disabilities.

Last year, we were blessed. We blessed our physical neighbors around the church and so many others in the community with gift cards to buy groceries. And you know what?

We're praying through this year as well. But what a joy it is to conquer coveting by discovering contentment in Christ. So make that radical commitment to walk with and to live for Jesus daily. Rejoice in what you do have because you are blessed and then give it away. Not just your money, but your time, your talent, and your energy to serve God by loving others.

Let me leave you with this quote by Jill Briscoe that I think sums up pretty well commandment number 10. She said, years ago, I stopped looking to anyone but God to satisfy me.

[24 : 03] There's no man that can love me enough, no child that can need me enough, no job that can pay me enough, and no experience that can satisfy me enough. Only Jesus.

And so since it's Father's Day, let me just take a second here at the end of this message to say this. To you fathers, to you men, it is so important that you can get this truth.

That only Jesus can bring contentment and satisfaction and joy and peace to your heart. And so run after him, men, with everything you are and you watch the difference it will make in your families.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we just thank you so much for these words of hope and these words of life that you have spoken over us today.

Thank you for just this series over the Ten Commandments and how you took us so much deeper than I even realized that we could go. And Father, thank you that it's not just about following a set of rules or being religious, but it's all about a heart that puts you first in everything, that loves you with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and that loves our neighbor as ourselves.

[25 : 21] So Father, thank you for also helping us to pursue holiness in you. That every day we can grow and be transformed by you into the follower of Christ that you are calling us to be.

So we give you permission right now. Have your way. Do what only you can do in us. And Father, we ask just that you will do immeasurably more than we could ever ask or imagine.

Thank you for these words of hope and these words of life that you have spoken over your church today. And may we follow you, follow this truth in everything we do.

We pray this in Jesus' precious name. Amen. I want to give you this invitation. Jesus loves you. He came into this dreary world because of our sin.

He was born in the most unexpected of ways. He lived a perfect, sinless life. He was mistreated. He was conspired against. He was beaten.

[26 : 23] He was spit on. He was nailed to a cross. all because of His love for you, for me, and every other person who's ever walked this planet.

He gave His perfect, sinless life to set us free. He took the punishment our sins deserved on the cross so that we could walk in freedom.

And yet, we believe with all our heart that God gives us free will. That He will never force you to be a marionette or a puppet that He gives you the free will to choose whether you will follow Him or not.

So, He will not force you to be a child of God. He will not force you to walk in Him and have the Holy Spirit living inside of you. But when we come to this realization that we have sinned against a perfect God, that that sin has separated me from God, and that if I do not come to know Jesus, that that sin will lead me to hell someday.

If we don't come to this realization, it's sad. And so, I just want to offer you this invitation, the most important invitation you'll ever respond to, more important than who you'll marry, more important than the job that you'll have, more important than where you'll live, is what you do with Jesus.

[27 : 41] Have you repented of your sins? Have you surrendered your life to Christ? Are you following Jesus faithfully, loving Him and loving His church the way He calls you to?

So, if you would like to have a conversation about that, we as a church, this is First Christian Church, Greensburg, Indiana. My name is Ray Sweet. I'm the lead pastor. There's a couple ways that you can get a hold of us if we can help you on this journey.

If you'd like to talk about giving your life to Christ, maybe you just got some faith questions, give me a call. So, our church office is open from Monday through Thursday, 8 to 430, and you can call us at 812-663-8488, 663-8488, or you can email me at ray at FCCgreensburg.com.

Hey, God bless you. I hope you have an amazing week.