

The God of Contentment

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Preacher: Dave Nannery

[0 : 0 0] All right, well, it's good to be back preaching again, and I'd like to start off the bad joke that you've all heard before. So what do you call a cheese that doesn't belong to you?

Nacho cheese. That's right. That brings us to the 10th commandment, because if it's nacho cheese, you shall not covet that cheese. Now, over this year, we've been learning from the Old Testament book of Exodus, the book that contains the 10 commandments.

And we've learned in this book that God is great, God is good, God is with us. And so we've seen the greatness of God revealed as he overpowers Pharaoh, king of Egypt, as he leads his people out of slavery, out of the greatest superpower of that day.

We've seen the goodness of God revealed as God provides for his people Israel in the wilderness, how he gives them his good law. And for the last three months, we've been learning that good law as it's summarized in the 10 commandments.

We have in the 10 commandments, 10 summary laws that tell us how to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, how to love our neighbor as ourselves. And so today, we reach the 10th and final commandment.

[1 : 1 6] And this 10th commandment warns us against something that it calls coveting. Coveting. And you can read this commandment in Exodus chapter 20, verse 17. You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that is your neighbor's. That's the 10th commandment.

And so if we're going to understand that, first of all, we need to ask this question. What does it mean to covet? What does it mean to covet? Well, the word that is translated in English as covet, it is used several times in the Old Testament, several other times, and it's not always translated as covet.

And it also doesn't always mean a bad thing. To covet means, strictly speaking, it means to desire, to delight, to take pleasure in, to crave, to seek to acquire something.

So, strictly speaking, it's not always wrong to covet. In fact, when God created the first man in Genesis chapter 2, God created for him things to covet in the Garden of Eden.

[2 : 3 3] We read there, out of the ground, the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food.

And that word pleasant, it simply means that each tree of the garden is to be desired, is to be coveted. So, these garden trees, they're beautiful, pleasant to the sight, to be coveted.

God made them to actually be coveted by the man and by the woman, to be desired, to be longed for. And yet, there is one tree in the garden that they are told not to eat from on pain of death.

It's the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It's a tree that God has held back from them. A tree that is not theirs to have. And so, we read in Genesis chapter 3, when the woman saw that the tree, this tree of the knowledge of good and evil, when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired or coveted, to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate.

And she also gave some to her husband who was with her and he ate. So, the tree was to be desired. She coveted this tree's fruit because she longed, craved the knowledge of good and evil, the ability, the liberty to assess for herself what's good and bad, to do so apart from God's fatherly care and instruction.

[4 : 04] She was not content with the good things that God had given her. She was not content. And so, we have trees, on the one hand, that should be coveted.

And then there's one tree that should not be coveted. And this tells us something. It tells us first, positively, God has given you, God has given me, good things.

Good things for us to enjoy. And then it also tells us, negatively, that God has also withheld things that we are not to enjoy.

Even things that we might think are good. There are people and there are things that we do have rights to, that we ought to possess for ourselves and we ought to enjoy.

And then there are people and things that we don't have rights to. There is my personal property and then there is my neighbor's property. And in the 10th commandment, you and I are told, you shall not covet your neighbor's house.

[5 : 06] And that word house is a much broader word than we often use. It's not just the physical building. It's really the whole household of your neighbor. You should not crave and seek to acquire the money, the possessions, the people that are rightfully your neighbors and not your own.

So from this point forward, just to simplify things, that is what we're going to be referring to when we use the word coveting. When I use the word coveting from here on out, I'm not just talking about desiring in general.

We'll be talking about craving what isn't rightfully yours. Craving what isn't rightfully yours. The Lord forbids coveting what isn't rightfully ours.

The Lord forbids coveting what isn't rightfully ours. And so that tells us the first of five aspects of coveting.

There's five aspects that reveal the true nature of coveting. And the first aspect of coveting is the object of coveting that we've just seen. Anything that is your neighbor's, that's what the commandment says.

[6 : 08] The object of coveting is anything that is your neighbor's. So that's the first aspect. The second aspect that we can also see here is the possessiveness of coveting.

So we have the object of coveting, and then we also have the possessiveness of coveting. Second, you're coveting what isn't rightfully yours, but you want to make it yours.

So how that plays out is that you will think, and you will think, and you will obsess, and you will even start to scheme over how you can make that your own. You see, it's not coveting simply to see another man's wife and simply to look at her and recognize and say, she's a beautiful woman and appreciate that.

What happens is you cross over into coveting when that desire to have her for yourself springs up in your heart. That desire to have her for yourself. In the Old Testament book of Joshua, God gives the Israelites victory over the city of Jericho.

But God insists that he is the one who is going to receive all the spoils of that conquest. And these spoils, they are his by right. They are his possession.

[7 : 22] Because he is the one who wins the victory for the people. And here that possessiveness of coveting, it rears its ugly head. Because there's an Israelite named Achan. And Achan wants all of those goods for himself.

He wants the Lord's possessions for himself. And Achan admits to Joshua in chapter 7, Achan brings disaster on the whole Israelite community because he was desiring to possess what wasn't his to have.

Achan is like those seagulls from the movie Finding Nemo, the ones who look at something instinctively. What are they saying? Mine, mine, mine. He's not content with what God has given.

Everything he sees is mine, mine, mine. This is a warning light for us. A warning light on the dashboard of your heart. Whenever you catch yourself thinking, that should be mine.

That should be mine. You're guilty of coveting. And the Lord forbids coveting what isn't rightfully ours. Now there is a terrifying irony to this possessiveness.

[8 : 52] I want to spend a little extra time talking about it. Because the person who is coveting, the person who desires to possess something or someone, that person in turn becomes the one possessed by the object of his or her desire.

The possessor becomes the possessed. In Proverbs chapter 6, King Solomon warns his son about an adulterous woman. He writes, Do not desire, literally covet, do not covet her beauty in your heart, and do not let her capture you with her eyelashes.

Those must have been really nice eyelashes. What brand does she use for her? Not only do you desire to possess her, but that very desire becomes the chain that binds you.

It becomes the means by which she possesses you. You long to possess that one ring of power, but it also longs to possess you.

It binds you and it twists you into its slave. You need the object of your desire. You can't live without the object of your desire.

[10 : 18] That's how addictions work. Addictions to drugs, to alcohol, to sex, to money, to just about everything. These things convince you that you need them to survive.

You need them to live. And so you will do anything. If it's a survival situation, you'll do anything to make sure you get what you need to survive. You'll tell any lie to survive.

You'll spend every penny to survive. You'll hurt everyone you ever loved to survive. In Psalm 78, the psalmist Asaph, he writes about the people of Israel who are wandering in the wilderness.

We read about that back in May, and he writes about them. And if we translate it literally, here's what he says in Psalm 78. They tested God in their heart by demanding food for their life.

They tested God in their heart by demanding food for their life. I need this to live. I need this to survive. And if that means testing God, if that means treating God wrongly, that's what I'll do.

[11 : 34] When you covet something, you desire to possess it, but that thing or that person turns around and possesses you. And so here is another warning light.

Whenever you catch yourself thinking, I can't live without this. I can't live without this. You're guilty of coveting.

And the Lord forbids coveting what isn't rightfully ours. So we've seen two aspects of coveting. It's object, it's possessiveness. And then next we turn to a third aspect, the disorder of coveting.

The disorder of coveting. Coveting is what happens when our desires become disordered. They become chaotic. Because we're just like our ancestors who desired the wrong trees.

We desire what we don't have a right to. We desire with the wrong intensity or we desire with the wrong motives. Our desires are all messed up, all disordered.

[12 : 41] And our desires that are disordered, they twist us, they ruin us, they disorder us. They bring chaos into our lives. They warp us.

Thomas Cranmer, the Anglican reformer, he understood that our heart, what the Bible calls our heart, the seat of our desires and our thoughts, the seat of everything that we are on the inside.

And especially when it comes to our desires, our heart is what really controls us. It is those deep-rooted desires of our heart that really run things. You know, we like to think that we're conscious, we're rational people, just walking around making rational decisions like a bunch of Vulcans from Star Trek.

And that is so not true. It is often those deep-rooted desires, many of them unconscious. That iceberg deep below the surface of our hearts.

That's what's really running things. The theologian Ashley Null summarizes Thomas Cranmer's understanding of human nature. And he does it with a proverb that we encountered a few weeks ago.

[13 : 48] What the heart loves, the will chooses, and the mind justifies. What the heart loves, the will chooses, and the mind justifies.

That's worth writing down. You know, honestly, outside of the Bible, this proverb is really the one thing I would most encourage you to memorize. I feel like this is human nature in a nutshell.

It's almost every interaction that I have with people, I walk away thinking, hmm, well, what the heart loves, the will chooses, and the mind justifies. Because we are controlled by the desires of our heart.

We're controlled by desires we're not always conscious of. And we always choose to do whatever we want to do. You always do what you want to do. Whatever our heart desires to do, we find a way to do it.

And then our minds think up an explanation to justify that choice that we've made. Or that choice that we want to make. That choice, a way to say that, you know, that choice is right.

[14 : 53] That choice is good. This is what's good for me. People who are controlled by coveting. People who are enslaved by sinful desires. People under the power of addiction.

Their minds have been pressed into service of their hearts. Their minds become warped by that pressure, twisted and reshaped beyond reason.

Coveting will give you a disordered mind. You'll think you're thinking clearly, but you aren't. Coveting also corrupts your community with disorder.

Not just you as an individual, but your whole community, your family, your church. Coveting sows the seeds of chaos in these relationships.

The commentator Douglas Stewart, he writes regarding this commandment. What people wish for, what people wish for, has a major role to play in what kind of society they will create.

[15 : 58] People able to curtail their wishing, so that it is limited to things they should desire. They are people who contribute good to a society.

Those who want what they cannot properly have, undermine a society's moral fiber. So Douglas Stewart is basically saying, you know what the problem with the world today is?

Coveting. Disordered desires. This coveting tempts your fellow church members to distrust one another, to abandon one another, out of anger, out of hurt.

This coveting forces your government to introduce more and more regulations and layer upon layer of bureaucracy, and then raise more taxes to support those layer upon layers of bureaucracy, in order to protect others from your disordered desires.

Even on a small scale, our low-level coveting, often it's coveting that other people don't even notice. It creates tension, it creates division in our relationships with one another.

[17 : 10] I want you to picture for a moment an example of that. Maybe you've got that one friend who would call themselves frugal, right? And let's just face it.

In reality, maybe that one friend is just plain cheap. Maybe you're married to that friend and you're elbowing them right now. Now, here's how that coveting plays out when the cheap person invites you over for dinner.

Proverbs chapter 23. Do not eat the bread of a man who is stingy. Do not desire his delicacies, for he is like one who is inwardly calculating.

Eat and drink, he says to you, but his heart is not with you. You will vomit up the morsels that you have eaten and waste your pleasant words.

If you don't ever think the Bible's funny, well, here's a moment that it is. In other words, every forkful of food on your plate, this guy looks at that and all he sees is a wad of cash.

[18 : 15] You know, you lift that food to your mouth and he's like inwardly cringing. You're just like swallowing up dollar bills as you're eating. And he is on edge the whole time, thinking about all that hard-earned money going down your mouth hole.

This man is ready to dive in right after that food to bring it back up again. He's going to get it back from your stomach. You're going to vomit it up. He's, you know what, and you're saying pleasant words and saying nice things.

He's not even listening. He's not even listening to the nice things you're saying. He's just a raw bundle of nerves, distracted, anxious. That's that low-level coveting, the tension that it creates.

Here's a warning light. If something that you desire is leaving you scattered, distracted, or anxious, you may be guilty of coveting. Because that's what coveting does.

It is the enemy of contentment. It is the enemy of contentment and the enemy of the God of contentment. Because it introduces disorder inside of you and disorder around you.

[19 : 27] So the Lord forbids coveting what isn't rightfully ours. So we've seen three aspects of coveting. It's object, it's possessiveness, it's disorder, and then there's two more to go.

Here's a fourth aspect. A fourth aspect of coveting is its subtlety. It's subtlety. Coveting can be very, very subtle. And especially so among well-mannered people, like most of you.

You guys are pretty good. You know, I was speaking this week with a pastor of an inner-city church in Vancouver. He told me about the expectations that he has for the people in his church.

And this being an inner-city church with a lot of people coming from really troubled backgrounds. For his people showing up at church two Sundays in a row, that is an accomplishment.

That's amazing. Staying sober for three weeks straight, that's a victory. That's a great thing. Because in his church, people never learned as children, they were never taught and trained how to hide the disordered desires of coveting.

[20 : 37] The destructive nature of these desires, it is on display for all to see. It is untamed, like a lion left on the loose.

Well, here in Squamish, it's a little different. We know how to cage our lions a little better. Many of us come from a middle class. Many of us come from a church background. Many of us come from parents who taught us how to express our desires in ways that are much more socially acceptable.

We learn how to covet in acceptable ways. So our coveting, it's a lot more subtle. Because why commit adultery when you could just simply watch pornography on your phone instead?

Why seek out the thrill or the comfort of drugs and alcohol? You know, there's other ways you can get that thrill. You can hit the trails or the slopes at every possible free moment. You can find that comfort by binging on ice cream or going on a shopping spree whenever you're feeling down.

You know, why steal money and merchandise when you can hoard your savings and investments? These patterns, these habits, they are all, these are destructive too.

[21 : 48] They are destructive to God's family as well, but they're destructive in a different way. Instead of being like this festering open wound, they're like a hidden cancer in your bones.

They're destructive in a way that other people don't recognize and in a way that other people can't criticize. In fact, we are so subtle with our coveting that most of the time we don't even recognize it in ourselves.

If I can't see it in myself and if I keep other people at arm's length so they can't see it either, that cancer is just going to stay there and it's going to spread. We're like a showroom that's full of furniture and that furniture is covered in this beautiful veneer.

But underneath that veneer, we're all particle board and we're fragile and we're rotten inside. And all it takes is a little rough treatment, a few bangs and bumps on a doorway and that veneer is exposed.

That's what's true, isn't it? A few bangs and bumps in life and what comes out? What comes to the surface? Here's a warning light. If you have a recurring and compelling desire, if you have this recurring and compelling desire that you've never spoken to someone about, you may be guilty of coveting.

[23 : 08] You need to talk about that. You need to find someone trustworthy to talk through this because coveting can be subtle. But no matter how reasonable, no matter how refined it seems, no matter how easy it is to bury, the Lord forbids coveting what isn't rightfully ours.

So that's four aspects of coveting and the final, fifth and final aspect of coveting is it's idolatry. It's idolatry.

And that brings us full circle. Remember that the first two of the Ten Commandments were prohibitions against alternative gods. They were prohibitions against making idols.

The Ten Commandments end as they begin. They end by forbidding idolatry. And what happens is that these things, these people, the objects of our desires, they function as idols, secular idols.

They function as the controlling centers of our lives. We possess them and we become possessed by them.

[24 : 15] In Isaiah chapter 44, we read this. It says, All who fashion idols are nothing, and the things they delight in, the things they covet, do not profit.

All who fashion idols are nothing, the things they covet, that is the idols that they covet, do not profit. So the idol worshiper covets the idol that he or she creates.

And that's where their heart will always go. They will always go back to that idol, always drift back to that idol. Here's a warning light.

If you find your thoughts just always drifting back, always returning to an object of your desire, if you find that your mind, when it's left on its own, it always seems to just sort of gravitate back to that one resting place, that one thing you crave, then that may be your idol.

That may be what you covet. The Lord forbids coveting what isn't rightfully ours. And so because idolatry is key to the nature of coveting, because the object of our disordered desires becomes an alternative God, we are going to see the outcome of our coveting.

[25 : 37] And it's going to be expressed in the first nine of these commandments. Remember now that the 10th commandment it reads, you shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that is your neighbor's.

Now, when you do covet something or when you do covet someone that is your neighbor's, you establish the object of your desire as an alternative God.

You set up another God before the Lord in violation of the first commandment. And so then what you do is you reshape, you take the Lord, he doesn't disappear, what you do is you take him and reshape him into a God and his purpose is to supply what you are coveting.

You turn the Lord into an idol. You reshape him into this vending machine that gives you what you want. That's in violation of the second commandment. You try to manipulate the Lord by using his name vainly in prayer and worship so that he will grant you what you're coveting in violation of the third commandment.

And instead of finding rest in the Lord and finding contentment in the Lord, you seek rest in the object of your coveting in violation of the fourth commandment.

[27 : 02] You avoid, you evade, you ignore the wisdom of your parents and elders who recognize your coveting. You shirk your responsibilities to them in violation of the fifth commandment.

You attack with words or deeds. You go after anyone who gets in the way of what you're coveting in violation of the sixth commandment.

Maybe this is because you covet sexual relations with someone who is not yours to have in violation of the seventh commandment. Or maybe it's because you covet money or possessions that are not yours to have and you forcefully acquire them in violation of the eighth commandment.

And either way, you conceal your coveting desires from other people and even from yourself and you use lies and you use half-truths as a tool to obtain what you covet in violation of the ninth commandment.

So it's little wonder that the Lord forbids coveting what isn't rightfully ours. And ultimately what this tells us is this. Coveting is a worship problem. Coveting is the fundamental problem in the human heart.

[28 : 15] It's the fundamental problem in the world today. It's the fundamental problem underlying all the upheaval and all the injustice today. And coveting is fundamentally a worship problem. It's a problem with worship.

It's a problem rooted in the desires and the loves of our hearts. And this problem of disorder desires, this problem of wrongful worship, it is the fountain of all disobedience to God.

It is the fountain of all injustice to our fellow man. There's a reason that the New Testament authors give such frequent, such harsh warnings against sins such as greed and rage and sexual immorality and lying.

Because throughout Scripture, each of these sins, they are pulled up so that we can see the root that they're growing from. They're pulled out of the ground so we can see the root underneath, that deep and bitter root of coveting.

And like any persistent weed, it is almost impossible to pull that sin up when the root is so deeply fixed into the earth.

[29 : 24] Maybe this summer, when it's been so bone dry, you've tried to weed your garden or your bed and you've tried to pull up those weeds and they won't come up because the root is fixed so deeply.

So how do we overcome the sin of coveting? How do we pull up that root that is fixed so deeply? Well, the way that we often try to do it is simply, well, you know, I'll just pull harder, put a little extra muscle into it.

I'll try harder to not covet, try harder to overcome sin. And so what we do is we, you know, we rightly warn each other about the evil of coveting and then we beat ourselves up. I beat myself up because the desires and the thoughts that I have, I know they're evil, I know they're wrong.

But rehearsing the law again and again and again, it doesn't seem to work, does it? You tell yourself, you're wrong, I did bad, I feel so guilty, I'll try to do better next time and it doesn't work.

You don't do better next time because you can labor and you can sweat to pull harder and harder on the weed and maybe you'll even break the weed off. Hey, this sin seems to be gone, this problem seems to be gone, but it always grows back because the root's still there.

[30 : 46] The Apostle Paul came to the same conclusion. He wrote about it in Romans chapter 7. While we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death.

Our sinful passions, they are actually aroused by the law. If it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin for I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said you shall not covet.

But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead.

I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. The very commandments that promised life proved to be death to me.

Let me pause for a moment. Think about it this way. You're trying to pull up that weed from your rock-hard ground and you think, man, it's rooted so deeply. I know what I'll do. I'll water the ground and then I can pull it up.

[31 : 59] You water the ground and then the weed just grows more. Knowing the law doesn't help you overcome your sin. The sin just grows a deeper root.

For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. So the law is holy and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

Did that which is good then bring death to me? By no means. It was sin. It was sin producing death in me through what is good.

In order that sin might be shown to be sin and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure. For we know that the law is spiritual but I am of the flesh sold under sin.

And what Paul is concluding here is that the law of Moses, the Ten Commandments, these good laws, these laws that reveal God's will for how we are to live, this law is not going to help us overcome our sinful habits and desires.

[33 : 09] It's not on its own. Simply learning about all the laws of God and learning what you should do and what you shouldn't do and what you should think and what you shouldn't think and what you should desire and what you shouldn't desire, that's not going to rescue you.

Back in July as we introduced the Ten Commandments we talked about the three uses of the law. The experience that Paul is describing is what we call the first use of the law. because the law acts like a mirror that's held up to us, held up to our face.

The law reveals that you and I, we are not as much like God as we think we are. We are not as righteous as we think we are. We're not as good as we think we are. We are not great like God is because we're powerless in our struggle against coveting.

We're not good like God is because we are consumed by these coveting desires. It seems impossible to get out.

Now, there's a mad TV skit that featured Bob Newhart and I find it incredibly funny. Maybe I'll put it up on our Facebook group after this.

[34 : 20] Bob Newhart plays the part of a therapist and his patient comes to him for help with all of her phobias and her insecurities and Bob Newhart gives her a solution and over and over again his solution is the same and his solution is to yell at her, stop it!

Stop it! You know, she's afraid of being buried alive in a box and his solution is stop being afraid! And it's funny, you know, we, as you watch it and that's his solution over and over to every problem that she brings up, it's funny because we get that frustration.

We feel that, right? Paul gets that frustration because the frustration is, you know, I want to stop it. I want to, I want to stop but I can't. It's not enough just to tell me to stop.

We can't stop coveting. You can't just hit the brakes. That root runs too deep. That root clings too tightly to our hardened hearts.

We can't pull it up. And what we need, we need help. We need our God, our good God, to soften the soil of our hearts so that the root of coveting can be pulled up because that root can be pulled up.

[35 : 34] What we need is for his Holy Spirit to soften our hearts, to strengthen our hands for this task. And Paul writes in Romans chapter 8, shortly after expressing this, this, this feeling of helpless, helplessness, he writes, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

No condemnation. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

For God has done what the law weakened by the flesh could not do by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin.

He condemned sin in the flesh in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh, not in that human powerlessness, but according to the Spirit with that divine power that God gives.

through his Holy Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

[37 : 01] Why? Because what the heart loves, the will chooses and the mind justifies. The mind follows the heart and if the heart is stirred up by God's Holy Spirit the mind goes there. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit his life and peace.

Life, peace. Everyone who believes in Christ Jesus believes that God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.

that means that Jesus was not only fully God, he is also fully man, fully human, just like you, just like me. But he's in the likeness, our likeness, because of this, this one difference.

He is without sin. His desires are all proper and all right and all good. God, he is not and yet he came for sin.

He came for our sin because he was crucified in our place. Jesus took, carried the punishment for our sin, took it on himself and so he overcame the power of sin by rising from the dead to new life.

[38 : 17] and he offers this life and peace free from the power of sin to anyone who believes in him. You've been set free. For everyone who believes in him, the law of the spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

You and I who believe, we have the Holy Spirit. he is in us. He is among us. We have, you have all of the resources, you have all of the relationships that God has given you to live a new life.

You have what you need to live the good life that God has in store for you. To set the mind on the spirit is life and peace.

the Lord forbids coveting what isn't rightfully ours so we overcome this sin by trusting and treasuring the God who is good.

[39 : 27] We overcome this sin by trusting and treasuring the God who is good. Now over the last few weeks we've returned to James chapter 4 several times and in James chapter 4 we read how we can trust and treasure the God who is good.

how we set our minds on the things of the spirit. And so when James begins chapter 4 by writing about this sin of coveting and he says what causes quarrels and what causes fights among you?

Is it not this that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have so you murder you covet and cannot obtain so you fight and quarrel. Doesn't sound like life and peace to me.

you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive because you ask wrongly to spend it on your passions.

You treat God like a vending machine. You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?

[40 : 33] whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the scripture says he yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us?

James reminds us that our coveting desires they lead to murder they lead to adultery they lead to idolatry and then James reminds us that the Lord himself he rightfully covets us the Lord covets you he yearns jealously for you that you would be his because you are rightfully his now look at what James says that this rightly coveting God does here's what he does in response to our evil coveting verse 6 but he gives more grace he gives more grace therefore it says God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble submit yourselves therefore to God resist the devil and he will flee from you draw near to God and he will draw near to you cleanse your hands you sinners and purify your hearts you double-minded be wretched and mourn and weep let your laughter be torn to turn to mourning and your joy to gloom humble yourselves before the Lord and he will exalt you now a lot of that sounds very bad but that's his point you humble yourself before the Lord and he will exalt you he gives more grace and James is urging you and me first of all recognize and rely on the kindness of God recognize and rely on the kindness of God verse 6 he gives more grace that means the greater the temptation to covet the greater the grace that God gives us the more the temptation the more grace that he makes available to us through his

Holy Spirit verse 8 draw near to God and he will draw near to you God's spirit is always going to respond to you when you seek him verse 10 humble yourselves before the Lord and he will exalt you as you recognize your inadequacy as you recognize your unworthiness to be called a child of God and then as you worship him as the one true God God the Holy Spirit he is going to lift up your head and he is going to crown you with steadfast love and mercy he will satisfy you with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagles recognize and rely on the kindness of God second weep and wage war against the powerful influence of sin weep and wage war against the powerful influence of sin verse seven resist the devil and he will flee from you so by the power of the spirit stand up against all the lies that

Satan is trying to tell you because he is trying to convince you that this sin this object of your coveting is good it's satisfying this is going to be life verse nine be wretched and mourn and weep let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom we don't think of that as truly living that sounds miserable that sounds awful but a life in the spirit is a life of joy mingled with sorrow it's both often both at the same time do not avoid mourning do not avoid weeping for your sin don't try to suppress it mourn your coveting desires let your heart be broken by what breaks the heart of God let the Holy Spirit work through his word to train you to teach you how to hate the sinful coveting in your own heart weep and wage war against the powerful influence of sin third trust and obey the commandments of God trust and obey the commandments of God verse seven submit yourselves therefore to God submit yourselves to God trust that the scriptures given by the Holy

Spirit you've got to trust that they are wiser they are more reliable than your own ability to reason we love to think that we've got our own ways of dealing with sin we've got our own ways of getting out of sin we've got our own ways of handling the suffering in our life but those are all warped our minds are warped by our coveting desires that's why we trust God's prescription is laid out in his word in the Bible that's why we trust our church family come to them for spirit given insight into your life insight that you don't have where would I be I do often think about this where would I be if I didn't have church family who loved me who corrected me who called me out on my coveting behavior I sure wouldn't be standing up here let me tell you that verse eight cleanse your hands you sinners and purify your hearts you double minded people who feel and sense the dirtiness of sin people who are just double minded you know flip flopping back and forth confused going every which way come to

[46 : 59] God in obedience devoting your life to his service trusting your heavenly father's wisdom and judgment trust and obey the commandments of God I've never heard anyone say well I obeyed God's commandment and boy that was a mistake over and over I've heard people say I disobeyed God's commandment and boy was that a mistake the Lord forbids coveting what isn't rightfully ours so we overcome this sin by trusting and treasuring the God who is good the reason the sermon is titled the God of contentment is this as we trust and treasure the God who is good you and I we learn the secret of living a life of contentment a life free liberated from the coveting and craving desires that twist and tear our minds apart that enslave us that oppress us in 1st

Timothy chapter 6 the apostle Paul he writes about how even those even those who once coveted wealth and prosperity they have a far better reward you have a far better reward than the nicest house on a hill in Squamish than the biggest fattest RRSP that you could ever get and here is the better reward 1st Timothy chapter 6 as for the rich in this present age charge them not to be haughty not to be uppity nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches but on God set their hopes on God who richly provides us with everything to enjoy they are to do good to be rich in good works to be generous and ready to share thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future so that they may take hold of that which is truly life so that they may take hold of that which is truly life set your hope on

God because he is the truest treasure he is truly life this is your secure retirement plan because some of you are worried about you know is my retirement plan going to last 25 years well what about the one that's going to have to last you forever and ever this is God he is the good life that is fully satisfying he is the eternal life that will never be taken away from you he is the true life in whom you find contentment the Lord forbids coveting what isn't rightfully ours because the Lord offers us himself as the God to be desired the God in whom we find contentment as we trust and treasure the God who is good you