

The Ninth Commandment

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God that we may not craftily seek to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, nor obtain it by a show of right, but help and be of service to him in keeping it.

The Tenth Commandment

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his cattle, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God that we may not estrange, force, or entice away from our neighbor his wife, servants, or cattle, but urge them to stay and do their duty.

1. Why should we not even scheme by ways that appear right to take away for ourselves our neighbor's people or things? Who gave them to him, and if we think he should've instead given them to us, what sin are we really committing? *Col 3:5; Eph 5:3, 5.*
2. Is covetousness (greed, desire to be fulfilled not in God and neighbor but in acquiring things and people for ourselves) really such a serious sin? *1 Cor 5:9–13; 6:9–11; Mark 7:20–23; Luke 12:13–21; Rom 1:28–31.*
3. What does a commandment that so strikes our hearts all the time show us about the purpose of the Divine Law? *Rom 7:7–8:17.*

From Luther's *Large Catechism* (I: Ten Commandments)

^{297–298} [W]e are so inclined by nature that no one desires to see another have as much as himself, and each one acquires as much as he can; the other may fare as best he can. And yet we pretend to be godly, know how to adorn ourselves most finely and conceal our rascality, resort to and invent adroit devices and deceitful artifices (such as now are daily most ingeniously contrived) as though they were derived from the law codes; yea, we even dare impertinently to refer to it, and boast of it, and will not have it called rascality, but shrewdness and caution...

³⁰⁰ This last commandment therefore is given not for rogues in the eyes of the world, but just for the most pious, who wish to be praised and be called honest and upright people, since they have not offended against the former commandments...

^{309–310} Therefore we allow these commandments to remain in their ordinary meaning, that it is commanded, first, that we do not desire our neighbor's damage, nor even assist, nor give occasion for it, but gladly wish and leave him what he has, and, besides, advance and preserve for him what may be for his profit and service, as we should wish to be treated. ³¹⁰ Thus these commandments are especially directed against envy and miserable avarice, God wishing to remove all causes and sources whence arises everything by which we do injury to our neighbor, and therefore He expresses it in plain words: Thou shalt not covet, etc. For He would especially have the heart pure, although we shall never attain to that as long as we live here; so that this commandment will remain, like all the rest, one that will constantly accuse us and show how godly we are in the sight of God!