

No Jealousy Please

Scripture

"You shall not covet your neighbor's wife; and you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, his male servant, his female servant, his ox, his donkey, or anything that [is] your neighbor's." (Deuteronomy 5:21 NKJV)

Commentary

We all know the saying, "keeping up with the Joneses," or whoever lives next door. Envy and pride often fuel an endless one-up contest that, if left unchecked, could lead to real disaster. I see this in young people all the time. One kid gets a certain kind of toy or gadget, and soon they all have it.

Of course, as we get older, the toys we seek and the consequences they bring escalate. If we sought our neighbor's wife we would not only break this commandment, but we would also be guilty of adultery. If we sought his donkey, [car, motorcycle, lawnmower, etc.] then this could escalate in to thievery, and so on, you get the picture.

Now you might be thinking this is crazy, "I would never steal my neighbor's car." Great, I hope not, but is it the fear of getting caught and paying the consequences that keeps you from taking from others, or is it your love for them and God? Also, what if you would never do such a thing, but you secretly lust after it in your heart? Is this not the same, in the eyes of God, as doing the physical crime? Clearly we are taught this about adultery and hatred. As it is written:

"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' "But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matthew 5:27-28 NKJV)

"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' "But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire." (Matthew 5:21-22 NKJV)

Therefore, my dear friends let us heed this commandment carefully. *"For where envy and self-seeking [exist], confusion and every evil thing [are] there." (James 3:16 NKJV)* Learn to be content with the blessing God has given you. You might even get to leave work an hour earlier if you don't have to have that neat toy your neighbor just bought.

More importantly, you will learn to love your God more than things. As it is written, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:19-21 NKJV)

Prayer

Father, your law is perfect. We pray for grace to obey your every word. Guide us by your Spirit and keep us from the evil that is all around us. Help us to set our affections on your glory and not this world. Amen.