

A young child wearing a red hat with a fur trim and a grey sweater, looking down and holding a tree branch. The background is a blurred forest scene with tree trunks and branches.

Family Study Guides

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

10. "YOU SHALL NOT COVET"

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Family Study Guide

10. YOU SHALL NOT COVET...

[We suggest that as you use this Family Study Guide, select and focus on a main portion or two that you feel will help your family's study into the commandment. You do not need to cover every aspect, discussion or scripture presented in this guide. Select the aspects or principles most relevant or helpful to your family.]

Objectives:

- Discover ways the Tenth Commandment is related to desires in the mind and heart.
- Identify Biblical and real-world examples that show how coveting is a selfish way to live and that selfishness is one way of sinning.
- Describe the benefits of being content and happy with what you have.
- Explain the cause and effect relationship between coveting (lust) and breaking many of the other Ten Commandments.

Memory Verse:

Exodus 20:17 *You shall not covet your neighbor's house; ...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.*

Review the Tenth Commandment.

- The Tenth Commandment states, "*You shall not covet.*" Coveting can be to desire something that belongs to someone else, or coveting can be wanting more than our share. It is setting our heart and mind on something we want.
- Can a person covet something other than material possessions? What else might we covet? [Someone else's job; position; life-style; a position on a team; a particular part in a school play; another's good grades; etc.]

Lucifer: Ezekiel 28:12

Who was Lucifer? How did the desires of his mind and heart affect his choices?

Lucifer was one of God's favorite angels. He had a lot of talent, was good looking, and he had a high position in God's government, ruling over many of the other angels. However, he was the first being to sin. He became transformed from Lucifer the "light bringer" into Satan the Devil.

Ezekiel 28:12-19 (TLB) *The Lord God says: You were the perfection of wisdom and beauty. 13 You were in Eden, the garden of God; your clothing was bejeweled with every precious stone... 14 I appointed you to be the anointed Guardian Angel. You had access to the holy mountain of God... 15 "You were perfect in all you did from the day you were created until that time when wrong was found in you. 16 Your great wealth filled you with internal turmoil, and you sinned. Therefore, I cast you out of the mountain of God like a common sinner... 17 Your heart was filled with pride because of all your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. Therefore, I have cast you down to the ground and exposed you helpless before the curious gaze of kings. 18 You defiled your holiness with **lust for gain**... 19 All who know you are appalled at your fate; you are an example of horror; you are destroyed forever.*

Isaiah discusses more of Lucifer's sins:

Isaiah 14:12-15 (TLB) *How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground—mighty though you were against the nations of the world. 13 For you said to yourself, "I will ascend to heaven and rule the angels. I will take the highest throne. I will preside on the Mount of Assembly far away in the north. 14 I will climb to the highest heavens and be like the Most High." 15 Instead, you will be brought down to the place of the dead, down to its lowest depths.*

- ✓ How many sins do you see Lucifer committing here? Identify how many ways coveting was connected with Lucifer's (Satan) downfall.
- ✓ One of his main sins was coveting. He wanted more than God had already given him. What if he had been happy with what God gave him?
- ✓ Who was Lucifer mostly thinking about? What do you think led him to this way of thinking?

We need to be aware that Satan wants us to be like him. He will try to get us to covet for things that do not belong to us.

Old Testament Example: 1 Kings 21 (Ahab, Naboth and Jezebel)

In **1 Kings 21** Ahab, the king of Samaria, looks out of his window and sees a vineyard that he doesn't own and thinks it would make a great garden. So instead of being thankful for everything he owns, he sees what he doesn't have. Ahab had lots of other land that he could use, but he decided that this land would be better. This would have been OK if the man who owned it was willing to sell, but he wasn't. He didn't want to part from it, because it had been in his family for generations. Ahab is unhappy and despondent, so his wife devises a plan so that Ahab can obtain it.

We need to understand that we should not even think about wanting something so much we would like to take it from someone. Ahab broke the commandment while he was standing at the window wanting or lusting for another man's field. Sin begins in the mind and that is where we need to stop it and attempt to control it.

Old Testament Example: Numbers 16 (Korah and Moses)

God had appointed Moses to be the leader of the Israelites. He led the Israelites out of Egypt and into the wilderness to worship God. While God's desire was to have the children of Israel obey and follow Him, sin soon crept into the camp of Israel. Let's see what happened.

Numbers 16:1-3 (NLT) *One day Korah... conspired with Dathan and Abiram... They incited a rebellion against Moses, along with 250 other leaders of the community, all prominent members of the assembly. They united against Moses and Aaron and said, "You have gone too far! The whole community of Israel has been set apart by the Lord, and he is with all of us. What right do you have to act as though you are greater than the rest of the Lord's people?"*

The fact was that God himself had put Moses in charge. These people had been given certain responsibilities, but it just wasn't enough for them! They were jealous of Moses and wanted to be in charge instead. Moses was shocked and saddened with what they were trying to do.

Numbers 16:4-7 (NLT) *When Moses heard what they were saying, he fell face down on the ground. Then he said to Korah and his followers, "Tomorrow morning the LORD will show us who belongs to him and*

who is holy... Then we will see whom the LORD chooses as his holy one. You Levites are the ones who have gone too far!"

Numbers 16:8-11 (NLT) *Then Moses spoke again to Korah: "Now listen, you Levites! Does it seem insignificant to you that the God of Israel has chosen you from among all the community of Israel to be near him so you can serve in the LORD's Tabernacle and stand before the people to minister to them? Korah, he has already given this special ministry to you and your fellow Levites. Are you now demanding the priesthood as well? The LORD is the one you and your followers are really revolting against!"*

God wanted to teach the Israelites how serious the sins of covetous and rebellion is—so He gave Moses this message to tell them:

Numbers 16:28-32 (NLT) *And Moses said, "This is how you will know that the LORD has sent me to do all these things that I have done—for I have not done them on my own. If these men die a natural death, or if nothing unusual happens, then the LORD has not sent me. But if the LORD does something entirely new and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them and all their belongings, and they go down alive into the grave, then you will know that these men have shown contempt for the LORD." He had hardly finished speaking the words when the ground suddenly split open beneath them. The earth opened its mouth and swallowed the men, along with their households and all their followers who were standing with them, and everything they owned.*

Breaking God's laws carries a penalty. What penalties do your parents give when you break rules?

Old Testament Example: 2 Chronicles 26:1-19 (King Uzziah)

This is the story of a teenager who was obedient to God and became very successful. He led a long and amazing life as the King of Judah. However, like Lucifer, coveting was his downfall.

2 Chronicles 26:1-5 *All the people of Judah had crowned Amaziah's sixteen-year-old son, Uzziah, as king in place of his father. Uzziah was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-two years... He did what was pleasing in the LORD's sight, just as his father, Amaziah, had done. Uzziah sought God during the days of Zechariah, who taught him to fear God. And as long as the king sought guidance from the LORD, God gave him success.*

Read about and discuss all the great things he accomplished in 2 Chronicles 26:6-15!

While he was a righteous, great and powerful man—something happened that brought him down!
What was it?

2 Chronicles 26:16-21 (NLT) *But when he had become powerful, he also became proud, which led to his downfall. He sinned against the LORD his God by entering the sanctuary of the LORD's Temple and personally burning incense on the incense altar. Azariah the high priest went in after him with eighty other priests of the LORD, all brave men. They confronted King Uzziah and said, "It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD. That is the work of the priests alone, the descendants of Aaron who are set apart for this work. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have sinned. The LORD God will not honor you for this!" Uzziah, who was holding an incense burner, became furious. But as he was standing there raging at the priests before the incense altar in the LORD's Temple, leprosy suddenly broke out on his forehead. When Azariah the high priest and all the other priests saw the leprosy, they rushed him out. And the king himself was eager to get out because the LORD had struck him. So King Uzziah had leprosy until the day*

he died. He lived in isolation in a separate house, for he was excluded from the Temple of the LORD. His son Jotham was put in charge of the royal palace, and he governed the people of the land.

For some reason, being King was not enough for Uzziah. He coveted the position of the Priest, which was not his job!

We need to be thankful for what we have. While being diligent and successful is not wrong, we should be careful that we do not desire more than we should have, especially if that is not what God would want for us.

New Testament Example: Who Is Greatest?

The disciples of Jesus Christ gave up all of their worldly possessions to follow Him. Could they have been tempted to break the Tenth Commandment with Christ in their very midst? The answer is found in **Luke 22**. On the night of Passover, Jesus washed the disciples' feet (John 13) to show the importance of being a servant to one another. He also gave them wine and unleavened bread as symbols of His sacrifice for them. The disciples were humbled and amazed that their Lord and Master gave up everything for them and took such a low position. What a meaningful moment!

However, temptation still crept in... **Read Luke 22:24-30**. Sadly, while Jesus faced betrayal and death, the disciples argued over who would have the highest position. Just like some of those in the previous stories in this lesson, they coveted something that was not their's to choose! Christ's reaction was to remind them to be a servant and willingly give themselves to others just as He did. The reward is to be a place in His coming Kingdom where God's family is best served! Christ's response was similar in a previous situation where the mother of James and John asked for a position that was not for Christ to give. He said, *"whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many"* (**Matthew 20: 27-28**).

- ✓ What lesson does this story show us about following the Tenth Commandment?
[When we seek to serve others and allow Christ and our Heavenly Father to reward us at the right time, it is so much greater than any position or belonging we could gain on our own.]
- ✓ How does this relate to **Matthew 6:19-21, 24, and 33**? What could the disciples have done differently in this situation?

New Testament Example: Acts 5:1-10 (Ananias and Sapphira)

Together as a family, read **Acts 5:1-10**.

- ✓ While the sin of lying is identified in the story—how did coveting lead to them lie against God's spirit? [Coveted money which they held back, and coveted recognition for "giving everything."]

New Testament Example: Acts 8:9-24 (Simon Magus)

Read as a family, **Acts 8:9-24**. This is about Simon the sorcerer.

- ✓ How were his evil actions driven by covetousness?

Additional Family Discussion or Activities

Read 1 Peter 5:6 and discuss:

- ✓ Have you ever greatly desired something that belonged to someone else?
- ✓ Have you ever wanted a certain position on a team or wanted to be the first one chosen?
- ✓ Did you do something to try to insure that you would get what you wanted?
- ✓ When we cannot/should not have certain things, what other sins can we end up committing?
- ✓ What can “covet” include?
- ✓ What is the difference between goal setting and coveting? What kind of attitude in the mind and heart exists in either situation?

Read the MEMORY VERSE and then Discuss:

Exodus 20:17 *“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house ... 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.”*

- ✓ How can we overcome the sin of covetousness? Include these elements:
 - We must not think only of ourselves.
 - Think of other peoples’ needs, desires and wishes (Romans 12:10).
 - Practice being content with what we have (Philippians 4:11).
 - Be thankful for all things (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

Have each family member complete “The Thankful List” activity. Then as a family discuss the things each of you are most thankful for.

How will you treat others who might get to be first or get a better position on the team instead of you?

Additional Family Resources:

- UCG.org tags - Tenth Commandment “The Ten Commandments”
<https://www.ucg.org/tags/tenth-commandment-0>
- UCG Teen Bible Study
<https://www.ucg.org/teen-bible-study/teen-bible-study-volume-3-ten-commandments/tenth-commandment-do-not-covet>

Possible Class Activities

- ✓ Have each student begin a "Thankful for" sheet. Encourage them to finish it with the family and have family discussion.
- ✓ Draw a cartoon or picture that shows someone coveting something. Is he thinking of others? Can you see that it is important to think of others and not of only yourself?
- ✓ Take old magazines and have students cut out pictures of things that they already have and make a collage. This activity can show how we need to be more thankful for those things we already possess.
- ✓ Discuss ways to get our minds off ourselves. Some examples might be:
 - Visit a family who might be less fortunate than yours and take a small gift to them.
 - Give a small gift to other people. Suggestions for a gift could be a flower from the garden, some cookies that you baked together or a small fruit basket.
 - Spend time as a family to make a special card or other item and then give it to a lonely person.
 - Talk to people at church services, especially those who are elderly, sick or don't have many friends.
 - Make a prayer list of things to be thankful for.
- ✓ **Case Study Project:** Invite older students to select their own "case study", a Biblical example or researched example in the news/history that exemplifies honoring or violating the Tenth Commandment. Each should come back with the following:
 - A brief summary of the "case" or event.
 - Identify attitudes/mindsets/desires as well as the actions of the people involved.
 - A key scripture or passage—either the passage of the case study or a scripture that provides wisdom that could have prevented the sin.
 - A possible solution: What could the person have thought, said, or done differently to avoid this sin? Or, if the commandment was honored, what can we learn about how to handle these situations so they don't lead to covetousness?Discuss these case studies as a group, then share the takeaway lessons from the discussion.

I Kings 21 - ACTIVITY

The older children can read the play of Naboth and Ahab while in front of the younger children.

- **Narrator:** *Near King Ahab's palace in Jezreel there was a vineyard owned by a man named Naboth. The King had much land but wanted the land owned by Naboth.*
- **Ahab:** *Let me have your vineyard; it is close to my palace, and I want to use the land for a vegetable garden. I will give you a better vineyard for it or, if you prefer, I will pay you a fair price.*
- **Naboth:** *No, King Ahab, I inherited this vineyard from my father's ancestors. The LORD forbid that I should let you have it!*
- **Narrator:** *Ahab went home; down in the dumps, sad and angry over what Naboth had said to him. He lay down on his bed, facing the wall, and would not eat. His wife Jezebel went to him.*
- **Jezebel:** *Why are you so depressed? Why won't you eat?*

- **Ahab:** *Because of what Naboth said to me. I offered to buy his vineyard or, if he preferred, to give him another one for it, but he told me that I couldn't have it!*
- **Jezebel:** *Well, are you the king or aren't you? Get out of bed, cheer up, and eat. I will get you Naboth's vineyard!*
- **Narrator:** *Jezebel wrote some letters, signed Ahab's name to them, sealed them with his seal, and sent them to the officials and leading citizens of Jezreel. The letters said: "Proclaim a day of fasting, call the people together, and give Naboth the place of honor. Get a couple of scoundrels to accuse him to his face of cursing God and the king. Then take him out of the city and stone him to death." Jezebel received a message that the job was done.*
- **Jezebel:** *Naboth is dead. Now go and take possession of the vineyard that he refused to sell to you.*
- **Narrator:** *Then the LORD said to Elijah, the prophet, "Go to King Ahab of Samaria. You will find him in Naboth's vineyard, about to take possession of it. Tell him that I, the LORD, ask him, 'After murdering the man, are you taking over his property as well?' Tell him that this is what I say: 'In the very place that the dogs licked up Naboth's blood they will lick up your blood!' He goes to find Ahab in the vineyard.*
- **Ahab:** *Have you caught up with me, my enemy?*
- **Elijah:** *Yes, I have. You have devoted yourself completely to doing what is wrong in the LORD's sight. So the LORD says to you, 'I will bring disaster on you and Jezebel, because you have stirred up my anger by leading Israel into sin.'*
- **Narrator:** *When Elijah finished speaking, Ahab tore his clothes, took them off, and put on sackcloth. He refused food, slept in the sackcloth, and went about gloomy and depressed. The LORD said to the prophet Elijah, "Have you noticed how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Since he has done this, I will not bring disaster on him during his lifetime; it will be during his son's lifetime that I will bring disaster on Ahab's family."*

[This play was adapted from a story as written in:

<http://www.ebibleteacher.com/children/lessons/OT/dividedkingdom/ahab.pdf>]

We need to understand that we should not even think about wanting something so much we would like to take it from someone. Ahab broke the commandment while he was standing at the window wanting or lusting after another man's field. We need to realize sin begins in the mind and that is where we need to stop it and attempt to control it.

THE THANKFUL LIST

The best weapons against covetousness are love and being thankful for what we already have. So stay out of the covetous trap and list 10 things that you are thankful for and list five ways that you can show love and concern to the people that are around you daily. Ask Mom and Dad to help you think of these things if you can't think of all of them. b

I'm Thankful For...

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I Show My Love to Others By...

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