

# **Heidelberg Catechism 113 –Be Satisfied, you who are Rich!**

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Let's define covetousness. Covetousness is an insatiable无法满足的 desire for that which doesn't belong to you. Covetousness is sometimes called the mother command. Covetousness 贪婪 is rightly called the mother command as it is at the root of breaking all other commands. For example, if you covet 贪恋 someone's life, you will hate or kill him. If you covet someone's wife, you will want to take her. If you covet the Lord's Day, you will ignore worshipping God and do what you want. So it is important to properly understand this command as I explain it from God's Word.

## **Prohibited Things in Law 10** **Prescribed Things in Law 10.**

Our goals are: That seeing how rich you are in Jesus, you ask the Savior to make you satisfied with what you have and stifle 克制 covetousness in your life.

**Exodus 20:17** "You shall not covet **your neighbor's house**; you shall not covet 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."  
**Q&A 113 Q. WHAT IS GOD'S WILL FOR US IN THE TENTH COMMANDMENT?**  
**A. That not even the slightest thought or desire contrary to any one of God's commandments should ever arise in my heart. Rather, with all my heart I should always hate sin and take pleasure in whatever is right.**

## **Prohibited Things**

### **1. Roman Catholics break this 10<sup>th</sup> law into 2 laws: Don't covet your neighbor's house, and don't covet your neighbor's wife.**

But the 2nd part of the command is simply an explanation of the 1<sup>st</sup> part of the command. You see, the word "**house**" in the 1<sup>st</sup> part of the command refers to everything a man has or owns. So a man's house consists of his wife, servants, and animals – the things you see in the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the command. Why then did the RC's make 2 commands out of this one? It seems that they wanted to join commands 1 & 2 together so they could excuse their idolatry 偶像崇拜.

### **2. This 10th command forbids you from lusting after 贪求 that which does not belong to you.**

God knows that **lusting leads to sin, shame, and death**, but because of man's fall into sin, lusting and covetousness became normal in man's life. Consider some examples:

**Solomon** pointed out that covetousness (lust) leads **adultery 奸淫**.

**Proverbs 6:25** Do not **lust after her beauty in your heart**, Nor let her allure 勾引 you with her eyelids. 26 For by means of a harlot A man is reduced to a crust of bread; And an adulteress will prey upon his precious life.

**Apostle Paul illustrated 举例说明** his frustration with his own sinful desires that led to **other sins in his life**.

**Romans 7:7** What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. **For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "You shall not covet."** 8 **But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire.** For apart from the law sin was dead.

**The Scriptures are full** of examples of **lust for food** (Garden of Eden, journey from Egypt to Canaan, etc.) that led to **rebellion 叛逆** and severe punishment.

**Lust for riches** often led to **stealing** and is today the seedbed for socialism 社会主义.

**A man who** is enamored 迷恋于 with his own pleasure and profit becomes self-absorbed 自恋的,

自私的 **and doesn't care for others. He becomes cruel.** He becomes a tool of the Devil.

James 3:14 But if you have **bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts**, do not boast and lie against the truth. 15 This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual属情欲的, demonic属魔鬼的. 16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.

### **3. God forbids you from murmuring发牢骚 about what you have or don't have something, like Israel murmured as they left Egypt for Canaan and lusted for the foods of Egypt.**

Remember the anger of God at their murmuring!

Numbers 11:4 Now the mixed multitude who were among them **yielded to intense craving**渴望; so the children of Israel also wept again and said: "Who will give us meat to eat? 5 "We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks韭菜, the onions, and the garlic;

God forbids you from **complaining when others advance in life and you don't.**

### **4. Are there specific actions that God prohibits in this law?**

a. **Law 10 forbids things like lotteries彩票 that offer high prizes without minimal investments and thus promote** covetousness in men's hearts – usually in poor men's hearts.

b. **Law 10 forbids pornography色情描写, 淫秽作品 which titillates挑逗 and evoke covetous thoughts in men's hearts.**

c. **Law 10 forbids your from holding tightly to this world's possessions.** You must hold loosely because you recognize that all of this world's possessions will burn. Bugs and washing machines will destroy the best clothes you have. If you don't hold tightly you won't have to go to therapy治疗 if you lose everything. And if you **don't hold tightly to things you will have time to use your hands to work for heavenly possessions.**

Ecclesiastes 2:11 Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done and on the labor in which I had toiled; And indeed **all was vanity虚空 and grasping for the wind捕风**. There was no profit under the sun.

Gold is like the horse leech蚂蟥 that never stops sucking when attached to a horse's vein.

### **5. What are consequences of Covetousness?**

Covetousness brought deadly plagues on Israel. Covetousness cost Eve and Jezebel their lives.

Covetousness cost Rehoboam his throne. Covetousness cost David a child. Then there are eternal consequences – which are much worse than physical death.

## **Prescribed Things**

### **1. God requires that you have a right heart to keep all his laws.**

a. **If you heart is not right with God, you will never keep this law.**

b. **If your heart isn't right with God you won't desire the finer things in life but you will covet the ordinary things like wealth, women, and song.** You will see those ordinary things as superior to anything else. Maybe you know Psalm 19. The Psalmist, knowing his own weakness, reminded himself of **God's laws – the finer things in life.** He desired God's law more than silver and gold and the best foods available. The point is, when your heart desires-finer things, you will learn to bar the gates of your mind so that selfishness does not sneak in偷偷进入. **Don't misunderstand. It is not wrong to desire to earn** enough to provide comfortably for your family; God commands this. It is not wrong to have money and it is not wrong to have delicious food, but these things must be in their proper place. You must not have **an insatiable desire** for earthly things.

c. **When you have a strong, rock solid, faith in Christ you won't worry about the future and**

that in itself becomes a cure for much covetousness. Remember Christ words of encouragement in this:

Matthew 6: 26 "Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns谷仓; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 "Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? 28 "**So why do you worry about clothing?** Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin纺纱;

## **2. God requires that you learn contentment满足...with an emphasis on learn – as it is unnatural to be contented.**

Philippians 4:11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I **have learned** in whatever state I am, to be content: 12 I know how to be abased处卑贱, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

How do you learn this: Know that you have Christ!

Hebrews 13:5 Let your conduct be without covetousness; **be content with such things** as you have. For He Himself has said, "**I will never leave you nor forsake you.**"

Psalms 16:5-O LORD, **You are the portion of my inheritance and my cup**; You maintain my lot. 6 The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; Yes, I have a good inheritance.

You must be contented because you know how much you really have. Yes, you must work hard, **but you balance it with "satisfaction with what you have."** **Christ gave you salvation, his Holy Spirit, his Word, and his Sacraments圣礼!**

## **3. God prescribes that you covet spiritual things.**

Remember it is God who is your eternal reward, not a beautiful wife, deposits in the bank, or expensive vacations!

Philippians 3:13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended理解, 得着; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 **I press toward the goal for the prize** of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. **20 For our** citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue使归服 all things to Himself.

**It is not sufficient to simply stifle a lustful desire** for another's possessions and pretend it isn't there– as Roman Catholics

believe. Rather, you have to stop those sinful desires from coming into your mind in the first place.

**You do this by filling your mind with good desires. When desires are proper, they should be allowed, sometimes even encouraged.** These good desires are from God. When you are sad, you cry. When you are hungry you want to eat. When you feel pain you moan. Apostle Paul had a desire to die and go to heaven. There was nothing wrong with that desire. He kept working, but he wanted to go to heaven. So don't kill feelings altogether and become a monk.

## **4. (Words) God prescribes that you use your mouth to keep law 10. How?**

a. **Speak words that show your thankfulness** for what you and others have received from you covenant God. **This is insulation绝缘, 隔离 against covetousness.** When you are insulated against covetousness you will be safe from its consequences.

b. **Don't complain.** Nothing good ever comes from God to you because of your

complaining.

**c. Rejoice when others prosper.** This is most difficult. But you can learn it.  
Romans 12:15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

**5. (Action) Law 10 requires that you make more effort for heavenly things than for earthly things.**

The tendency is to overload yourself with worldly things and tasks that your life loses true meaning. But learn that truly good works follow you into heaven.

Revelation 14:13 Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and **their works follow them.**"

What rewards will follow you to heaven?

**Every obedience to the 10 laws goes with you!** So do you have enough? Do you **share some of your possessions with your neighbor?** Do you hoard 储藏? Do **love God** in work and worship? Do you covet the time that God calls you to worship on Sundays or do you covet the time when God calls you to do something for a total stranger?

**Conclusion:**

**As a Christians, you can have good desires** – physical desires for water, or emotional desires for companionship, or even a desire to have more so you can provide for yourself and your family. But **the 10<sup>th</sup> law deals with inordinate 过度的, 超出正常的 desires-** the desires for things which belong to someone else – a person's wealth, his wife, his position, his reputation, etc. **God forbids all inordinate desires and threatens severe consequences** – eternal death – to those who have them.

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ:

**1. Remind yourself of what you already have in Jesus now and remind yourself of your eternal reward** in heaven. You are already sitting in heavenly places. Your ticket has been paid for. You have that assurance in your heart. Knowing how rich you are, you won't be enamored with (迷恋于) the shiny things of this world.

**2. You add to those rewards** in heaven when you give to the needy, when you work hard, and when you give to God's work.

**3. Stay away from people who are enamored with stuff!** Don't marry such people. They will pull you down to run after the shiny things...that are only filled with sugar... that provide a temporary high, but are not good for your souls – and have not benefit in the future.

**If you are not a Christian, I have one final word for you. Covetousness will destroy your soul faster than gangrene**坏蛆. Ask God to change you. He will change you if you ask with a sincere heart. He will change you because Jesus suffered and took the punishment for sinners to satisfy God's anger. He will change you and make you his child. His salvation will then lead to your heart's satisfaction with better things...things that truly matter.