

Exodus 20:17

17 You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.

REFLECT & DISCUSS

Context

The final commandment is not isolated. It is deeply connected to each of the other commandments, especially the second and fourth. According to Colossians 3:5, covetousness, which is greed, is a form of idolatry (forbidden by commandment two). It is an elevation of "thing" or "things" to the place of God. Sabbath rest (commandment four) puts a limit on our activities of acquiring or working toward things, and thus serves to curb our covetousness. Coveting is a kind of restlessness of the heart. Sabbath rest turns the heart toward the full and final rest found in God, the One who's image we each bear.

Scripture Reference: *Matthew 22:37-40*

37 Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' **38** This is the first and greatest commandment. **39** And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' **40** All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Big Ideas

1. Love your neighbor as a **self**, not a thing.
2. It's hard to love people at all if we love things most.
3. Generous giving is the antidote to covetous living.

Reflect

1. Read the scripture passage carefully and slowly. What word or image stands out to you? Why?
2. Why might we be tempted to prioritize "stuff" or "things" over people? Have you had an experience of things prioritized over people?
3. Coveting is caught up in the "dynamic of dehumanization": where we look past people *as people* to something else. History is filled with examples of individuals and people groups reduced to labels of disposable things or despised animals (like cockroaches). Have you observed this dynamic before, whether in your own life or in the culture at large? Why might this be so dangerous? How does the gospel resist this dynamic of dehumanization?
4. Why might the discipline of giving and living generously be an antidote to coveting? Have you experienced the freedom that giving something away brings?