

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Final Commandment is “Do not covet any of your neighbor’s goods.” In other words, “Be content with what you have.”

Covetousness is the root of all wrong desire. It is to see something and say, “I want that! I want that so much that I will do anything to get it!”

Covetousness becomes a form of violence because invariably, the thing we want belongs to someone else and we must reach out to take it, and so deprive them of that thing. Covetousness breeds and broods in the heart of man and causes deep unhappiness.

Nurturing a desire for something other than God lead to ultimate unhappiness. It is easy to dismiss covetousness as being a minor sin, but we need to monitor our desires and be aware of the things we live for which are not God. If there is anything we live for that is not God, then that is our idol.

What do you live for that is not God? Your career? Your money? Your relationships? Your sexual pleasure? Your family? Your home? Your future? Your self esteem? To put anything before God is to indulge in covetousness that leads to greed.

God is against this because it does not make us happy. There is a God-shaped space within all of us, and it is only in seeking Him that we will be truly satisfied.

How do we rid ourselves of covetousness? The answer is simple but not easy. It is there in the two great commandments to love God and love our neighbor. We love God by putting him first every day of our lives. We put Him first by living sacrificially and giving sacrificially. It is impossible to remain covetous for long if we are giving sacrificially and living sacrificially.

Secondly, if we live to love and serve our neighbor it will be impossible to covet what they have. Through giving alms, serving the poor, reaching out to the needy and loving others we will overcome the false loves that keep us from Christ’s kingdom.

All the commandments are given not to make us unhappy, but to lead us to true happiness. It is important therefore to know and love the ten commandments, to teach them to our children and to live them with enthusiasm and joy. In this way our lives will be enriched and as St. Benedict teaches, we will “run on the path of God’s commandments, our hearts overflowing with an inexpressible delight of love!”

Your Pastor,
Fr. Longenecker