



Date: _____

Shepherd's Path

A Shepherd's Personal Devotions

God's Top Ten Series, Lesson 42

Lesson Title: Never Covet

Take Home Point: Never covet.

Warm-Up:

How much unhappiness do you suppose is the result of wanting what another person has? The desired object may be a material item, it may be a relationship, or it may be a quality. It's interesting, isn't it, that although we live in the world's richest country – relatively secure, healthy, and surrounded by material goods – we're not the happiest people. Why is that? Could it be because we are constantly desiring what is not ours? Could it be that the desires we do have are destructive to ourselves and those around us? Have we been so trained by our advertisement-driven consumer society that we aren't happy when someone else has more/different/better than we do? What a sad commentary on our way of life.

Read: Exodus 20:17; 1st Timothy 6:6; James 1:14-15, 3:13-18

Observation (What happened?):

With what does temptation start?

What comes from envy and selfish ambition?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

What is coveting? Why are we commanded not to do it?

What quality does James give as the contrast to envy and selfish ambition?

Insight:

It is important to recognize the distinction so well made by James. It is not always wrong to have a desire. It is wrong to have an evil desire. What makes an evil desire? A desire will be evil if we want something Scripture prohibits. That's pretty straightforward. But a specific desire also will be evil if what we want becomes more important than a right relationship with God or someone else. This usually involves an object or activity that we want in order to please ourselves no matter what the consequence. But God actually wants us to have desires. He wants us to desire to do his will (Psalm 40:8). He wants us to desire to know and live the truth (Proverbs 3:15). He wants us to desire his honor (Isaiah 26:8). He wants us to desire a merciful, compassionate heart for others (Matthew 9:13). He wants us to desire to love him (1 John 5:1-5). He wants us to desire his forgiveness, peace, and rest (Matthew 11:28-30). He wants us to desire to have a relationship with him that lasts for eternity (John 7:37-38). Are these your desires? Are you trying to make them your desires?

Application (What does it mean to me?):

What do you covet? How can you overcome the desire and temptation?

Pray for your small group to be alert and aware of being tempted in a culture that encourages coveting.