



Ten

The Tenth Commandment

Family Study Guides • The Ten Commandments Series

Ten

The Tenth Commandment



“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.

Additionally, this Study Guide has suggested questions and activities that can be used in a classroom setting. They are at the end of the guide.

Objectives:

- Discover possible ways the Tenth Commandment is related to desires in the mind and heart.
- Explain the cause-and-effect relationship between coveting (lust) and breaking many of the other Ten Commandments.
- Describe the benefits of being content and happy with what you have.

Memory Verse

“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” (Exodus 20:17).

1. What is the Tenth Commandment?

The Tenth Commandment states, “You shall not covet.” Coveting can be desiring something that belongs to someone else, or wanting more than our share. It is an inappropriate setting our heart and mind on something we want.

Can a person covet something other than material possessions? What else might we covet? (Someone’s job, position, lifestyle, a position on a team, a particular part in a school play; another’s good grades, etc.)



2. What was the first case of coveting?

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

God created the angel Lucifer with lots of talent. He was good looking and he was given 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.

"Son of man, sing this funeral song for the king of Tyre. Give him this message from the Sovereign Lord: 'You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and exquisite in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God. Your clothing was adorned with every precious stone—red carnelian, pale-green peridot, white moonstone, blue-green beryl, onyx, green jasper, blue lapis lazuli, turquoise, and emerald—all beautifully crafted for you and set in the finest gold. They were given to you on the day you were created. I ordained and anointed you as the mighty angelic guardian. You had access to the holy mountain of God and walked among the stones of fire.

'You were blameless in all you did from the day you were created until the day evil was found in you. Your rich commerce led you to violence, and you sinned. So I banished you in disgrace from the mountain of God. I expelled you, O mighty guardian, from your place among the stones of fire. Your heart was filled with pride because of all your beauty. Your wisdom was corrupted by your love of splendor. So I threw you to the ground and exposed you to the curious gaze of kings. You defiled your sanctuaries with your many sins and your dishonest trade. So I brought fire out from within you, and it consumed you. I reduced you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching. All who knew you are appalled at your fate. You have come to a terrible end, and you will exist no more'" (Ezekiel 28:12-19, The Living Bible).

b. Isaiah discusses more of Lucifer's sins:

"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. 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. I will climb to the highest heavens and be like the Most High.' But instead, you will be brought down to the pit of hell, down to its lowest depths" (Isaiah 14:12-15).

c. One of Satan's main sins was coveting.

- Identify how many ways coveting was connected with Lucifer's (Satan) downfall. How many sins did Lucifer commit in the verses we have read?
- Who was Lucifer mostly thinking about? What do you think led him to this way of thinking?
- Satan wanted more than God had already given him. What if he had been happy with what God gave him?

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

3. Ahab, Naboth and Jezebel (1 Kings 21)

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 okay if the man who owned it had been 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 became unhappy and despondent, so his wife devised a plan so that Ahab could obtain the field.



We should not even think about wanting something so much we would like to take it from someone. Ahab broke the Tenth 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.

Parents with younger children: You may want to do a web search for a kid's animated story of Ahab and Naboth to add to your discussion.

4. Korah and Moses (Numbers 16)

a. 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.

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?'" (Numbers 16:1-3, New Living Translation).

The fact was that God himself had put Moses in charge. These people had been given certain responsibilities, but it 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.

"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!” (Numbers 16:8-11, NLT).

b. Breaking God’s laws carries a penalty.

- What did God do to teach the Israelites how serious the sins of coveting and rebellion are?
- What penalties do your parents give when you break rules?

Your family may want to watch this video clip from “The Ten Commandments” that illustrates a penalty that can happen to covetous, idolatrous rebels: <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x3u3x45>

3. Simon Magas (Acts 8:9-24)

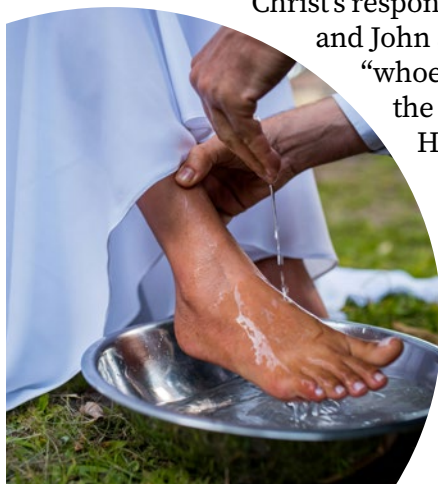
As a family, read Acts 8:9-24 about Simon the sorcerer. How were his evil actions driven by covetousness?

Who is the 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 theirs 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 even 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?

Family Discussion

Together as a family, 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 ensure that you would get what you wanted?
- When we can't or 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 discuss:

"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" (Exodus 20:17).



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 on page 10. Then as a family discuss the things each of you are most thankful for.

After this discussion of coveting, how will you treat others who might get to be first or get a better position on a team instead of you?

Additional Resources for Your Family Studies

UCG Resources on the Tenth Commandment

<https://www.ucg.org/tags/tenth-commandment-0>

UCG Teen Bible Study "The Ninth Commandment"

<https://www.ucg.org/teen-bible-study/teen-bible-study-volume-3-ten-commandments/tenth-commandment-do-not-covet>

Optional Classroom Activities

The Thankful List

Have each student begin a “Thankful for” sheet (found at the bottom of the Guide). Encourage them to finish it with the family and have family discussions.

What do you think about?

Have the students 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 only yourself?

Thankful Collage

Take old magazines or download images off the Internet and have students cut out pictures of things that they have, then make a collage. This activity can show how we need to be more thankful for the things we already possess.

An Exercise in Selflessness

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 that could lead to covetousness?

As a group, discuss these case studies, then share the takeaway lessons from each.

Naboth's Vineyard

Have the older children read the following play, based on 1 Kings 21, about Naboth and Ahab while in front of the younger children.

Naboth's Vineyard

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.



Vineyard Word Scramble
Can you answer the following words? When you’re finished, the letters in the circled boxes spell a word—unscramble them to learn how Ahab responded after Elijah’s message.

Who owned the vineyard?
_ _ _ _

What was King Ahab’s wife’s name?
_ _ _ _ _

Which prophet came to visit King Ahab?
_ _ _ _

To get the vineyard, sins of coveting, _____ and stealing were committed.
 _ _ _ _

Answer:

_ _ _ I _ _ _ Y

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.

I'm Thankful For . . .

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

I Show My Love to Others By . . .

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	