

Two Ways to Be Unhappy

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Study Given by W.D. Frazee—July 1,

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in His law doth he meditate day and night."
Psalm 1:1,2.

The happy man is the one who finds his delight in the law of the Lord. It makes him so happy that he meditates in it day and night. The more he enjoys it the more he wants to meditate in it. The more he meditates in it the happier he is. He keeps working up and building up like an ever ascending spiral. Blessed indeed is such a man.

Those who are not acquainted with God's law might wonder how in ten commandments there could be enough to keep a person busy meditating even for a week, much less for a lifetime. But you and I know there is enough in those sacred commands to keep us studying all through eternity, meditating day and night.

I would like to share with you some thoughts of meditation from one of those commandments, the tenth. Turn to Exodus 20 where we will notice the exact wording of this interesting commandment:

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's" Exodus 20:17.

I suppose most people would say that the Tenth Commandment says thou shalt not covet. I would not quarrel with that, because Paul summarizes it in the New Testament. So we have an inspired example of it.

Nevertheless friends, I would like to suggest that the expression, "thou shalt not covet" is not all there is to the Tenth Commandment. In fact, it would be easy to get a false impression. The Tenth Commandment does not forbid coveting. If it did, Paul would be in contradiction when he tells us:

"Covet earnestly the best gifts" 1 Corinthians 12:31.

So there is a time when it is all right to covet. There are some things that it is not only proper to covet, but we are urged to covet them. So let us go back to the Tenth Commandment and see if we can catch the thought of the divine mind as we meditate on the law of the Lord.

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's" Exodus 20:17.

It is clear. The thing that we are not to covet is the thing that belongs to someone else. That's it. Notice that in each case it is made clear that what we are not to covet is our neighbor's. Each time the word neighbor is used, or the pronoun his is used.

Notice how God details it. Don't covet thy neighbor's house. Don't covet his wife, his manservant, his maidservant, his ox, his ass. And then to sum it up He says, Don't covet anything that is thy neighbor's. If you do you will break the commandment.

But there is plenty to covet that does not belong to thy neighbor at all. It is all right to covet that.

There are two ways to be unhappy. Nearly all the world is made up of these two classes of people. The first is made up of people who are unhappy because they are coveting what doesn't belong to them. They don't have it. They wish they did, so they are unhappy. The second class of people are those who do have it. They coveted what didn't belong to them, and they got it. That made them unhappy.

Remember, whenever God tells us something it is to make us happy and keep us from being unhappy. To put it simply, the great reason God doesn't want you to covet what belongs to your neighbor is that it would make you unhappy if you got it. It wasn't made for you. It doesn't fit you. It won't fit you if you get it. That is true. If you doubt it, study with me. And when you are convinced of it, it will take a great load off your shoulder and a great worry off your heart, and there will come into your heart a new admiration for the divine wisdom and divine love that is back of that wisdom.

We are individuals. God made each one of us by a separate pattern. There are no two of us alike. In making us that way God has made each one of us to like certain things and enjoy certain things. And while it is true that there are things in general that most everyone enjoys, there are hundreds, thousands, yes millions of things that God has planned for you to enjoy that belong to you. These are in His infinite planning for your enjoyment through the eternal ages. They are all planned out for you. And in the ages to come He is going to show the exceeding riches of His kindness toward us.

But heaven begins here in this world. In this life there are things to make you happy that belong to you, that were planned for you.

Sometimes when my wife and I are on a walk in the woods I say to her, "Perhaps we ought to go back, but I wish we could go a little further and see if there isn't some happy surprise waiting for us." And from time to time we see something out there.

A few weeks ago Brother Chambers and I were walking over a piece of our property. Suddenly we came upon a beautiful moccasin flower. It was the first and only time I had ever seen one on these five hundred acres. It was just beautiful. I made a note of where it was and took my wife back to see it. And I am just foolish enough to believe that God put it out there for me and others who saw it, and that God was willing to plan it years ago, looking for the moment when we would come upon it unexpectedly. Yes, I believe that. If that is being foolish then I am foolish and simple.

I believe that all through my life God has again and again brought me to experiences that He planned just for me, and that He is going to do that all through eternity.

I am very sorry that I ever coveted anything that belongs to other folks. Sometimes that wishing for something that wasn't mine made me very unhappy. I think that the deepest sorrow I ever had was getting things that didn't belong to me. I don't mean doing things that would put me in the penitentiary either. But anyone who gets what God never intended for him is missing a great deal of happiness, and likely taking hold of something that will only wound and grieve him.

Our best friend says, Thou shalt not covet any thing that is thy neighbor's, but covet the best gifts that were made for you. Those that have your name on them. Those that were planned before you were ever born, and arranged by a loving heart in heaven for you. Those are the things to covet. Why should we miss those precious gifts that God is waiting to bestow upon us?

In Bunion's allegory, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the man with the muck rake was working around in the straw. Every now and then he would uncover some glass bead, or some other trinket, and grin at it. He would keep working with his muck rake, while all the while there stood one above his head holding out a golden crown. But he couldn't see it. Why? He wasn't looking that way.

"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" Colossians 3:2.

I am thankful that some of those heavenly gifts come down to earth. All our joys are not in anticipation. Right here in this world there are experiences of the deepest joy for all who will let God plan their lives.

I want to ask you something, and please be honest with yourself and God. Do you first decide what you want, and then hope that God has planned it for you? Or do you first find out what God has planned for you and then allow yourself to be drawn into an ever growing desire for it? Which plan do you follow?

Someone says, Brother Frazee, be practical. We want things because we want them. And we don't know whether they are planned for us or not. We want them and hope it is so.

I thought of the little girl whose mother heard her praying, "Please Lord, make Albany the capital of New Jersey."

Her mother said, "Darling, why are you praying for the Lord to make Albany the capital of New Jersey?"

The little girl said, "Because that is what I wrote in my examination today."

We smile at the absurdity of it.

But do you know that over this world there are hundreds and thousands of people praying to God that God will give them the person they want for their wife or husband? They have it all picked out. They can tell you the name they have picked. It is Mary or Alice or George or John. Oh Lord, please give me that one.

Why?

Oh, I want her so much.

And it leads to the place where people are fearful that their plans might be interfered with, you understand. They are fearful that someone is going to intervene and stop it. They even fear to pray too much about it.

Of course, people have their different ideas about God. There are people who think if they pray long enough and hard enough they can get God to come around to their thinking.

You remember Balaam prayed earnestly for something that he wanted. Peter says he loved the wages of unrighteousness. He wanted the rewards that Balak was going to give him if he would come and curse Israel. He ought to have said, Lord, help me to feel the way You feel, and love what You love, and want what you want, and to not even want the thing that You don't want me to have. That is what he should have prayed, shouldn't he? And it would have kept him from a great deal of unhappiness.

He disappointed Balak. He disappointed himself. He went home a disappointed man to think up some new and terrible plan to get what he wanted, and he finally died in battle.

Do you see what I mean when I say there are two ways to be unhappy? First Balaam was unhappy because he couldn't go. Finally he was unhappy because he got to go. So either way you are unhappy if you covet something that doesn't belong to you. You will be unhappy until you get it, and then you will be unhappy after you get it.

God says, I want you to be happy. So please don't covet what doesn't belong to you.

Did you ever see children sitting at a Christmas party waiting for the presents to be passed out? I heard a friend telling about a Christmas party he was at over 70

years ago. He told how there were certain things he wanted, and something that he didn't want at all. Of course, he had no thought that he was going to get that thing he didn't want.

When the presents were passed out he had the great disappointment of seeing every present he wanted passed out to others. Finally his name was called, and the thing he didn't want was given to him.

So many experiences are like that for little children, and older ones. Why? Because they have this thing backwards. They decide what they want, start coveting it, begging for it. If they are little they beg their parents. When they get older they may beg God, or others. Or if their minds are of a different bent, instead of begging they go to work to get it. They think that if they want something they have to go at it. And most of the people in this world are spending their lives wanting this and that thing they have decided on. Oh, how disappointed they are because they don't get it, or because they do. Either way it ends up in a disappointment.

This is the reason why there are so many unhappy people. This is it. I want to read something interesting in comment on the Tenth Commandment:

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's' Exodus 20:17.

"The Tenth Commandment strikes at the very root of all sins" *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 309.

You remember what John the Baptist said about the axe, don't you?

"And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees" Matthew 3:10.

Well, this is the root, friends. And the Gospel axe is being put at the root.

"The Tenth Commandment strikes at the very root of all sins, prohibiting the selfish desire, from which springs the **sinful act**" *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 309.

Where does the sinful act come from? Selfish desire. What is a selfish desire? It is wanting anything except what God intended you to have. That is just plain selfishness.

"He who in obedience to God's law refrains from indulging even a sinful desire for that which belongs to another will not be guilty of an act of wrong toward his fellow creatures" *Ibid.*

Friends, isn't that wonderful? Do you want to be kept from sinning, as well as sorrow and sadness? Well, here it is. Just quit this coveting business. But you will have to go deep, because this lies deep in the heart. Much of the other

commandments has to do with the outward act, but this Tenth Commandment is dealing entirely with what is down **underneath—the thoughts**, the motives, the desires, the wants.

I hope everyone is listening. Do you know that parents start early in life planting this very germ of covetousness in the little child? It is this perpetual catering to the wants and whims and desires of little children who don't have wisdom enough to make the decisions that are thrown at them. They are asked, What would you like about this and that and something else? What food do you want? Later on they are asked, What books do you want to read? What school do you want to go to? Some are asked what work they would like to do around the house, and the rest of the members of the household govern themselves accordingly. If the little child should condescend to select certain employment, father and mother will take what is left. It is planting covetousness down into that child.

A child should be taught to desire to please his parents. That is it. It is that simple. We are told plainly that to the child the parents stand in the place of God. What should a Christian want when he comes to God in prayer? Is God a glorified Santa Clause? I would not be irreverent, friends, but is prayer a Christmas check list? Please send me this, that, and the other thing. Or should prayer be the sincere endeavor to have the heart emptied of all our selfish desires? If so, then in sincerity we can pray, Lord, I have come to You to find out what You want.

How are our children going to learn that? The question is, What do they want? If you are honest you would have to admit that they don't know what they want. Neither do you. But God will give you wisdom to know what He wants you to do, if you will seek Him. And He will give you wisdom to find out what will please your child, if you will study the Bible, *Child Guidance*, *Ministry of Healing*, and *Adventist Home* instead of asking the child what it would like. Let's put that away, my friends. Let us, for Jesus' sake, come back to primitive Godliness in raising our children. What do you say?

Let me hasten to add, that doesn't make our children unhappy. It is to keep them from being unhappy. That is the whole purpose of it. It is God's way. And God knows that if we will follow His way, then we can be happy, and help others to be happy.

I want you to notice another comment on this:

"Covetousness is an evil of gradual development."
Patriarchs and Prophets, pages 496.

Gradual has to do with time. It means that it takes time. This chapter is telling about Achan's experience. God told the children of Israel not to take one thing from Jerico. They were not to touch the gold or silver. It was to be devoted to the sanctuary. And everything that could be burned was to be burned up. But one man out of all those thousands of people allowed himself to covet.

He told the story himself afterwards. He said, When I saw all the spoils, that golden wedge, and that goodly Babylonian garment, I coveted them. Then I took

them. But Achan had been building for years that covetous disposition. He had been allowing himself to want things that God never intended, and he finally come to the tragic hour when he would lay his hands upon holy things that had been consecrated to God, and that men were forbidden to touch. That meant stealing and concealing, hiding them in the tent until the whole camp of Israel was under the curse. All this was for what? Covetousness. Covetousness is an evil of gradual development.

When we think of sacred things that have been devoted to God we think of something sacred that God has devoted to Himself down through the ages. The tithe. Is it still sacred? There has been running through my mind these four little words:

"Let none feel at liberty to retain their tithe, to use according to their own judgment. They are not to use it for themselves in an emergency, nor to apply it as they see fit, even in what they may regard as the Lord's work.

"The minister should, by precept and example, teach the people to regard the tithe as sacred. He should not feel that he can retain and apply it according to his own judgment because he is a minister. It is not his" *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, page 247 (underlining supplied).

There are the four little words. What is the "it"? The tithe. What if the "his"? The minister. Can't a minister take the tithe and put it where he thinks it is best? No. Why not? It isn't his. Whose is it? God's. Has God told us what to do with it? Yes.

"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house" Malachi 3:8-10.

God has a treasure. The tithe is to be put into that treasure.

I came across something interesting a few weeks ago. I was looking for something else, and didn't know this was here. It is in a book of special testimonies that one of our dear ministers gave me a few years ago.

"You who have been withholding your means from the cause of God, read the book of Malachi. Unworthy ministers may receive some of the means, but dare anyone because of this withhold from the treasury and brave the curse of God? I dare not. I pay my tithe gladly and freely, saying, as did David, 'Of Thine own have we given Thee.' Act your part my brothers and sisters. God loves you, and He stands at the helm. If the conference business is not managed according to the order of the Lord, that is the sin of the erring ones. The Lord will not hold you responsible for it if you do what

you can to correct the evil. But do not commit sin yourselves by withholding from God His own property" *Special Testimonies, Series A, Number 1, page 27.*

You see that Achan's problem was that he dared step into something that God told him not to touch.

But the central point is that coveting is wanting what doesn't belong to us. That's all there is to it. If it belongs to you, it is all right to covet it. You can covet anything that is yours, but don't covet anything that is your neighbors. If you do you are breaking God's commandment, and getting ready for sorrow.

I was about to say that I wish money was all there is to this coveting problem. It would still be a big problem, wouldn't it? The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil (1 Timothy 6:10). But there are a great many things that people are coveting beside money.

I mentioned earlier about life's companionship. Most of the courtship and marriage that is going on today is based on coveting. It is an expression of coveting. Let me give an example:

"A young man who enjoys the society and wins the friendship of a young lady unknown to her parents, does not act a noble Christian part toward her or toward her parents... Marriages contracted under such influences are not according to the word of God. He who would lead a daughter away from duty, who would confuse her ideas of God's plain and positive commands to obey and honor her parents, is not one who would be true to the marriage obligations. . . .

"'Thou shalt not steal,' was written by the finger of God upon the tables of stone; yet how much underhand stealing of affections is practiced and excused" *Messages to Young People, page 445.*

Satan has so captivated the mind of the people of this world that they have a proverb. All the world loves a lover. It is not in the Bible. What does it mean? It means that young people, apart from parental counsel and contrary wishes, engage in courtship and marriage. Usually they have the sympathy of the community around them instead of the sharp disapproval which would reflect the disapproval of heaven.

Why is that? Because people don't understand the subject we are talking about.

Thou shall not covet anything that is thy neighbor's. And if a young man is looking for a wife, he must remember that there is not any girl in this world who doesn't belong to someone. If he is looking for one, he had better find out from God who God has intended for him. And he had better find out from the guardian of the woman whether or not he has permission. That is in harmony with these principles.

If people would practice it that way, what a world of sorrow would be missed. It isn't that God and guardians are trying to keep young people from being happy. It is just the opposite. They are trying to keep them from being unhappy. And all along the shores of life you can see the wrecks of the lives of young people who were so afraid that someone was going to interfere with what they wanted, and so they got it.

God is going to let people get what they want if they are determined enough to have it. But He can't put His blessing upon what He has forbidden, what He has not planned. How Jesus and angels must weep as men and women deliberately turn from that which God has planned and choose to paddle their own canoe, all the while missing the most precious experience.

Someone says, I think that unless I do something about getting what I ought to have I won't get it.

So they quote another proverb (one that isn't in the Bible), God helps those who help themselves. So they proceed to help themselves quite liberally. But how many precious providences are missed as people get what they are determined to have instead of what God intended.

That can be true even in what God wants people to eventually have. Let's look at Jacob for an example. God had told Jacob's mother that the elder would serve the younger. Jacob was the younger, and he was to have the blessing. God knew that before Jacob was born, and he was told that as he grew up.

The day came when Rebecca heard Isaac laying his plans to give the blessing to Esau. She communicated what she had heard to Jacob, and together they hatched a scheme. Why? To help Jacob get what Jacob wanted to have, and what God had promised. To help God do it, you understand.

Did they help? No, they didn't help. They started out with evasion and ended up with plain lying. That led on to having to flee. Why? Simply because people could not learn to wait on God.

I want to read you a beautiful text:

"My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him" Psalm 62:5.

Put a ring around the word "only." It means that God is the only one who knows what I want. If I will wait upon God, I know He will give me what I hope for.

Is it worth waiting for? Oh, yes. If you take that attitude you don't have to fight and battle with the people of this world. You don't have to run and grab something before somebody else gets it. If it belongs to them, why should you run to get it before they do? And if it belongs to you, and you do what God wants you to do, you will have it at the right time.

Couldn't Jacob have gotten that blessing eventually? Wouldn't God have arranged it at the right time? He didn't have to grab for it.

God never makes it necessary for you to get into a contest in order to grab some money someone else is going to get, or some position that someone else is going to get, or some life's companion that someone else is going to get. No, friends. Don't get in the race. You might get beaten. But that isn't the worse of it. You might win.

You can have what God wants you to have without battling with flesh and blood, without grabbing from someone else. You don't have to borrow the Devil's weapons to work out the will of heaven.

Serene I fold my hands and wait,
Nor care for winds nor tide nor sea;
I rave no more against time or fate,
For my own shall come to me.

I stay my haste, I make delay,
For what avails this eager pace?
I stand amid the eternal waves,
And what is mine shall know my fate.

The stars come nightly to the sky,
The tidal wave unto the sea;
Nor time nor space nor depth nor height
Can keep my own away from me.

God is good. God is wonderful. I think of an experience I saw a dear woman have right here in this place. It was the first institutional session we ever had sixteen years ago this summer. The conference loaned us some tents, and we pitched them down under the pine trees across from where the sanitarium is now.

Different ones came. Among them was a woman who graduated from a state university. After reaching adult life she accepted this message. She came and studied these beautiful principles and motivation. She studied that love is the great motive instead of competition. As she studied a great vision dawned upon her soul, and a great peace came into her heart.

She told me her experience. She said, "Brother Frazee, all my life I have been pushed and prodded. I was a good student. My parents wanted me to be at the head of my class and have straight A's. I did, but I was always under that pressure of getting ahead and being ahead; being at the top, and being an honor student. It just about wore me out. Now I find that I don't have to do that anymore. I can just do my best and believe that what God wants me to do He will arrange, and the place God wants me to fill He will arrange. That is wonderful."

I thank God, it is wonderful.

Our precious Lord, we thank Thee for the simplicity for faith and love. We thank Thee with all our hearts that these Ten Commandments are ten promises. With joy we ask Thee to fulfill Thy promise that to each one of us we shall not covet anything that is our neighbor's. Keep us from coveting. Keep us from allowing even one desire for that which is not ours. Then fill our hearts with the deep yearning for that which belongs to us, that which is Thy plan in every phase of life. Thus may we make Thee happy, in Jesus' name, Amen.

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