

Tenth Commandment

#0558
1964

Study given by W.D. Frazee—August 1,

I am glad so many people are interested in studying the three angel's messages of Revelation 14. Are we through yet? No. There is more to study.

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters” Revelation 14:6-7.

Everybody doesn't accept his message, so the second angel comes saying:

“Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” Revelation 14:8.

And the third angel followed them. How many more after the third. No more. This is the last. The angel of Revelation 18 comes to join his voice in a repetition on a wider and grander scale of the threefold message. The third message is the last, and no more to follow. He warns against the false worship of the beast and his image, and the reception of his mark. Then he points out the glorious results of this threefold message:

“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” Revelation 14:12.

Where are they? Here. John hears the angel repeat it twice. Here. Not on some far off planet. Not in heaven. Right here in this world God will have a people who keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

Can it be done? What does it take to believe it? It takes faith. Whose faith? The faith of Jesus.

Jesus had faith enough to give His life for the development of that people. Will we have faith enough to participate in it? I trust so. Oh, what a glorious opportunity.

The standard is so high and the experience so truly out of this world that the only way a man can believe it is by faith. The only way a man can truly hope for it is

by believing God. It takes the same faith to believe that God is going to develop in this world a group of people who keep His commandments as it does to believe that He is coming to take us from this world and translate us to heaven. One is just as much a miracle as the other; but we have a miracle working God. Is that right? Thank God for that.

I want us to look at the law. There are two tables. The first table deals with love to God. The second table deals with love to man.

Which is the first and great commandment? Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, and soul. That is the first. These four commandments of the Decalogue are to enable us to show our love to God.

The other six commandments deal with how to express our love to our fellow man. Thus the ten show us how to reveal love.

Love is what? The fulfilling of the law. "If ye love Me," Jesus says, "Keep My commandments." You can't keep them unless you love Him. It is utterly impossible.

This is all an expression of love, and love prompts obedience. Long before you and I had the opportunity to show our love by keeping the law, God showed His love by giving the law. Every word in the Decalogue is an expression of God's wonderful love for man. It is for one purpose, and one only—to make us happy.

Which is God more interested in, that you be good or that you be happy? He says:

"These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" John 15:11.

The whole purpose of God is to make us happy. What is good is what God says will make us happy. And He knows, for He made us. That is why we are keeping the Sabbath today. We believe that He made us. And since He made us, He knows what makes us tick. He knows how our minds work. He knows what it takes to satisfy us.

Do you know the job God has undertaken? Sometimes when I think of it, it seems to me it is a tremendous assignment. But He assigned it to Himself. This is the job He has undertaken:

"Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing" Psalm 145:16.

Oh, think about that. Do you mean that God is in the business of trying to satisfy everybody? Yes. Some people cannot succeed in satisfying anyone, but God has undertaken the task of satisfying every desire of everybody.

"Every want He has implanted He provides to satisfy"
Education, page 41.

This sounds almost too good to be true. but it is too good not to be true.

Take myself. I am a hard man to please. Seriously, I tell my wife that. If I am a hard man to please, I know that nobody but the wife I have could have done that job. I have many desires, many tastes, and God has made arrangements to satisfy every one of them. And I have so many that it is going to take eternity to satisfy them.

That is why God is going to give me eternal life. If I could get everything I want in a hundred years, a hundred years would be long enough to live, wouldn't it? Why live when you are not getting what you want? But God is going to continue my every desire a thousand years, ten thousand years, a million years, a billion years. And a billion years I am going to want a great many things I don't even know about tonight. There will be a great many more desires and plans and ambitions that will come to light. God has planned my life that way, and He has made full arrangements to give me everything I want. Oh, how good God is!

But listen. He has made every individual different. What you want would not satisfy me, and what I want wouldn't satisfy you. Look around you and compare the things you like and enjoy with your friends.

How many of you like watermelon. Not every hand is going up. What is the matter with those strange people? And I could go around the list of delicious foods. They may be delicious to you but somebody else says, I don't see anything in that.

So it is with every phase of life. We are individuals and made so. When Jesus went to prepare a place for you, He went to prepare a place for you.

My dream of a home in the earth made new is a little lake. Not too small, but not big like lake Michigan, or even lake Tahoe. Like one of these lakes up in the park. Dream Lake or Bear Lake. One of those beautiful lakes. And a waterfall at one end. Wonderful peaks surround it. And at one end a view of a vast expanse of the most beautiful scenery. That is my home in the earth made new. Yes. You can dream about what yours is, and it will be better yet. My point is, it will be tailored to your measure. Don't forget it.

Well, what does this have to do with keeping the commandments? It has a great deal to do with it. I want to study one of these commandments with you that is designed to make certain that the plan of God making you eternally happy will come to pass by giving you exactly what will satisfy you in every detail.

The commandment I want to study with you is the last one, the Tenth Commandment. What does it say? Not to covet?

That's what a lot of people think it says. That isn't what it says.

You say, I think it does. Well, turn in your Bibles to Exodus 20:17 and let's see if it says not to covet.

You say, "Sure, I know that. I have learned the Ten Commandments by heart."

Well, look and see if that is what it says. And while you are turning to it, let me remind you that if it says not to covet, then Paul didn't write what he should have. He says plainly:

“But covet earnestly the best gifts” 1 Corinthians 12:31.

The Bible doesn't contradict itself. And when God has an inspired prophet like Paul, that prophet does not by inspiration contradict the Ten Commandments.

My friends, we not only have permission to covet, we are exhorted to covet, and to covet earnestly the very best in life.

What is that Tenth Commandment then? Does it say not to covet? No, it does not.

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

Ah. Then it is all right to covet just so you do not covet what belongs to your neighbor. That what it says, and that is what it means.

Remember, the purpose of the commandments is to make you happy. Therefore, if you want to keep the commandments, never covet what belongs to somebody else. If you do you will be unhappy. If you want to be happy, covet earnestly the best gifts, the ones that God has made for you, the ones that God has planned for you.

The more you look at it the more glad you will be that God is such a wonderful God. Notice He says do not covet your neighbor's house, do not covet your neighbour's wife, do not covet your neighbor's manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's.

How many times does God say not to covet? Seven times. That ought to be enough. That is the perfect number. Seven times God says don't covet what is your neighbour's. Why not? In the first place, you may not get it, and that will make you unhappy. And in the second place you may get it, and that will make you unhappy. That is two ways to be unhappy. And everybody in the world that is unhappy takes either the first or the second method. They are either coveting what belongs to somebody else and not getting it, or else they covet what belongs to somebody else and do get it. Either way they are unhappy.

Someone was telling me an experience which helps me to illustrate this. A wealthy woman who had a maid looking after her toddler heard the child crying in the next room. Like a number of parents today, she supposed that the way to get a child to stop crying was to give him what he wants. She spoke through the door to the maid and said, “Give him what he wants.”

Presently the crying stopped. Then it broke out again, louder than before. The lady of the house said to the maid, "I told you to give him what he wants."

The maid said, "I did. It was a wasp."

So many times when I hear people crying for things I think of the wasp and the wails that are going up from this world.

How many see an automobile that belongs to somebody else. Oh, I want that. Or it may be any one of ten thousand things. But unless God has put your name on it, don't covet it. It will make you restless and envious and jealous and dissatisfied all the time you want it. And then if you get it, God pity you, because you are going to get stung.

One evening when David should have been engaged in some useful occupation, his eyes were wandering. He saw a beautiful woman. Was she his? No. She wasn't his. What should David have done? He should have quit looking immediately.

As he looked he began to covet, and he coveted his neighbour's wife. Before he got through, he succeeded in getting what he wanted. Did it lead him to break any of the other commandments? Yes. He broke the sixth, the seventh, the eighth, and the ninth. He committed adultery, he lied, he stole, and he murdered, all because he let himself covet what was not his.

Did it make him happy? No. Was he unhappy while he was coveting? Yes. Was he unhappy when he got what he coveted? Yes. Ah, David never did get over the sorrow and remorse of it. Think of those four sons of his that one after the other were taken away as the bloody and awful result of breaking the Tenth Commandment by their father, king David.

So I say, whether it was a big matter such as David got into, or a little thing, never start wanting something until first you ask God whether your name is on the tag. I mean that seriously. It is the way to avoid a world of unhappiness. And people down here in this last generation who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus are going to keep the Tenth Commandment along with all the rest. They are going to covet earnestly the best gifts. And the best gifts for you are the gifts God has put your name on.

This has a special lesson for young people in their teens and twenties. One of the great gifts God gives young people is the gift of life companionship. The Bible says:

"Whoso findeth a wife, findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD" Proverbs 18:22.

Does that mean that everybody who gets married finds a good thing? There are millions of people who could testify to the opposite. First they cried for the wasp, and then they cried because they got the wasp. Well, it would be laughable if it were

not so tragic, but a broken home is not a funny thing, and a broken heart is not a comical thing.

As a pastor and evangelist I have been through many a tragedy and gone through many a sad experience with broken hearts for the last 35 years. And I tell you, broken hearts are not pretty. But they could all be avoided if people would just ask God before they started coveting, Dear Lord, did you put my name on this tag? Is this something for me?

The Bible says to covet the best gifts, and one of the best gifts is a good wife. But young men, before you ever start loving a girl, or wanting to love a girl, remember you are only going to have one. Before you start, be sure it is the one God has made for you.

You say, How will I know? Well, that is another subject, but you can find a good deal of light on it in the book, *Messages to Young People*, in the closing section on *Courtship and Marriage*. I will read just a few sentences:

“The underhand way in which courtships and marriages are carried on is the cause of a great amount of misery, the full extent of which is known only to God. On this rock thousands have made shipwreck of their souls. Professed Christians, whose lives are marked with integrity, and who seem sensible upon every other subject, make fearful mistakes here” *Messages to Young People*, page 447.

In fact, we are told that the great enemy works harder at this business of leading those who are not suited to each other to marriage than anything else, because he knows that by it he can produce more misery and hopeless woe than by exercising his skill in any other direction.

I wonder if God who is interested in every detail of your life is interested in this mighty and momentous thing in your life? Oh, yes. And He tells you to not covet your neighbor's wife.

You say you would not covet somebody who belongs to somebody else. I want to tell you something. Every girl in this world belongs to somebody. Some know who they belong to and some don't, but every girl in this world belongs to somebody. It would be too bad to covet your neighbor's wife after she was your neighbor's wife. But it would be tragic for you to get her before she became your neighbor's wife, because she would not fit you, and he would be missing. I mean this seriously. God has a plan for every life.

But let's go back of that. Do you know who a girl belongs to before she is married? Who do you girls think you belong to? I will read you a statement, and maybe you can come to a conclusion.

“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. Through

secret communications and meetings he may gain an influence over her mind; but in doing he fails to manifest that nobility and integrity of soul which every child of God will possess. In order to accomplish their ends, they act a part that is not frank and open and according to the Bible standard, and prove themselves untrue to those who love them and try to be faithful guardians over them. Marriages contracted under such influences are not according to the word of God. He 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*, pages 445-446.

Suppose I am a young man looking for a wife. I see a young woman who looks good to me. Can't she and I fix the thing up? If I go and deal with her and get her affections I am doing what? Stealing. Listen. Can you steal something that belongs to you? No. The only thing a man can steal is something that does not belong to him.

Now I know that what we are studying tonight is revolutionary. That is, it would be if it were believed and practiced. It would be very revolutionary. But that's what keeping the commandments of God is. It is revolutionary.

Do you know what they said about Paul and his company? "These who have turned the world upside down have come hither." Do you know why Paul and his group turned the world upside down? It was wrong side up. That's right. And anyone who will seriously and conscientiously and fully obey the Ten Commandments will find himself turning things upside down.

So young people, both young men and women, I challenge you to make a study of this chapter in the light of the Tenth Commandment. And I suggest to every young man, before you covet anyone, be sure you have a right to. That young woman you are thinking about belongs to somebody.

You say, "Oh, but she doesn't care about what her father or mother think."

Well, if she doesn't, you had better be careful. You may get a wasp. I mean it seriously. If a girl doesn't care enough about what her father and mother think to want to know what her father and mother think before she takes the first step in giving herself away, what makes you think she will be true to her marriage vows? What makes you think she is a prize?

Were you ever at a wedding? Quite often the minister, as a part of the ceremony says, "Who giveth this woman to be the wife of this man." How many of you have ever heard that? I wonder why they put that in there? And when the minister says that, what happens? Her father is supposed to stand up and say, "I do."

When is that said, before or after the wedding? Before. Is that right?

There is many a father, if he told the truth, would have to stand up and say, To tell you the truth, nobody has. This fellow right here came in and stole this girl.

Now that isn't done at a wedding, is it? No. It is supposed to be the polite thing and the courteous thing for the parents to go along and be good and not make any trouble.

My dear friends, God is going to have some people in this last generation, young and old, who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. And I challenge you, young and old, study these counsels in the Spirit of Prophecy, for they bring to view a standard which is entirely different both in kind and degree from what is going on around us.

And keeping the commandments on this subject will mark the people of God as peculiar just as much as keeping the Fourth Commandment, or any of the rest of the ten.

Did you ever see a person with a job you wish you had, a position you wish you had? I was talking to a young person a few years ago. He attended a week of prayer I conducted. As a result of the meetings he attended and the studies he listened to, thank God his view of life was completely changed. He was not a student. He was a teacher of experience, but still a young man.

After he had gotten a view of life in which he didn't have to take anything that belonged to anyone else, and that he didn't have to engage in competition and rivalry, he said, "Brother Frazee, for several years I have had a certain path marked out for myself that would lead me at last to the presidency of the General Conference."

Notice he was not intending to be the president of General Motors or the president of the United States. He wasn't planning to be wealthy. He wasn't planning to do something big in this world. He was planning to do something big in God's work.

Somebody says, "Isn't that wonderful?"

Do you think that God is leading young people to carve out a career for themselves, to pick out some office for themselves in the church of God, and to have them plan like the politicians do who at last grasp that office as a prize?

I tell you, No. It is written in the law of God, thou shalt not covet anything that is thy neighbor's. When this young man got hold of that he settled down to do a good job in what he is doing, and he has left with God who is going to be the president of the General Conference 10 or 20 or 30 years from now, should time last.

Never covet the position somebody else has. In the first place, it will make you restless and dissatisfied while you are wanting it. In the second place, you just might get it, and what a wasp it might turn out to be.

God has not called everybody to be president of the General Conference. How many has He called? Just one. And I believe God is capable of placing the man in the leadership of His people that He selects, and barring the revelations of the Spirit of Prophecy, such as Samuel coming to David and anointing him when a youth, I do not believe God is telling today the man who is going to be a future General Conference president. That is not His way of doing things.

What a blessed thing it is to be happy in the work that lies nearest; to do the work that heaven has appointed us, and not to be coveting what belongs to our neighbor.

Closely allied to this is another thing that makes people unhappy. It is the matter of talent. How many of you have ever heard Ben Glanzer sing? Oh, yes. Do you enjoy it? Most people do.

But it makes some people unhappy to hear a man like that sing. Do you know why? Because they can't sing that way.

You say, "That's foolish."

Yes, it is. But it all comes from not understanding and keeping the Tenth Commandment—Thou shalt not covet anything that is thy neighbor's.

Dear friend, I know I can't sing like Brother Glanzer, but I can do something he can't do. Do you know you can do something he can't do? What is it? There is a soul I can reach that he cannot reach. I have a key in my pocket that fits a certain lock. You have a key that fits a certain lock. And there is somebody you can reach and take to Heaven nobody else can reach.

What a shame it would be to lose even one minute of that holy and wonderful opportunity by vainly wishing we could do what somebody else can do, and be what somebody else can be.

What did God say to Moses by the burning bush? What is that in your hand? Moses said, A rod. Just a shepherd's stick. What did God say? Take that, and with that you will do signs, wonders, marvels. Did it happen? Ah, yes. Moses, with the gift of God, went to Egypt, and with that rod he turned the Nile to blood. With that rod he brought plague after plague upon that rebellious nation. With that rod he led Israel to the Red Sea, and through it. With that rod he brought water from the rock.

Oh, friends, what is that in your hand? Don't covet anything that is your neighbor's. Whether it be a gift, position, wealth, influence, anything that is thy neighbor's, do not covet it. But covet earnestly the best gifts, and believe that Jesus loves you enough to give you the very best. Believe that Jesus has given you a mind that is peculiarly adapted to do the particular work He has planned for you to do.

Don't look at life and think what you would like to do. You don't know what you would like to do. You might pick out a wasp. How many a disappointed man there is 35, 40, 60 years old, who looks back and says, If I had life to live over again I would do something different.

Do you know what Einstein said he would do if he could have life over again? He said he would be a plumber. He was utterly dissatisfied and disgusted by what had been accomplished by his contribution.

You don't need to do that way. You can, like the apostle Paul, look back over your life and say, I have fought a good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. I am happy for the way God has led me.

I thank God I know something of what we are studying tonight. As I look back over my life, over a half a century now, while I am sorry for the many failures this poor man has made, I can truthfully say that the God in whose hand I placed my life when I was a boy has, in spite of all my failures and mistakes, led me in a wonderful way. If I had time, I could tell you experience after experience where He kept me from the wasp. To Him be all the glory. It wasn't any wisdom of mine. It wasn't any goodness of mine. He has led me in interesting ways. When we get under the tree of life I will tell you all about it. And it is a wonderful story. It is my book of life.

But God loves you just as much as He loves me, and He is just as anxious to satisfy your every longing as He is to satisfy my every longing. He wants to make you just as happy as He wants to make me.

In the last thing Sister White wrote, is one of those grand sweeping statements that stand like a great mountain. Listen:

"It would not satisfy the heart of the Infinite One to give those who love His Son a lesser blessing than He gives His Son"
Testimonies to Ministers, page 518.

What? Do you mean that God wants to give me just as big a blessing He gives Jesus? That's what it says. Oh, I can't comprehend that. No friends, I can't, but I can keep eating on it day by day. Did you ever get a present so big you couldn't eat it all in one meal. That's what refrigerators are for, and deep freezers. Here is a fruit cake so big you can eat on it a million years:

"It would not satisfy the heart of the Infinite One to give those who love His Son a lesser blessing than He gives His Son."
Ibid.

That is a direct quotation. Look it up if you think it is too big.

In that parting message that came from the servant of the Lord there is wrapped up God's longing desire to please, to satisfy every heart. Let's let Him do it. What do you say? That is what makes Him happy. That is what satisfies Him. And He will do it.

You say, "If all this is so, there are some things I don't understand."

Well, why not ask Him about those things you don't understand. You may find the answer is:

"What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter" John 13:7.

It is better to wait God's time to explain things than to grab for the wasp and get it, and spend the rest of your life crying.

"In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths" Proverbs 3:6.

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