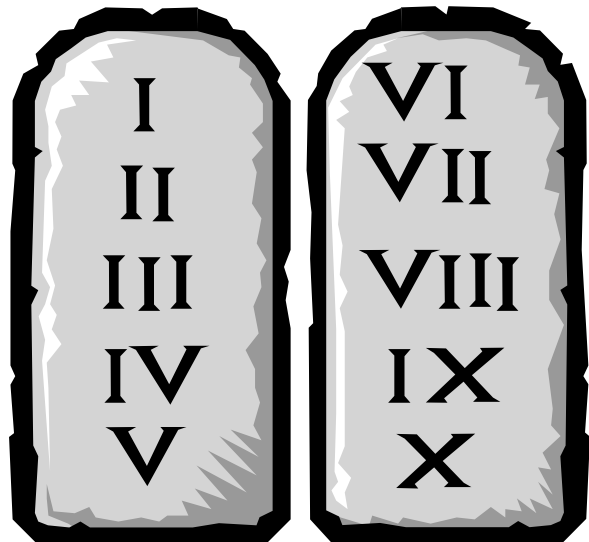


Lesson 2.5 –How Can I Serve My Neighbor?

(cont.)

Intro:

THE NINTH AND TENTH COMMANDMENTS



1. What does God deal with in the Ninth and Tenth Commandments?

Exodus 20:17 ¹⁷“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

Romans 7:7,8 ⁷What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, “Do not covet.” ⁸But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire.

In the Ninth and Tenth Commandments God deals the attitude of our hearts – his command that we have holy desires.

2. Why is God so interested in the heart?

Mark 7:14-23 ¹⁴Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. ¹⁵Nothing outside a man can make him ‘unclean’ by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him ‘unclean.’” ¹⁷After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. ¹⁸“Are you so dull?” he asked. “Don’t you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him ‘unclean’? ¹⁹For it doesn’t go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body.” (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods “clean.”) ²⁰He went on: “What comes out of a man is what makes him ‘unclean.’ ²¹For from within, out of men’s hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²²greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. ²³All these evils come from inside and make a man ‘unclean.’”

Luke 6:45 ⁴⁵The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.

A sinful or godly heart is the source from which all our actions flow – it determines whether we sin or do good. Even before sinful actions, God judges us as unclean based on the condition of our hearts.

Matthew 22:37,38 ³⁷Jesus replied: ““Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ ³⁸This is the first and greatest commandment.

God desires a pure heart that loves him above all else.

3. What does Scripture call that part of the believer that opposes God's will and that part which loves God's will?

Ephesians 4:22-24 ²²You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

That part of our hearts with ungodly desires is the “Old Self” (Old Man, Old Adam, Sinful Nature, Flesh). That part of our hearts with godly desires is the “New Self” (New Man, Inner Being, spirit).

4. How will a pure heart change our attitude about the things of this world?

1 Timothy 6:6-8 ⁶But godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. ⁸But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

Philippians 4:12,13 ¹²I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

A pure heart will lead us to be content with the things God has provided for us in this world.

5. What does God say about those areas of life for which he has given no specific commands ?

Romans 14:1-4 ¹Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters. ²One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. ³The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him. ⁴Who are you to judge someone else's servant?

God warns us to refrain from judging the decisions that other Christians make when we have no clear command from him how we should behave. (Adiaphora)

6. What guides me in how I will choose to act in areas of adiaphora—things God neither commands nor forbids?

Romans 14:14,15 ¹⁴As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean. ¹⁵If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died.

We are guided by love for our neighbor in what we do, even when our actions don't have a specific command from God.

1 Corinthians 8:8,9 ⁸Food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do. ⁹Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak.

1 Corinthians 8:13 ¹³Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall.

Sometimes love leads us to give up our liberty for the sake of our Christian brothers and sisters. We are free not to use our rights.

Galatians 5:1,2 ¹It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. ²Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all.

Sometimes we must exercise our Christian freedom and defy those who insist upon making something which God has neither commanded nor forbidden a matter of conscience. We must not let others add to God's commands.

Luther's Small Catechism on the Ninth and Tenth Commandments

The Ninth Commandment

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not scheme to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, or obtain it by a show of right, but do all we can to help him keep it.

The Tenth Commandment

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, workers, animals, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not force or entice away our neighbor's spouse, workers, or animals, but urge them to stay and do their duty.