

**The Fifth Part in the Series**  
**Exodus: Let My People Go!**  
**“Mine!”**

Having survived parenting through the toddler years—four times over—the following “*Toddler Property Laws*” I recently read brings back memories. “If I like it, it’s *mine*. If it’s in my hand, it’s *mine*. If I can take it from you, it’s *mine*. If I had it a little while ago, it’s *mine*. It must never appear to be yours in any way, because it is always and forevermore *mine!*”

Let’s be honest. We can all be just like little kids as well as like Daffy Duck! “It’s mine, mine, mine!” Deep down, within all of us, there exists an insatiable desire to look at someone’s car or truck snow blower or lawnmower, bike or boat, patio or porch—indeed, just about anything and everything that belongs to someone else—and long for them all to be *mine!*

We’re in a series on the Book of Exodus. Today we come to the most famous part of the book—the Ten Commandments. There are two commandments that address the sin of coveting. Not one, two! What gives? God repeats what is very important. The ninth and tenth commandments are extremely important Commandments. Why is that? Because every sin—which means all sadness—begins with coveting.

Coveting isn’t wanting things. It’s natural to **want** things. There is nothing wrong with wanting things. Nothing wrong at all. Coveting, on the other hand, says, “I’ll do whatever it takes to get that. I’ll break any commandment, any statute, any rule, just to make it mine.” Woody Allen famously put it this way, “The heart wants what it wants.” Translated *I want it all to be mine!*

Coveting is why we worship other gods like our job, our paycheck, and our social status. Coveting is why we fail to honor our parents, kill people with our words, look with lust, lie, cheat and steal. *I want it all to be mine!*

How can we deal with our humongous desire to acquire? How can we become more obedient to God’s Word and will? How can we break the stranglehold of looking at things and people and always thinking, “Mine”?

The fact is, coveting is natural. Coveting is how we are wired. Coveting comes with being sinners. Being content, though, doesn’t come naturally. Being content is something that is learned. “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” (Phil 4:12) Being content **conquers** coveting. *Being content conquers coveting—every single time.* How does that work?

**Realize the Sequence.** Usually we *rationalize* the sequence. “Coveting? No big deal!” Realize the sequence. “Then the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, she coveted it for gaining wisdom, then she took and ate it” (Gn 3:6). See. Covet. Take. In the book of Joshua Achan said, “I saw among the spoils a beautiful mantle from Shinar, and 200 shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels, then I coveted them, and then I took them” (Jo 7:21). See. Covet. Take. This sequence appears five more times in the Old Testament. See. Covet. Take.

How often do we rationalize our coveting? We say, “I’m just lookin’!” Lookin’ leads to coveting. Coveting leads to taking. What does taking lead to?

James 1:15, “After desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death.” Realize—don’t rationalize—the sequence! See. Covet. Take. *Death!*

When we covet our neighbor’s spouse it brings death to marital joy. When we covet each other’s skills, intellect, popularity, family connections—you name it—it brings death to inner peace. When we covet our neighbor’s new pick-up, tractor, Rolex watch, looks, pick your poison—it brings death to our relationship with Jesus.

Left unchecked, coveting drives a stake into our heart and kills us. Just ask Eve. Just ask Achan. Just ask James. “After desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death.” *Being content conquers coveting.* So here’s the first step to being content. **Realize**—don’t rationalize—realize the sequence. See. Covet. Take. Death.

**Personalize Your Salvation.** Usually we generalize our salvation. We say, “Salvation? No big deal.” No. Personalize your salvation. Exodus 20:2, “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.” Not her God; not his God; not their God; not some God; not any God. Yahweh, the LORD, is your God! Exodus 20:5, “I, the LORD your God, am a zealous God.” Your zealous God will do whatever it takes to save you! Your zealous God will do whatever it takes to save you! He did it for you, but not with fleas, flies, and frogs.

There was a passover lamb, though. Christ’s blood wasn’t splattered on the wood of a house, but on the wood of a Roman instrument of death, mingled with sweat, soldier’s spit, and cheap wine. It all ended “crucified, dead, and buried.” Watch as Joseph of Arimathea places Christ into the garden tomb. Smell the stench of death. See the confines, the darkness, the sealed stone. Feel the utter hopelessness.

Witness the charred marks of a divine explosion to life! *There is nothing dead about our Jesus!* Jesus blew the rock open from the inside and rolled away the stone. Jesus lives so He can speak these words straight from His heart to yours—“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of sin and death, out of the house of slavery. I, the LORD your God, am a zealous God. I will do whatever it takes to save you!”

*Being content conquers coveting.* The first step to being content is this. Don't rationalize the sequence. Realize where it all leads—death! The second step? Don't generalize your salvation. Personalize it. Jesus is the Passover Lamb who saved *me!*

**Internalize Segulah.** “Out of all nations you will be my treasured possession [*segulah*]” (Ex 19:5). God's desire to acquire us is infinitely greater than ours! From the depths of his loving heart the LORD says, “You are always and forevermore my *segulah!*” God wants us—warts and all!

God *always* says, “*You are my first choice!*” When you were baptized God made you His first choice. His choice wasn't obligatory, required, compulsory, forced, or compelled. God chose you because God loves you. God looks at you in great love and says, “You are my prized, priceless possession! *Segulah!*” *Imagine that!* The temptation, though, is to trivialize *segulah*. “What's the big deal?” Don't trivialize—internalize—*segulah*. Let it go deep down into your bones, into every fiber of your being! You are God's prized, priceless possession! What else tops that?

The heart of the Ten Commandments. “You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.” How does that work? Realize the sequence—see, covet, take, death. Personalize your salvation. Internalize *segulah*. Where's the power to do this? The strength? The “want to”? “I have redeemed you, I have called you by name, you are always and forevermore lovingly, passionately, eternally *mine!*” Amen.