

# Instruction In The Westminster Standards

## The Historic Standards of Presbyterian Denominations

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### STUDIES IN THE WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM

- Q. 79. Which is the tenth commandment?
- A. The tenth commandment is, 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.

Q. 80. What is required in the tenth commandment?

- A. The tenth commandment requireth full contentment with our own condition, with a right and charitable frame of spirit toward our neighbor, and all that is his.

**Scripture References:** Ex. 20:17. Heb. 13:5. Rom. 12:15. Phil. 2:4. I. Cor. 13:4-6.

Questions:

- 1. Generally speaking, what is required in the tenth commandment? The tenth commandment requires that a believer keep the other nine commandments. If he is able to do so by the grace of God this commandment will be fulfilled.
2. What does it mean by the word "covet" in this commandment? The word "covet" in this commandment would include both aspects of the Greek words as they are found in the New Testament. It would mean an "insatiable desire of getting the world" and would also include an "inordinate love of the world." It would mean the person is wholly taken up with the world, he sets his heart upon worldly things, and sometimes he is not too careful of how he attains his desired end.
3. What does the commandment require in regard to ourselves? This commandment requires that we be content with what we have and this is the best possible defense against covetousness.
4. What does it mean to be content with what we have and how can we attain to it?  
It means to be satisfied with what God, in His providential dealings with us, has given us and recognize that such is best for us. We can only attain to this state by His grace. The road to this is the road plainly marked "Godliness" in our lives. We must covet spiritual things more than worldly things.
- 5. What does this commandment require as to our neighbor? We are required to have a right and charitable spirit toward all that belongs to our neighbor. We are to promote and rejoice in the welfare of our neighbor, always striving to help him, showing a pattern of good works toward him.

## KEEP LOOKING UP!

"The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." (Ps. 16:5). The writer of these words had discovered a very important characteristic of godly living. He knew full well that his heritage was in the Lord, that there was an inheritance waiting for him someday. He kept looking therefore in the right direction: Up!

A doctor told me once that it is quite amazing to find in man a fifth muscle in the eye that is not found in animals. He told me that he thought this could be for the purpose of keeping one's eyes on God! I am not at all sure as to the reason for the extra muscle in the eye, but I am sure that the believer can always gain much by keeping his eyes on God instead of on the world about him or on himself. The best remedy possible for covetousness would be to get our eyes off the things of others and to get our eyes off ourselves as we are prone to see things we do not have but wished we did have. The believer must come to recognize that "All is vanity" and that satisfaction can only be found in a close walk with God.

Certainly it is true that others might have more than we have. But God does know what is good for us. He alone knows how much we can stand. But certainly it is equally true that we have more than others have and we should be thanking God for it instead of being discontent and opening the door to the devil and his temptation of covetousness. The poet knew that he must get his eyes on the Lord when he wrote:

"Once it was the blessing, now it is the Lord;  
Once it was the feeling, now it is His Word;  
Once His gifts I wanted, now the Giver own;  
Once I sought for healing, now Himself alone.

All in all for ever, Jesus will I sing;  
Everything in Jesus, and Jesus everything."

Is it your feeling that God has given your fellow-believer more than He has given you? Look up and count your blessings! Is it your feeling that you must have more of this world's goods? Look up and He will teach you that He is sufficient! We must remember daily that to covet is to sin before the Lord. We do have a goodly heritage and can be content in the Lord.

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