

# You Shall Not Covet....

## Overview

The Commandment, *You shall not covet your neighbor's house*, and the Commandment, *You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's* are two distinct but related Commandments. Because of their relatedness, they are dealt with together, both in Swedenborg's theological writings and in this *Sourcebook*. Here are some of the things that are meant by coveting:

- Craving
  - Craving the goods of others
  - Any selfish or materialistic craving
- Desiring or longing to commit any of the evils contained within the Ten Commandments
- Desiring to dominate or control
  - Desiring to control the way other people feel, think, or act
  - Desiring to subject other people to your own authority or bidding
  - Desiring to control your own life or your surrounding environment

Here are some other things that may be meant by coveting:

- Greed, stinginess, selfishly withholding
- Envy
- Comparing yourself to others
- Self-absorption
- Etc.

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Quick Reference  
- from -  
*Secrets of Heaven*

Emanuel Swedenborg

## **[Some definitions:]**

1. [The word] "coveting" means to will from an evil love, [that is, from] the love of self or love of the world.<sup>1</sup>
2. [The Lord says,] "If anyone looks on a strange woman so that he lusts after her, he has committed adultery with her already in his heart."<sup>2</sup>
  - a. By "lusting after" is here meant to will, and unless fears restrained, to do.<sup>3</sup>
3. [The words "coveting" and "lusting after" have reference to] "concupiscence" of evil and "concupiscence" of falsity, [or what is the same,] affection for evil and affection for falsity.<sup>4</sup>
4. [Notes on affection and concupiscence:]
  - a. ["Affection" can be defined as "the continuous of love".]<sup>5</sup>
  - b. "Concupiscence" is [also defined as] the continuous of love, [but specifically it is] the continuous of the love of self or love of the world.<sup>6</sup>
  - c. ["Concupiscence," therefore, is an affection that an evil love breathes forth. It is an affection for evil and affection for falsity.]<sup>7</sup>
  - d. ["Concupiscence" can also be defined as that which comes forth] from an evil will, thus from an evil heart, and [the things that come forth from an evil will or heart are] murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, and false witness.<sup>8</sup>
  - e. ["Concupiscence," therefore, has to do not only with affections that arise out of the love of self and love of the world, but also with the forms of evil that] spring from these loves.<sup>9</sup>

## **[Not coveting includes the following:]**

1. Beware of the love of self and love of the world, lest the evils which are contained in the preceding commandments become of the will, and so come forth.<sup>10</sup>
  - a. [Note:] All the evils of concupiscence spring from the love of self and love of the world as from their fountain.<sup>11</sup>
2. [Beware lest] evils enter through the thought into the will and come forth therefrom.<sup>12</sup>
  - a. [Beware lest] evil be received from the thought into the will, and go forth from there into speech and action.<sup>13</sup>
  - b. [Notes:]
    - 1) The things which enter only into the thought of a person, and not through the thought into the will, do not defile him or her. [These things] are said [in New Testament Scripture] to go out through the belly into the draught. But the things which enter through the thought into the will, these things defile a person, because they become his or

her [own]. They are said to enter his or her heart and to come forth therefrom.<sup>14</sup>

- 2) Evil and falsity are injected into the thought of a person from hell, and are sent back again thither. These things cannot defile the person, because they are sent back. For a person cannot stand apart from thinking evil, but from doing it. But as soon as he or she receives evil from the thought into the will, it then does not go out of him but enters into him, and this is called "coming forth out of the heart." The things which come forth thence defile him, because what a person desires in his will goes forth into speech and into act, in so far as external bonds, which are fear of the law, of the loss of reputation, of honor, of gain, and of life, do not forbid.<sup>15</sup>
3. [Beware of] "endeavor" and "motion" [in yourself, that is, beware of] will and action.<sup>16</sup>
4. [Beware of your] "ends of life," [that is, your ends in view or inner goals].<sup>17</sup>
  - a. This is evident from the Lord's words, "Whoever looks on a strange woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart."<sup>18</sup>
5. [Note: To do evil to a person] is not only to do so in act, but also to will to do it.<sup>19</sup>

**[What is meant by a person's "house," and by the things within the house:]<sup>20</sup>**

1. In the internal sense [of Old and New Testament Scripture] the things that are mentioned [in the ninth and tenth commandments, and] which are not to be coveted, mean all the goods of love and truths of faith in one complex, [as follows:]
  - a. "House" means all good in general.
  - b. "Wife" means all truth in general.
  - c. "Manservant" means affection for spiritual truth.
  - d. "Maid servant" means affection for spiritual good.
  - e. "Ox" means affection for earthly good.
  - f. "Donkey" means affection for earthly truth.
2. These are the things which are "not to be coveted," that is, which are not to be taken away from any one, or to which harm must not be done.
  - a. [Note: Not coveting includes] not taking away the goods and truths of faith from any one, and not doing any harm to them.

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Quick Reference  
- from -  
*The Apocalypse Explained*  
Emanuel Swedenborg

## **["Coveting" (in general) includes the following:]**

1. Coveting the houses of others.<sup>21</sup>
2. The love and consequent lusts for possessing the goods of others.<sup>22</sup>
3. [Notes:]<sup>23</sup>
  - a. There are two loves from which all lusts spring and flow forth, like streams from their fountains:
    - 1) Love of the world
    - 2) Love of self
  - b. These loves are the foundations of all lusts.
  - c. Lust is [defined as] love continually longing for (or willing).
    - 1) [Specifically, lust is] the love of evil continually longing for (or willing).
4. All evil lusts that flow from...<sup>24</sup>
  - a. The love of the world (ninth commandment).
  - b. The love of self (tenth commandment).

## **[Not coveting (in general) includes the following:]**

1. Not longing (or willing) to possess or to divert to yourself the goods of others against their will.<sup>25</sup>

## **[Coveting a neighbor's house includes the following:]**

1. The lust of the love of the world.<sup>26</sup>

## **[Not coveting a neighbor's house includes the following:]<sup>27</sup>**

1. Not coveting his or her goods, which in general are possessions and wealth.
2. Not appropriating them to yourself by evil arts.

## **[What is meant by the things within a person's house:]<sup>28</sup>**

1. In the spiritual [or] internal sense [of the Word] the things within a person's house, ([namely his] wife, manservant, maidservant, ox, and donkey) mean the things that are his or her own, [as follows:]<sup>29</sup>
  - a. "Wife" means affection for spiritual truth and good.
  - b. "Manservant" means the affection for rational truth serving the spiritual.
  - c. "Maidservant" means affection for rational good serving the spiritual.
  - d. "Ox" means affection for earthly good.
  - e. "Donkey" means affection for earthly truth.

## **[Coveting a neighbor's wife, manservant, etc. includes the following:]<sup>30</sup>**

1. Desiring the affections [of others (which are meant in the spiritual internal sense of the Word by "wife," "manservant," etc.)].
2. Lusting after these affections.
3. [Note:] Lusting after these affections means [the following:]
  - a. The lusts of the love of self,
    - 1) Especially the lusts of the love of ruling [from the love of self],
    - 2) For thus does a person make the things belonging to a companion to be his or her own.
4. The lusts of the love of self lusting after these affections,
  - a. Especially the lusts of the love of ruling [from the love of self].
5. Making the things belonging to a companion to be your own.
6. Willing and eagerly desiring to subject a person to your own authority or bidding.
  - a. [Note:] Coveting and desiring [the above mentioned affections] means to will and eagerly desire to subject a person to your own authority or bidding.
7. The love and consequent lusts of ruling over others.<sup>31</sup>

**[Not coveting a neighbor's wife, manservant, etc. includes the following:]**

1. Not desiring [a] neighbor's wife, manservant, [etc.]<sup>32</sup>
  - a. These are lusts after what is a person's own, that is, the things that are his or her own.<sup>33</sup>
2. Not willing to rule over others.<sup>34</sup>
3. Not willing to subject others to yourself.<sup>35</sup>

**[Notes on the relationship of lust to love:]<sup>36</sup>**

1. All lusts are of love, for it is love that covets.
2. There are two evil loves to which all lusts have reference:
  - a. Love of the world (ninth commandment).
  - b. Love of self (tenth commandment),
    - 1) Especially the [selfish] love of ruling (tenth commandment).
3. All evils and falsities therefrom flow from these two loves.

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- from -

*True Christianity*

Emanuel Swedenborg

**[The ninth and tenth commandments] teach and enjoin the following:**<sup>37</sup>

1. Evils must not be done.
2. Evils must not be lusted after.
3. [Note:] He or she who refrains from doing evils and yet lusts to do them, still does them.
4. [A person ought to be cleansed of "Pharisaic internals,"] which are lusts after the things that are forbidden to be done in the first, second, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth commandments, [as follows:]<sup>38</sup>
  - a. [First: You shall have no other gods before My face.
  - b. Second: You shall not take the name of Jehovah your God in vain.
  - c. Fifth: You shall not murder.
  - d. Sixth: You shall not commit adultery.
  - e. Seventh: You shall not steal.
  - f. Eighth: You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.]
5. The things forbidden in all the preceding commandments, [that is, the commandments that precede the ninth and tenth commandments] are not to be lusted after.
6. Lusts [are to be] removed.

**Spiritual sense:**<sup>39</sup>

1. [Not] lusting against the spirit<sup>40</sup>
  - a. [Note: The ninth and tenth] commandments forbid all lusts that are contrary to the spirit,<sup>41</sup>
    - 1) Thus, all [lusts] that are contrary to the spiritual things of the church.
      - a) [Note:] The spiritual things of the church relate chiefly to faith and charity.
2. [Not] walking after the flesh in lust<sup>42</sup>
  - a. [Note:] Unless lusts are subdued, the flesh let loose would rush into every wickedness.<sup>43</sup>
3. All things that have been presented in the spiritual sense [of prior commandments] must not be lusted after.
4. Likewise, all [things that have] been presented in the heavenly sense [of prior commandments] must not be lusted after.

**[Notes on lusts of the flesh and affections of the spirit:]**<sup>44</sup>

1. The lusts of the flesh, the eye, and the other senses, separated from...the affections, desires, and delights of the spirit are completely like the lusts of beasts. In themselves they are beast-like.
2. The lusts of the flesh may be compared to [the following:]
  - a. Shriveled and dried up grapes and wild grapes.
  - b. Stables where there are donkeys, goats, and swine.
  - c. Dross.
  - d. Limestone.
  - e. Coral.
3. [By comparison,] the affections of the spirit [may be compared to the following:]
  - a. Juicy and delicious grapes; also to the taste of the wine that is pressed from them.
  - b. Stables where there are noble horses, sheep, and lambs.
  - c. Gold.
  - d. Silver.
  - e. Rubies.
4. So far as anyone indulges the lusts of the flesh, he or she is a beast and a wild beast.

**[The connection between] lust and deed:**<sup>45</sup>

1. Lust and deed are connected...
  - a. Like blood and flesh.
  - b. Like flame and oil.
2. Lust is within the deed...
  - a. As air from the lungs is in breathing or in speaking.
  - b. As wind in a sail when a [ship] is in motion.
  - c. As water on the wheel that gives motion and action to machinery.



# Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> SH 8910:1
  - <sup>2</sup> SH 8910:4
  - <sup>3</sup> SH 8910:4
  - <sup>4</sup> SH 8910:1,5
  - <sup>5</sup> SH 8910:1,5,6
  - <sup>6</sup> SH 8910:1,5,6
  - <sup>7</sup> SH 8910:1,5,6
  - <sup>8</sup> SH 8910:1,5,6
  - <sup>9</sup> SH 8910:1,5,6
  - <sup>10</sup> SH 8909-10
  - <sup>11</sup> SH 8910:6
  - <sup>12</sup> SH 8910:2,3
  - <sup>13</sup> SH 8910:3
  - <sup>14</sup> SH 8910:2,3, Matt. 15:11,17-19
  - <sup>15</sup> SH 8910:3
  - <sup>16</sup> SH 8911
  - <sup>17</sup> SH 8911
  - <sup>18</sup> SH 8911, Matt. 5:27-28
  - <sup>19</sup> SH 8911
  - <sup>20</sup> SH 8911 unless otherwise noted
  - <sup>21</sup> AE 949:3
  - <sup>22</sup> AE 949:3
  - <sup>23</sup> AE 1021:2 unless otherwise noted
  - <sup>24</sup> AE 1021:2 unless otherwise noted
  - <sup>25</sup> AE 935:2
  - <sup>26</sup> AE 1022:3
  - <sup>27</sup> AE 1021:2 unless otherwise noted
  - <sup>28</sup> AE 1022:2 unless otherwise noted
  - <sup>29</sup> See also AE 935:2, 949:3.
  - <sup>30</sup> AE 1022:2 unless otherwise noted
  - <sup>31</sup> AE 949:3
  - <sup>32</sup> AE 1022:2
  - <sup>33</sup> AE 1022:2
  - <sup>34</sup> AE 935:2
  - <sup>35</sup> AE 935:2
  - <sup>36</sup> AE 1022:3 unless otherwise noted
  - <sup>37</sup> TC 326 unless otherwise noted
  - <sup>38</sup> See also Matt. 23:25-26, Exod. 20:3-7,13-16.
  - <sup>39</sup> TC 327 unless otherwise noted
  - <sup>40</sup> See also Gal. 5:17.
  - <sup>41</sup> See also Gal. 5:17.
  - <sup>42</sup> See also Gal. 5:17, James 1:14-15, 2 Epis. 2:9-10.
  - <sup>43</sup> See also Gal. 5:17, James 1:14-15, 2 Epis. 2:9-10.
  - <sup>44</sup> TC 328 unless otherwise noted
  - <sup>45</sup> TC 328 unless otherwise noted