

10th Commandment Honor Contentment

Let us turn to our Bibles. Proverbs 118 and 19. Proverbs 118 and 19.

And I'll read part of Exodus 20. You don't have to go there. You'll recognize that one.

Proverbs 118 and 19. Let us listen attentively to the word of God. But they lie in wait for their own blood.

They lurk secretly for their own lives. So are the ways of everyone who is greedy for gain. It takes away the life of its owners.

And here we have the 10th commandment, the end of the series here on the 10 commandments. You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's.

Let us pray. Glorious, gracious God, our Father above, we are thankful for your spirit and your word, and that we are brought thereby to conviction of the law of God and all 10 commandments and the depth and the breadth thereof. And as we see here in the 10th commandment, Lord, it's a unique contribution in the way you, of course, granted it to us in your infinite wisdom to open up our eyes to the depth of the law of God.

It's not just simply and only the 10th commandment, all of them, and deal with the matter of the heart. But the 10th especially points it out with respect to here, this call to positively honor contentment, but negatively to avoid and flee the likes of covetousness, envy, and whatever else strikes at the heart of your commandment. May we learn and relearn these things, our God and Savior, and trust upon you and the power of your spirit to live a life in accordance to the 10 commandments, we pray.

Amen. So, we live in interesting times in many ways, and we seem to have this struggle sometimes in politics. You may talk about, depending on the parties, the socialist versus the capitalist, but it seems to me often what we have, although I grew up on one hand, right, you'd be aware of godless socialism or godless communism, right, from the 50s onward.

But we also have christless capitalism, covetousness run amok and justified in the name of Christianity even, because indeed both godless communism slash socialism and christless capitalism encourage envy, greed, and discontentment. That's the long and short of it. And we have all of that, and it seems to me in spades in America, whatever political persuasion people may be, and it easily flows into the church, because we live in society.

We cannot isolate ourselves from these things. We hear it, announcements on the radios and the like. Our hearts are already inclined towards discontentment, of course, as those who struggle with sin to one degree or another, I'm sure, even envy as well.

It seems to be doubly so during Christmas season, where businesses everywhere, what, pressure us to be discontent with what we have and therefore buy, buy, buy, and buy more. I'll remind us again, I mentioned this before, I think, I remember even to this date, so this is

what, 25 years ago when Bush Jr. was like, we can fix the economy, just buy more, just spend more. What? Wow.

This is where we are. So we know, however, in our hearts, in the word of God, that even this season can be turned easily into a time of envy, discontentment, and covetousness. So with this in mind, and by God's providence is how I'm ending the series on this holiday season to help warn and protect us from this subtle, in some ways it can be very subtle, sin and temptation, let's review this important commandment that we'd be better equipped to resist sin and stand for Jesus.

What is the 10th Commandment?

So the three points, the first one is, what is the 10th commandment, to give a summary of what it is and the depth of it? In many ways, it's a unique commandment. In this sense, it immediately, clearly strikes at the heart compared to almost all the other commandments. It brings it to the fore very explicitly.

The first commandment, of course, is general enough to include the wording and the idea of the heart. You should have no other gods, which is very broad. That's true.

But the other commandments, their language can easily fall into or have been abused and misused, of course, by evil men like the Pharisees to be merely externalities. I haven't stolen anything. I haven't committed any adultery.

What are you talking about? And what does Jesus, you know, tell them in the Sermon on the Mount? It's your heart. Talking about your heart first and foremost. The 10th commandment brings that out especially.

That's the point. It's a heart issue. The 10th commandment has proof of the depth of the law of God.

It was never supposed to be merely externality. Some people are confused and look at the Old Testament that way. Oh, it's all about externality.

No, it may be emphasized, and indeed it was, but it wasn't the only thing. We emphasize things with kids that we don't with teenagers, that we don't with adults, and vice versa. We emphasize things with adults we don't with kids, and nobody runs around confused thinking, oh, you must only believe this and not that.

It's both. It just depends on the circumstances. And they were, as we know in Galatians, children under a tutelage, and so they had to have that kind of training brought upon them.

The 10th commandment, if they but paid attention, and we'll see as we go through the Old Testament text, it was always there in the Old Testament. The heart of the matter, your heart, was supposed to be given to God and supposed to be pure before Him by His power. The other commandments use the language there of not bowing to other gods, not killing, not stealing, not desecrating the Lord's day, but here it goes straight to our soul.

The 10th commandment points to the heart, affections, and the will under the law of God. It's not just one or other. It's all that we are within our soul, and of course our bodily actions as well.

If you recall the lessons of how to apply the law of God, we're going through that in Sunday School class right now. There are eight principles to apply the law of God, so we understand the depth, the breadth, the height, the extent of the law, and how it is very thorough, because it's God's will for our life, both the external parts of our life and the internal parts of our life. We have two rules here I want to highlight to remind us, and how they show us the depth of this commandment.

We like what the heart's pretty deep. Well, it shows us how broad and deep it covers this matter of the heart, of covetousness, of envy. The second rule of how to apply the law of God, this is from the Westminster Larger Catechism question 99 the Puritans put together back in the 1600s.

The catechism, as you recall, is a question and answer format to help teach the kids, but not only kids, even adults. You can try to memorize the Larger Catechism. It is large for a reason, but it's good to go over it.

It's a good summary and has lots of good proof text. The eight principles, one of the principles is number two, that the law is spiritual and reaches the understanding, the will, and the affections, the mind, will, and emotions, as I like to say, and all other powers of the soul, whatever that may be, your conscience, your imagination, as well as words, works, and gestures. Even our gestures, as we recognize, are under God's rule and command.

You can't just use any kind of gesture you want towards your parents. Try it one day and you'll find out. The rule number three is that one and the same thing, that which is commanded or forbidden of God's law, in diverse respects or different ways, is required or forbidden in several commandments.

In other words, one sin overlaps multiple commandments, believe it or not. Again, the Ten Commandments are a summary of God's law. There's a lot more depth to it.

This is what this brings out here. We see all these verses. What the greatest of our church fathers did is grab all the verses on the same topic and show the depth and the breadth of God's will for His people.

Whatever commandment, whatever teaching or doctrine, like the doctrine of God or the doctrine of Christ or the Gospel, here it's the law. There's lots of verses on the law in the Bible. And so, the example here of rule number three, that one sin or commandment, which is required, can fall under one of the Ten Commandments.

The easiest one is cheating, of course. There's no, thou shalt not cheat. Cheating is a combination of two commandments, lying and stealing.

Okay, we all understand this. Oh, okay, sure, that makes sense. There's a lot of sins like that, in fact.

Amos 8, 5 is one of the proof texts they use. Amos 8, verse 5, saying, When will the new moon be passed, that we may sell grain, and the Sabbath, that we may trade wheat, making the ephah small and the shekel large, falsifying the scale by deceit. So we read here in Amos that a number of the Jews were not satisfied with what? The fourth commandment.

The fourth commandment is we should honor the Lord's day. In the Old Testament, the Lord's day, of course, was Saturday. And they're on Saturday, and they're not honoring it.

How do we know this? Because they're eager to get rid of the new moon or the Sabbath day or whatever holy day there was, because they want to make money. So they're dishonoring. So formally, that is externally, they're there, obviously, during this time, and they're like, yeah, we're celebrating, yay, new moon, Sabbath.

This is great. Hurry up, come on. And we recognize that intuitively, even unbelievers, like, are you really into this? Are you worshiping God? Are you submitting to him? Are you happy to be here with his people? You got something else on your mind.

And clearly, they got something else on their mind. They want to make a fast buck. And not just any kind of fast buck.

What do we read? Making the ephah small and the shekel large, right? Their measurements and their gold and whatnot, falsifying the scales by deceit, the text tells us. That's what they're doing. So they can make even more money than they should.

It wasn't just enough for them to be greedy for gain. They're so greedy for gain, they're also violating the eighth commandment, thou shalt not steal, right? So 10 now bleeds into eight. That's the point.

Proverbs 119, I just read part of this right here, 118 and 19. My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent. If they say, come with us, let us lie and wait to shed blood.

Cast in your lot among us, let us have one purse. But they lie and wait for their own blood. They lurk secretly for their own lives.

So are the ways of everyone who is greedy for gain, it takes away the life of its owner. So that begins there and shows us that they're greedy for gain, verse 19, clearly the 10th commandment, but also there in the eighth one to take something, covetous for something that's not theirs to such an extent they run with troublemakers, people who we read who lie and wait to shed blood. They're willing to kill the sixth commandment in order to steal.

This is what they do. They lurk secretly for their own lives. At the end of the day, it brings them to hell and damnation.

Abortion is an example of this. Women are eager to be encouraged by other women to get rid of their kids because their kids are a burden upon them and won't make them rich. It takes money and time and effort.

I can do these things without the kid and make all kinds of joyous things and fun and have money, extra money. No, that too is wicked. Now, this commandment is hard insofar as again on the surface it just shows very clearly it's about the heart.

You should not covet. You shall not be covetous. You should not lust after what other people have that are not yours or even the things that you have you shouldn't have excessive affections for.

In fact, we'll talk about that in a bit. It's hard. Believers know this.

We're not perfect. We struggle with sin and the 10th commandment really pokes us there as it were in the heart or in the eye as the case may be. So the external observation of course can be easy.

Just do whatever everyone else does like the Pharisees, right? Looks good mimicking other Christians. And again, insofar as that maintains peace and purity in America, I'm happy with that. Go ahead.

But I'd rather they go a little further and in their heart trust in Jesus, hate sin, and flee from covetousness. But of course in this sense, the sense of the heart, of the mind, will, and emotion being under the law of God, all the commandments are hard. The 10th commandment just highlights that.

To control our desires and passions and the things that we care about and put it in proper proportion of our life. That's what we were called to do. We control them and they don't control us.

Lust controls us if we don't make an active point of controlling it as we'll find out. And of course we can't hide this from God. He knows all things and thus we need more of God's mercy and grace upon us to look to him for forgiveness.

For the 10th commandment, as much as we may think we fulfill the other commandments, will expose us as still sinners. We will break them one way or the other and thus we need his mercy upon us. The 10th commandment was used by Jesus, I remind you, to hit the rich young ruler over the head.

Give up all that you have and give it to the poor. If Jesus came to you and said that, could you do it? That's the question. Are you willing and able right now? Do you have that frame of mind and heart saying, Lord, if I have to lose my house one day and you take it in your providence, it's your will? That's hard and that's what we're called to do nevertheless.

What is Forbidden in the 10th Commandment?

What does the 10th commandment forbid? So again, as I usually do, I go backwards from the catechism. I start with the negative and with positive. What does the 10th commandment forbid? Question 81 of the Shorter Catechism, what is the forbidden in the 10th commandment? The 10th commandment forbids all discontentment with our own estate, envying or grieving at the good of our neighbor, and all inordinate or excessive emotions and affections to anything that is his.

And so I'll break this down a little bit here into the constituent points therein. Covetousness, discontentment, envy, grief, and inordinate desire. Covetousness, of course, is desire to possess that which is not rightfully yours.

That's pretty straightforward. The 10th commandment gives a list of things that we should not. That's why I read that there to remind us again.

That list obviously is not exhaustive. It says your neighbor, your neighbor's animal, neighbor's possession, the car, the house, the ground they're on. It doesn't matter.

It's apparently when God puts this together like He puts the rest of the Bible together, He spoke to them at their time. They had some of these problems. We would add other things in the details of it.

If we were to give it to our siblings, for example, or our children, we'd be like, well, don't forget it also includes your computers, your social media accounts, your investments. They didn't have investments back then the way we do today. All of that, and whatever it is, it's all included.

So those details shouldn't blind us to the fact that God needs everything when it comes to all His commandments, in fact, not just the 10th. But other sins are under this commandment as well, so far as they accompany or cause or are the fruit of covetousness as well. So I know the word there is covet, your neighbor, neighbor's possessions, and the like.

Covet is but a figure to point to every other sin that's also involved in this problem, discontentment being one of them. Remember the story Ahab? We went over that, oh, I guess a couple of months ago, Wednesday night through 1 Kings, near the end of 1 Kings. So Ahab, 1 King 21, went into his house sullen and displeased because the word which Naboth the Jezreelite has spoken to him, for he had said, you recall, he told the king, I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers.

And he laid down on his bed and turned away his face and would eat no food. I just picture a grown baby. I mean, it's just like, what is up with this guy? He was discontent, unhappy, sullen to such an extent.

I'm just like, I can't eat anything. My life is ruined because I can't have what is not mine. That's covetousness as well as discontentment.

He's not happy with what God gave him. Brothers and sisters, King Ahab, although one of the most wicked kings of the time, had a lot of things. I mean, what's he to be discontent about? That's the context there.

But what didn't he have? Look at all the land he had, all the servants. He had a number of houses. If you recall, we went through the early parts of 1 Kings and I showed some pictures and outlines and schematics of the various buildings he had.

It wasn't just a temple. He had his own building, like a summer house and then a servant's house and all this stuff. What more does he need? Because covetousness, when it once grabs a whole of you, just says, I want more, more, and more, is never satisfied.

Discontent. All I can think of, brothers and sisters, this is the ocean we swim in in America because it drives our economy. Buy, buy, buy.

Be discontent with your car, your houses, and whatever else you have. Always get more. It's never enough.

Envy and grief falls under this category. You know, it's kind of interesting here, the word envy. Discontentment toward the goods or blessings of others.

That should have been me. Usually with an undertone of bitterness. Envious of your prosperity.

Why wasn't that me? Why wasn't that me? I deserve that. So in English, of course, sometimes the word envy is a synonym for covetousness. But the idea historically, and as you know from your own experience, and the Greek word, for example, used in the New Testament is more precisely discontentment that other people got what you didn't get.

And of course, there's another interesting phenomenon I've run across in my own experience when I was younger, and I still run across it. People confuse the word envy and jealousy. People confuse the word envy and jealousy.

I just want to make it clear, jealousy is excessive possessiveness of what is already yours. You already have it. That's jealousy.

Now the KJV, the old KJV used the word God as a jealous God. I'm not aware if that's what they used for the NKJV, I don't remember. There, of course, is not a bad thing.

I mean, God's saying, I own you, and you're mine, and you ought to have your affections on me. This is all there is to it. So that kind of jealousy, another appropriate word we would think of would be a proper godly zeal.

And that's what they mean by that word. But for the humans, of course, jealousy is pretty much always sinful. Now we know envy when we experience it in our heart and other indications, of course, in our life express and show that we have the wrong attitude with respect to the 10th commandment when it comes to other people's prosperity and happiness.

Sometimes it's expressed and catches us or reminds us by grieving, the wrong kind of grieving, Nehemiah 2.10. When Sabalat, the Hornites, and Tobiah, the Ammonites, officials heard of it, that they were rebuilding the wall in Jerusalem, right? They came back from the Babylonian captivity there in Nehemiah 2.10. They hear of this, God's people being blessed, and good things are happening. They were deeply disturbed that a man had come to seek the children of Israel. Is that us? Pastor, I don't do that to the church.

I want the church to be prosperous. Yeah, but what about your unbelieving neighbor or your coworker? He got the position that you didn't get. Are you envious of that? That's what we're talking about.

Here, grieving at the good of others is a sin. Or being angry or disturbed, it could be other things. Again, the catechism is just a little summary of a summary of the 10 commandments.

There's all kinds of different ways in which we can express covetousness or, in this case, envy. Next, we have inordinate desires. Inordinate means excessive or unrestrained, uncontrolled.

Colossians 3.5, therefore, put to death your members which are on the earth, fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, etc., etc. The word passion there or pathos is strong emotion. Obviously, it means it in a negative sense because it's good to have a strong emotion for God's glory.

Obviously, that's a good thing. Here, it clearly means something along the lines of uncontrolled passion. They're just going wild and crazy.

Most sin, if we think about it, is actually an exaggeration or a misuse of good things and good desires. It is good to sleep when you're tired. It is not good to sleep in all day.

It is good to eat when you're hungry. It is not good to eat all the time. See, excessive use of good desires becomes sin or a misuse, of course, of them as well.

So, we can look at the beautiful painting at a friend's house and think, that's a beautiful painting, without having to envy them or covet the picture and, therefore, what, plot to steal it. Something along those lines because covetousness pushes you further than just discontentment. That's a problem enough as it is.

Or we can think that's a beautiful picture. I must have it now. I must have it at all costs.

I must dwell upon its beauty, be dissatisfied with all other pictures until I have that one possession. Maybe I can borrow it and he'll forget about it sometime. Something like that's going on.

That's a problem. That's an inordinate desire. That's your love of the beauty of something going too far to the nth degree, as we say.

That's a problem. This is also forbidden in the 10th Commandment by implication, by explication elsewhere in the Word of God. Proverbs 21, 25, the desire of the lazy man kills him, for his hands refuse to labor.

He covets greedily all day long, but the righteous gives and does not spare. So, here, the lazy man, he covets ease and relaxation. He doesn't want to work.

And, well, today you can get away with that because we're so prosperous. You can just literally not work and people will feed you somewhere. You can find someplace to live and whatnot.

Back then, and in most of the world, in fact, even today, you live close to the ground and if you don't work, you're going to die. That's what it's referring to. The desires of the lazy man kill him.

Well, I don't see that today, Pastor, because God is being more than kind and compassionate for people who hate him and his law in America. All the prosperity he bestowed upon them, which, of course, should drive them to repentance, they use and misuse, but it eventually will kill them. That is, they will die the eternal death if they do not repent.

For his hand, the lazy man's hand, refuses to labor. He doesn't want to work. In other words, he is coveting, he is desiring so strongly his own ease, he can't even bother to work to take care of himself and his family.

Maybe you don't think of it that way, but that's a form of covetousness. It's not a tangible object. The list there is tangible objects in the Tenth Commandment, isn't it? Of course, it includes intangible things as well.

Maybe you covet liberty, not just ease, because ease is kind of a broad idea. Some people's view of ease is different than someone else's approach to ease, but it's still wrong. So it can lead to miserly living, whereas righteousness, but the righteous gives and does not spare. They work hard and they are desirous to help others. They don't covet the ease of their own life to such an extent they can't help others.

What is Required in the 10th Commandment?

Thirdly, what does the Tenth Commandment require? Question 80 of the Shorter Catechism, what is required in the Tenth Commandment? The Tenth Commandment requires full contentment with our own condition, with a right and charitable frame of spirit toward our neighbor, and all that is his.

It's the shortest explanation, actually, in the Catechism there. They have a lot more on the other commandments because it covers so much of the heart. In the book by Jeremiah Burroughs, the Puritan Jeremiah Burroughs, the rare jewel of Christian contentment, the rare jewel of Christian contentment, he talks about the mystery of contentment, and that is to be content with afflictions in life even as you endeavor to remove it by all lawful means.

That is, while you are in the midst of a difficulty, you say, Lord, this is where you put me. Now I'm going to try to get out of it. I mean, if you're starving and your family's going to die, God's not like, well, you should be content in that.

It's okay. That's clearly not what he means. It's not what God means at all.

Every story fights against that, mitigates against that approach to things in God's Word. It means where you are, when things aren't changing fast enough, or they don't look like they're changing at all, you do what you can, but you're still not moving anywhere, like on a treadmill. We recently got a treadmill in our house.

I'm glad we did it for the winter because I don't want to walk on ice, but I'm not going anywhere. I'm just standing there and walking on a treadmill. Sometimes you feel that way in the Christian life, and God says you need to be satisfied or content with that.

It may change. You do what you can to change it. Maybe take longer steps so you can finally get off the treadmill, but it takes a long time sometimes in our life for things to change, difficult things to change.

But while that's happening, we should still be content with where we are is the point. Content doesn't mean, oh, whatever, I guess I'll never change. You know, I just kind of give up on life.

That's not what God's referring to. So Paul cried out, what, three times to the Lord to remove the thorn in the flesh, didn't he? And God didn't say, why aren't you content? Isn't that interesting? What he said instead was, my grace is sufficient for you, which is to say, you're pleading for me, that's fine, you should pray. God says, bring prayers, bring your difficulties before me.

Do I have to quote the verses? Of course he does. Does that mean you're discontent? No, you could be, that's true. Because again, the 10th commandment is a heart matter, and I can't read your heart, brothers and sisters.

But that you do plead to God to change things is not evidence necessarily of discontentment. Paul does it. And of course, Christ pleads with God, if this be thy will, take this cup away from me.

Wow. Contentment with life. And Ken, I think this is a quote from him, Jeremiah Burroughs, I missed, I didn't give the attribution here.

Inward, quiet, gracious frame of spirit, freely submitting to and taking pleasure in God's disposal in every condition. Where you find yourself in providence, in history, in life, vocation and callings in life, or whatever else that may be. And inward, quiet, gracious frame of spirit, freely submitting and taking pleasure in God's disposal in every condition.

Accepting where God has put you for now, because it could, of course, change. Both the good and the bad. It's the bad that's hard.

And again, in America, we're so prosperous, we haven't seen a lot of bad. Our brothers and sisters in Africa have seen bad. Those of war-torn countries in Eastern Europe have seen bad.

And discontentment in such a condition, of course, would mean what? Cursing at God. Saying, I give up on religion. I'm not willing to do what I'm called to do as a believer and still be a Christian and go to church and help my fellow neighbors, even though I'm struggling.

I just give up on all my responsibilities. Those are evidences, former ones, of course, clearly, of discontentment with God across the board. We have much, and God has done much for us in this day and age.

Proverbs 12, 12 through 14. Proverbs 12, 12 through 14. The wicked covet the catch of evil men, but the root of the righteous yields fruit.

A man will be satisfied with the good by the fruit of his mouth and the recompense of a man's hands will be rendered to him. There's an interesting contrast there, verse 12 and verse 14. The righteous will be content and satisfied with what God has blessed us with, but the wicked is never satisfied.

He covets the catch of the evil men. He wants more. Never good enough for him.

Another way to fulfill this commandment, because we're talking about the positive part and the positive half was here, of course, the man being satisfied. We should be satisfied. The positive, another way of doing this part, is charity, giving.

We saw this already here in the prior verse, six, that God there, excuse me, the righteous give where the lazy man is like, I'm not interested in giving. I'm not even interested in leaving the house for that matter. Charity.

Towards our neighbor, Romans 12, 15, rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep as well as a form of charity, of consideration, of help, a charity of the heart. Of course, charity of the hand is important as well. Give if you can give to those in need, especially in the household of faith, Galatians 6, 10.

Thinking about others instead of thinking about yourself is one way to fight against the temptation of the 10th commandment, violating it and being covetous or envy or grieving at the good of others. Thinking about what we can do to be useful in God's kingdom. Other antidotes to covetousness and discontentment to guide, excuse me, to guard our heart is to guide it by the word of God through daily prayer, Bible, and the like.

Study the topic of covetousness. I can give you these verses if you want. You can find a study on these topics, I'm sure, all over the place nowadays and learn this matter a little more.

Self-examination, of course, is part of what we are called to do as well. To be self-aware of what tempts you. What you keep thinking about is one clear, classic example.

You're just dwelling upon this product all the time, every day. Maybe that's a sign you're coveting it or you're envious of what your neighbor had. You're always thinking about all the good thing he has and you don't get anything good thing in comparison to him.

Use God's word, pray, read, meditate, use the means of grace as well. That's why worship is helpful. It points us to God and His word and Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior and gives us a day in which we don't have to be out in the world when we hit all the advertisement at work or in the neighborhood or going to the mall and going to the grocery store and whatnot because you can control your house a lot better than you control the world, obviously.

Become the church as it were a safe space for Christians and we rejoice to see the plenitude that we have in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior and therefore learn to be content with the blessings that we have from Him. Remember the gospel promise that God has given us. Hebrews 13.5 is one of those promises.

Let your conduct be without covetousness. Isn't that interesting? Be content with such things as you have. For He Himself said, I will never leave you nor forsake you.

Is that not good enough? Is what He's writing to the authors there, to the readers there. And the book of Hebrews is written to the Jews who want to go back to the Jewish form of worship, right, in the temple. They were not satisfied.

They were coveting these old ways and the whole book is designed to say, no, no, no. It always pointed to Jesus. It was always about the coming of the Messiah and we don't need those ways anymore.

And so I tell you, don't be covetous anymore. Rather be content with what you have because you have Jesus. He says, I will never leave you.

Why would you want to go back to the old forms, killing animals and priests and temples? That's ridiculous. Be satisfied with what God has done through Christ Jesus. Practical things as well that we can do today during this holiday season.

Expect less in terms of gifts. It's just a simple little thing. Just expect less.

Write a shorter list, something like that. Give less to the children. The kids aren't going to like that one.

I'm not saying you have to do these things. You know your condition and your family better than I do. You know perhaps this method or another method may work better for you.

And of course, set up times of Thanksgiving, not just November, throughout the year. I know we have the national holiday and that's a good thing. I'm glad we still have that by God's grace.

Because right after that, it's all about, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme. And even before that, I think they were already setting things up for Thanksgiving, weren't they? It was crazy. They have no self-respect.

Are you wealthy? Use your wealth for the good of others. Are you poor? Continue to work and be satisfied where God has put you until times have changed, perhaps in his providence he smiles upon you. Lastly, pray for the golden mean.

What do I mean by that? Aristotle had a thing called the golden mean, a balance between extremes. And we have a Christian version of that. God's golden mean is in Proverbs 30, verses 8 through 9. Proverbs 30, verses 8 through 9. I remember running across this verse when I was younger.

I was like, wow, that's a great verse. I always remembered it. I might not have always quoted it exactly word for word, but I remember the sentiment to be clear.

Give me neither poverty nor riches. Feed me with the food that is my portion, that I not be full and deny you and say, Who is the Lord? Or that I not be in want or lack and steal and profane the name of my God. Poverty and riches, of course, are relative categories.

And so his prayer here is, I want to be in the middle, whatever that may be for him. And King Solomon, of course, is very rich. If he would have had more riches, it would have probably been worse.

That's the point, because it is relative to our spiritual condition, isn't it? Abraham was rich, richer than I was. I'd like to have 318 armed men, thank you very much. But no one would accuse him of being covetous, wouldn't they? No.

God put him where he needed to be, and that should be our prayer right here, Proverbs 30. And so pray to our Lord God above, by the blood of Christ Jesus, brothers and sisters, that we not be too rich, and that coveting therefore leads to forgetting God, nor too poor that we covet what other people have when we fall into thievery. Pray this, Proverbs, brothers and sisters, that we may be drawn unto the Lord our God.

Give me neither poverty nor riches. May this be our heart's desire. Amen.

Gracious God above, by your Spirit, may these words strike into our hearts and draw us more unto you. Encourage us and strengthen us, God, that you have been with us. And yes, you have blessed us in the American scene in many ways beyond the wildest dreams of those in past generations.

May this not be a snare for us, God, but rather a blessing that we can use to bless others. May this be so for all of us, God. For Christ's sake we pray.

Amen.