

## Small Group Study Guide – **Leader Guide**

For the weekend of 9.19.2010

Exodus 20.17 & Joshua 7:10-26 – Want what you already have

### **Introduction**

This weekend at the Summit we are working through the 10<sup>th</sup> commandment, “Thou shall not covet ... anything that is your neighbor’s.” This is the only of the “neighbor” commandments that directly addresses a condition of the heart rather than an outward action. In fact, a covetous heart can lead to all kinds of destructive behavior, including breaking many of the other commandments. And while this is often a private sin, the bible tells several stories that show it’s disastrous effects on a community. Achin’s story from Joshua 7 is one such example.

Note: The small group study guide is designed to work in partnership with the weekend message. So each week you should work through this guide, take notes during the sermon, and come prepared to discuss both of these in your group.

### **Break the ice**

If you had a \$5,000 gift card that you could use at any one store, but only one, where would you go? What would be the first thing you buy?

### **Dig Into the text**

Read Exodus 20.17 and look over any notes you have from the sermon. What challenged you from the sermon?

Coveting is an inward condition rather than an observable action. Why do you think it’s included in the Ten Commandments? What are some signs that you or someone you know is maintaining a covetous spirit?

Some signs of a covetous spirit include a continual direction of your thoughts toward the object of your affection. If you find yourself planning on how to obtain the object of your affection, you’re moving from temptation (not a sin) into coveting (sin). If the thought of obtaining the desire of your affection is the most exciting thought you have in a day, you are coveting. If you find yourself devaluing the person who owns the object of your affection, and thinking of all the ways they don’t deserve that BMW (or whatever), then you are coveting. Strained relationship will certainly ensue.

In what ways can/has harboring a covetous spirit affect your relationship with God? You may begin to think that what God has provided you isn’t enough, so he’s clearly not doing as good a job at providing for you than you would like. Instead of reveling in what God has done for you, you will become bitter about the things that he hasn’t

done for you. You will find less and less joy in spending time with God in your prayer times, at church, and in small groups.

Read Joshua 7:10-26. Israel has just defeated Jericho (by a miracle from God), but was commanded to leave all of the spoils of victory. What do you think motivated Achin do commit this sin? Why was this such a severe offense against God? Clearly, Achin valued the gold and possessions more than obeying God and keeping the community pure. That's why the punishment was more severe than simply having Achin put the stuff he stole back. He knew what he was doing was wrong and would affect his friends and neighbors negatively, but he did it anyway. God was teaching Israel at this time that sin had no place in the promised land, and if that type of attitude spread throughout Israel, then the whole community would be subject to life without relationship to God.

How did Achin's actions affect the whole community? How can covetousness affect your relationship with others, even if you never act on it?

In Achin's case, this affected the purity of the entire community. In our present circumstance, it's hard to maintain a right relationship with a person if you are perpetually wishing that something be taken from them and given to you. You value that thing more than your relationship, and this attitude will cause the relationship to deteriorate.

### **Apply it to your life**

What has this series on the Ten Commandments shown you about the significance of being in Biblical Community?

Answers will vary, but be sure to talk about the benefit of having a group of people around you that can restore you back to a good relationship with God. You have a group that can see the outward signs of your sin, point it out to you, give you opportunity for confession and restoration, and help you fight against the consequences of your sin.

What are you coveting right now? What are you hoping that the object of your affection will do for you? How can the gospel set you free from this misdirected desire?

The gospel reminds you that the God who did not spare his own son on your behalf will surely give you everything you need. So if you don't have it right now, you don't really need it. God is the Ultimate Treasure that will never disappoint you or leave you lacking what you truly need.

## **Prayer Guide**

Philippians 4:11-13 – The Secret of Contentment

Take time in your personal study and then as a group to pray through this vision of our future as disciples of Christ. In praying through this passage pray the following:

- Pray for contentment in your current circumstances.
- Ask God for strength to face the challenges.
- Declare to God that He is worthy of your devotion and trust.
- Ask God to remove the things in your life that you treasure more than him, and declare to him that he is the ultimate treasure.