

PRAYER

Dear Jesus, thank you for loving me so completely and for washing me so clean that you forgive even my sinful thoughts and desires. Always create in me a clean heart and a new mind, so that I may want those things You desire for me to have. Amen.

Memory

1. “Do not covet your neighbor’s wife” Exodus 20:17).
2. “Though your sins have become like scarlet cloth, they will turn white as snow” (Isaiah 1:18).

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Emmaus Bible Lessons
Series 2: Commandments Four to Ten
Study #12 of 13: The Slave Onesimus (Philemon)

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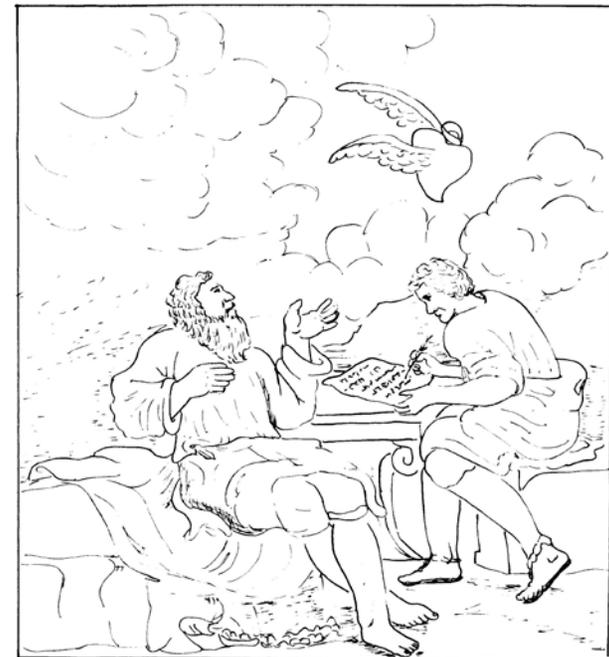


Emmaus Bible Lessons

Series 2: Commandments Four to Ten

Study #12 of 13

Tenth Commandment *The Slave Onesimus*



God says to you in the tenth commandment,
“Do not covet your neighbor’s wife...”
(Exodus 20:17).

THIS MEANS you must encourage others to be faithful to the duties God has given to them.

Bible Reading: Philemon 1-21

Questions and Answers

For Understanding This Bible Story

Onesimus was once a useful worker for Philemon, but had run away. While Onesimus was away he became a Christian and a friend of Paul. Paul is now writing a letter to Philemon to urge Philemon to love and to welcome Onesimus back.

1. Paul said that he would have liked Onesimus to stay and help him. Why, then, did Paul send Onesimus back to Philemon?

When Onesimus ran away, he stopped doing his duty as Philemon's worker.

Paul liked Onesimus and could have used his help. But Paul also knew about the duty Onesimus owed Philemon. Paul urged Onesimus to return—and even sent a letter to help him—because Paul did not want to commit the sin of coveting. That is to say, Paul did not want to take away the person whom God had given to Philemon. Paul also did not want Onesimus to sin by failing in his duties to Philemon.

2. Can you think of people in your life who have obligations toward others, just as Onesimus had toward Philemon? How can you help other people to be faithful to their duties?

Your friend may have an obligation to do homework. Your brother or sister may have an obligation to do chores for mom or dad. If you wanted them to forget about their duties and come play with you, that would be coveting. It is better to urge them to do their duty!

You can help others to be faithful by asking, "Is now a good time to play, or do you still have work to do?" Then you can say, "Let me help you with your duties, so we can play sooner," or something like that.

3. Can you think of other ways people break this commandment?

Skipping chores to play with you is certainly one time that you might want to covet. Adults sometimes also covet when they want to hire someone else's employee or steal someone else's husband or wife. Paul felt tempted, too. He was tempted to covet by wanting Onesimus to stay with him, instead of returning to Philemon.

4. Paul said to Philemon, "If Onesimus cheated you or owes you anything, charge it to me." Paul was willing to pay all of Onesimus' debts! In the same way, Jesus also paid ALL the debts of our sin when He died on His cross, including our sins of coveting. What comfort does this good news give to you when you are guilty of coveting?

Even when we are guilty of sinful desires, such as coveting, Jesus' blood washes us clean! Because Jesus shed His blood for your forgiveness, God promises you through His prophet Isaiah, "Though your sins have become like scarlet cloth, they will turn white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they will become like wool" (Isaiah 1:18).

This is good news! No one can avoid feeling sinful desires. Yet Jesus' forgiveness is even greater than what happens in our sinful hearts and minds.