



[James 1:13-15](#)

(13) Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: (14) But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. (15) Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

[Exodus 20:17](#)

(17) 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 any thing that is thy neighbor's.

King James Version

Every problem, individual or national, has its root embedded in [sin](#). But what causes sin? Wrong desires brought to fruition, and everyone—from peasant to king—is subject to wrong desires. From the beginning of time, sinners have blamed their sins on others. Satan blamed [God](#), Eve blamed Satan, and Adam blamed Eve. James sternly rebukes this.

God does not cause sin, nor do things. Sin would be helpless if it did not appeal to something in man. Sin appeals to man's human nature through his desires. If a man desires long enough, the consequence is virtually inevitable. Desire becomes action.

Desire can be nourished, stifled or—by the grace of God—eliminated altogether. If we humbly, thoughtfully, and wholly give of ourselves to [Christ](#) and involve ourselves in good activities and thoughts, we will have precious little time or place for evil desires. The tenth commandment pierces through surface Christianity, really showing whether we have surrendered our will to God.

The spiritual requirements for keeping it are in some ways more rigid than any other because it pierces directly into our thoughts. [II Corinthians 10:4-5](#) sets a very high

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standard for us to shoot for:

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

These verses, revealing God's authority over even our thoughts, also sets what may be our ultimate goal in this life. The tenth commandment shows the depth of God's concern about the state of our inner character as well as our apparent character. If our thoughts are right, our actions will be too. Changing our thinking strikes right at the heart of character, emphasizing why spending time with God, in studying His Word and in prayer, is so important.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[The Tenth Commandment \(1998\)](#)

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