WOW: Word Of the Week

Contentment, Covetousness

October 7, 2026

This week, our WOW is plural. Not a "Word Of the Week," but "Words Of the Week." Are both of those a WOW? How should I write this? Is it still a WOW, or is it WOWs? This week is two for one. You get to pick the word that appeals to you. One lesson, two related words. I see them as opposites.

In his book, *Future Grace*, John Piper suggests that the Ten Commandments begin and end with the same idea or instruction: "You shall have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3) and "You shall not covet" (Exodus 20:17). Piper suggests that these are almost equivalent. Why? Because covetousness means desiring something because we lack contentment. Covetousness says we are not content with our life in Christ. How unlike Paul's claim: I can be content in every circumstance (Phil. 4:11) because of Jesus who empowers me.

Covetousness is a heart divided between two gods, two loyalties. Paul calls it idolatry! (Col. 3:5) In this context, idolatry is an admission that I need something more than God to be contented. Idolatry puts something ahead of God on my priority list. The time comes when I must choose between something and God. Will I choose God? Or will I choose something else that is really important to me? Covetousness makes my contentment hinge on something other than God. It is in this sense that covetousness is the opposite of contentment.

If the average Christian were challenged to make a list of potential sins, there's a good chance that covetousness would not make the list. We have spent too little time considering the nature of covetousness. The primary application is to money and material things. The idolatry of covetousness is bigger than our stuff! What keeps you from being content in Jesus? What keeps you from being content with what God provides?

The idolatry of wants and goals, preferences and priorities, touches all of life! Contentment and covetousness. Opposites! Contentment in our Lord is a great challenge, made more difficult by our world that finds value, meaning, and identity in so many other places!