I have been challenged lately to make sure that I am wisely using the resources God has provided for our family. And anytime I think through those issues I have to focus on God, not on what others may have. It is so easy in our culture to give into wanting something so badly that it turns into coveting. I was challenged and encouraged by the following explanation written by John Piper.

Exodus 20:3, 17 (NIV) You shall have no other gods before me. ... [17] "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

J. Piper - "... Jericho had fallen before Israel. The riches of the city were not to be taken. But Achan took garments and silver and gold. He hid them and tried to deceive the leaders. Why did he do this? When he was caught, Achan gives the answer: '*I coveted them and took them*' (Josh. 7:21). Covetousness. He desired the silver, gold, and garments more than he desired fellowship with God. There is no difference between the Hebrew word for DESIRE and the Hebrew word for COVET. Coveting means desiring something too much. And too much is measured by how that desiring compares to desiring God. If desiring leads you away from God rather than closer to God, it is covetousness. It is sin.

I suspect that the reason the Ten Commandments begin with the commandment 'You shall have no other gods before me' (Ex. 20:3) and ends with the commandment 'You shall not covet' (Ex. 20:17) is that they are essentially the same commandment. They bracket the other eight and reveal their source.

Not coveting means not desiring anything in a way that diminishes God as your supreme treasure. And not having any gods before God means the same thing: Don't treasure anything or anyone in away that competes with God's supreme place in your life...the reason Achan stole and lied is because God was not his supreme treasure. He was not satisfied in all that God promised to be for him. ...It demeans the glory of God when we prefer anything above him.

...Paul describes the condition we all want to be in. He says, 'Whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord' Philip. 3:7–8. That is exactly the opposite of covetousness. That is the opposite of idolatry. That is supreme satisfaction in Christ. That is freedom." (From: Taste and See - June 25, 08)

PRAYER: Lord, God may I count ALL things as Loss in order to know my Lord Jesus better. May things and stuff never become my pursuit in life. May I seek after You will all my heart, soul, and strength.

Pastor Mark Kieft