* **Series Slide**
* Danielle Bregoli recently appeared on the Dr. Phil show with her mother.
* The title of the episode was “I want to give up my car-stealing, knife-wielding, twerking 13-year old daughter who tried to frame me for a crime.”
* …and no, in case you’re wondering based on the long descriptive title, I have not been hired to come up with the titles for the Dr. Phil show.
* Throughout the interview, which many of you undoubtedly have seen, she is disrespectful to her mother, boasts of her ability to steal cars…and of course, challenges the entire studio audience to fight her with the pop culture catch phrase du jour “Cash Me Ousside How Bow Dah?”
* From this appearance on Dr. Phil, Danielle now has appeared in music videos, is demanding $30-40k for public appearances, and allegedly is getting her own spin-off TV show.
* So…how did we get here?
* How did we arrive at a point where a disrespectful thief is so celebrated that she now has her own spinoff television show?
* Well… lets go back in time about 2500 years to find out.
* A little over 300 years before Jesus was born, a Greek philosopher by the name of Epicurus was developing a philosophy that would not only influence the world Jesus was born into…but is still influencing the world you and I are living in right now.
* Epicurus taught that pleasure was the greatest good.
* Now, before you picture Panama City Beach Spring Break in 300 BC, THAT is not quite Epicurus taught.

Pleasure, or the highest state of happiness, according to his philosophy, was about **tranquility, freedom from fear, and an absence of pain.**

And the way to achieve this tranquility & freedom from fear was actually in modest living and gaining more knowledge about how the world works.

So, Epicurus’ Spring Break was more like staying behind in the biology lab, developing hypotheses while listening to classical music.

Epicureanism led to different forms of Hedonism.

Hedonism is the idea that your happiest life is the one that has the smallest amount of suffering and the greatest amount of pleasure.

* Hedonism promotes autarchy, which means self-rule or self-reliance. In other words, individual freedom.
* Thomas Jefferson, one of America’s founding fathers was a self-described hedonist and influenced by Epicureanism and the idea of autarchy.
* Of course, he was a major factor in the writing and ratifying of our Declaration of **Independence** whose arguably most famous line is:
* **“*We hold these truths to self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.”***
* Now, lets fast-forward another 250 years to today.

As that philosophy and way of thinking has “developed”, we have landed somewhat precariously in a world where a 13 year old who says, “Cash Me Ousside, How Bow Dah?” now has her own television show.

Something tells me Epicurus did not have THAT in mind!

In the 20th century, religion… particularly Xianity… began to be viewed as burdensome and a barrier to human autarchy and the pursuit of individual happiness.

New research conducted by the Barna group less than 2 years ago, revealed that America was pledging allegiance to a new moral code summed up in 6 guiding principles….For our sake in this series, we’ll call them the new commandments.

Here they are: (*Good Faith, Kinnaman & Lyons, pg 57*)

1. **To find yourself, look within yourself.**
2. **People should not criticize someone else’s life choices.**
3. **To be fulfilled in life, pursue the things you desire most**
4. **Enjoying yourself is the highest goal of life.**
5. **People can believe whatever they want as long as those beliefs don’t affect society.**
6. **Any kind of sexual expression between two consenting adults is fine.**

Anybody see the Epicurean, hedonistic, autocratic influences in there?

Do you see how those 6 commandments could create a “Cash Me Ousside How Bout Dat” society?

After all, she might be a 13 year old suburban girl, but when she looks inside she feels like a 25 year-old woman from the streets...

And, you can’t criticize her…after all, its her life choice.

And, when she steals a car, why are we so outraged…she’s just pursuing what she desires most and enjoying herself as the highest goal of life.

Every single one of today’s self-reliant moral code puts you at the center of your own life and demands that you do everything in your power to limit your suffering and achieve your highest pleasure.

…good luck keeping that belief from affecting society, by the way.

**Title Slide**

For the last several weeks we’ve been looking at a slightly different moral code…the 10 Commandments.

But this isn’t just a moral code… we said from the beginning, it's more like an introduction to the character of God…and an invitation to take in his beauty and have it flood into your life.

The 10 commandments is about a relationship with a beautiful God, and establishing beautiful relationships with other people….

…while the new moral code led to the sort of self-centered disrespect that invites others to “Cash me ousside”…

…when God reveals himself to us in the 10 commandments and the rest of his word, it ends up humbling us to the point of laying our lives down to serve others…and the funny thing is…when that actually happens…you’ll find that somehow you’ve actually found the happiness you were pursuing all along.

Today, we are on the last commandment. Which means we get to look at what happens right after Israel hears the 10 commandments…and we get go way into the future…to see how much better the philosophy that God delivered through Moses is than the one that Epicurus delivered through Thomas Jefferson.

**Exodus 20:17-21**

* **“You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.”**

**Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off and said to Moses, “You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die.” Moses said to the people, “Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin.” The people stood far off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was.**

* **Philippians 4:8-13**

**Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.**

**I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.**

* **1 Timothy 6:6-8**

**But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.**

**Transition:** Today I want to show you not only the difference in coveting and contentment…but I want you to see how the beliefs underneath your coveting and contentment not only affect you, and how they inevitably affect society.

…and hopefully today, you’ll see that to truly “find yourself” you don’t need to look inside yourself…but outside of yourself.

….In fact, maybe we’ve stumbled on a brand new redemptive way to say that you actually find yourself outside of yourself…. “Cash me OUSSIDE, HOW BOW DAH, Epicurus?”

**1) Coveting pursues happiness but never finds it.**

* + This 10th commandment is about coveting.
	+ Coveting is not just when you want something you don’t have….its when that wanting makes you unhappy or resentful toward other people for having that thing…or that person that you want.
	+ Coveting is not something that happens outwardly…its something that happens on the inside…in your heart.
	+ It's a dissatisfaction, an anger, an ambition to take that develops in your heart because you want someone else’s job, someone else’s spouse, someone else’s success…their money, their family, their body.
	+ And because you don’t have it, you live in this constant state of discontent.
	+ Always thinking about the thing you don’t have and resenting anyone that does.
	+ Martin Luther said that coveting is a restatement of the 1st commandment, the one to only worship God, but restated in psychological terms.
	+ **Col 3:5 & Eph 5:5 (*Bold the parts about coveting being idolatrous)***
	+ In fact, Paul says so directly in Colossians 3 & Ephesians 5
	+ See, whatever it is that you believe you can’t be happy without…you will relentlessly pursue until you get it.
	+ …and if you are kept from it… you will grow bitter and cynical toward anyone who DOES have it….or anyone, including God, who you think is KEEPING you from it.
	+ Coveting is a gateway sin. Coveting is what leads to breaking these other commands.
	+ Look how James puts it.
	+ **James 4:1-2a (end at quarrel)**
	+ **What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel.**
	+ He says, “Its what’s happening in your heart, your coveting, that drives you fight..and eventually, commit murder.”
	+ You see that word “passions” in v 1.
	+ That word is the greek word “Hedone (hay-doe-NAY)
	+ The root of the word Hedonism. (How Bow Dah?)
	+ It means pleasure.
	+ James says that the reason you steal, the reason you lie and commit adultery, the reason you commit murder and break the Sabbath…the reason you break all the other commands…is because inside you have a fight going for pleasure ….you are trying to decide what will actually make your heart happy.
	+ Coveting happens when you give in to the inward lie that tells you that something temporary can make you happy.
	+ A marriage, a job, a relationship, a car, an amount of money…whatever it is…if its not God himself…its temporary. Its something you can lose.
* **Back to 1)**
	+ Now, here’s why coveting is so tricky.
	+ Let me explain it through the story of King Solomon.
	+ Solomon did this philosophical experiment on Hedonism long before Epicurus was around.
	+ Since he pretty much had unlimited resources, he decided to try everything under the sun to make him happy.
		- He slept with thousands of women (which God was not OK with, BTW)
		- He mounted up stacks of cash.
		- He threw the best parties.
		- Drank the best wine.
		- Built houses, planted vineyards.
		- He surrounded himself with the best entertainment.
	+ And after he finishes his experiment, look what he says
	+ **Eccl 2:10-11**
	+ **And whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure in all my toil, and this was my reward for all my toil. Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun.**
	+ In other words, in trying to pursue happiness through temporary things…his happiness slipped away like water through his fingers. He says it was like trying to catch the wind.
	+ See, getting everything you chase after never makes you as happy as your coveting leads you to believe it will.
	+ In fact, Paul writes in the first chapter of Romans that God giving you everything you want is a type of judgment, not blessing.
* **Back to 1)**
	+ There’s an episode of the original Twilight Zone series that makes this point beautifully.
	+ (Tell story- gangster gets shot “goes to heaven”…or so he thinks.
	+ Gets everything he wants, all the women, he wins every hand of poker he plays, he robs banks and they just hand over the money.
	+ And he’s got this “angel” that is at his beck and call…he just tells him what he wants, and the angel makes it happen.
	+ After a while, the gangster is just, bored. There is no pleasure in any of it. He’s like the dog that finally caught the car.
	+ And so he goes to the “angel” and says,
	+ “I don’t think I belong here. I just don’t fit in. Somebody must have made a mistake. If I have to stay here another minute I’m gonna go nuts. I don’t belong in heaven, see! I want to go to the other place!”
	+ And the angel says, “Heaven, what gave you the impression you were in heaven? This IS the other place.”
	+ And then you hear Rod Serling’s familiar narration in the background as he says.
	“**A scared angry man who never got a break. He’s finally got everything he’s ever wanted, and now he’s going to have to live with it for eternity.” –Twilight Zone, *A Nice Place to Visit***
	+ Coveting tells you a lie, that if you can just get, that girl, that guy, that marriage, that divorce, that car, that house, that salary…if you can just get that person out of your life, if you could just move to that bigger city…or smaller town…if you could finally leave home….or finally GO HOME…
	+ If you could just determine for yourself what would please you most…and then go out and get it for yourself…THEN…you’d finally be happy forever.
	+ You’re living in the twilight zone.

**Back to 1)**

* + Long before Epicurus was around, Solomon tested his theory…and proved it wrong.
	+ And long after Epicurus, we’re still testing his theory…and celebrities, wealthy people, powerful people, married people, divorced people…we keep proving him wrong.
	+ But because of the insanity of our autocratic self-worship…we keep trying…because how could how you feel on the inside possibly be wrong?
*
* So what gives?
	+ Well, according to Solomon. We’re using these things the wrong way. See….
* **2) The secret to happiness is pursuing something eternal…and that road goes through suffering, not around it.**
	+ Even after the disappointment of Solomon following his hedonistic experiment that plunged him into pleasure and avoided suffering at all costs…
	+ He was still able to appreciate the things that so disappointed him.
	+ **Eccl 3:11-13**
	+ **He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live; also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil—this is God's gift to man.**
	+ Solomon says, “Even though all these things let me down, it wasn’t the things fault. It was mine. I was using them the wrong way. All along those they were meant to be enjoyed…but not as an end. As a means to an end. Those temporary things were meant to point me to something eternal. In enjoying the gifts, I was supposed to be looking through the gifts TO the giver…God himself.”
	+ He is supposed to be my happiness. He is supposed to fulfill me.
	+ Now, you might say, “OK, Great, Trev!” I’ll just do everything Solomon did except I’ll thank God all along the way. Then I can drape myself in velvet and live in opulence and it’s all Bible-endorsed happiness. Cash Me Ousside, How Bow Dah?”
	+ Not so fast.
	+ Remember what we read earlier from Paul’s letter to the Philippians?
	+ **Phil 4:11-13**
	+ Paul says, the SECRET to happiness is not in pursuing things…its not in pursuing temporary things that trick you into feeling safe or beautiful.
	+ He says, “I have learned how to be rich and poor. I have learned whether or not I’m in a state of flourishing or in a state of suffering…I’ve learned how to be content.
	+ The secret is that I am in a relationship with the Eternal God who will never leave me. He is my strength. I can do all things…rich things, poor things, hungry things, full things…I can do everything God has called me to do, regardless of my marital status, my financial status, regardless of my popularity, or the breadth of my influence…whether I feel beat down, or uplifted…because I have God, nothing can stop me from accomplishing HIS purposes for me to bring glory to HIM.
	+ Boy, that sure is a different spin on a verse that we typically use to inspire our teenagers to win football games.
* **Back to 2)**
	+ See, the Bible gives an entirely different sort of philosophy from Epicurus.
	+ The road to happiness is not one that avoids suffering, or conflict, or pain.
	+ Rather, the road to happiness is one that pursues the presence of God all along the way.
	+ The road to happiness does not depend on my temporary circumstances…whether I have a lot or a little money. It does not depend on whether I have a lot or a little respect, or comfort, or anything else my deceitful heart tells me I have to have from other people.
	+ The road to happiness is one that I walk with Christ, right the middle of the valley of the shadow of death, and all along he whispers to me…”Don’t quit. Don’t chase the temporary. Hang in with me. You can do all of this through my love and power. I’m with you. I’m not giving up on you…don’t give up on me!”
	+ **Phil 4:8-9**
	+ That’s why Paul writes just before those verses that we should dwell on what is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable and excellent…that’s what we think about on the road through suffering.
	+ We don’t covet. We don’t think about what we DON’T Have that will make our lives so much better…we focus on the eternal truth we DO HAVE…the presence of God himself.
	+ We dwell on the beauty of God.
	+ On who he is, and how he loves us.
	+ See, contentment is the positive side of this command.
	+ It's the opposite of coveting.
	+ **Coveting is trying to lust your way out of suffering.**
	+ **Contentment is realizing you have everything you need in Christ for life and godliness as you suffer.**
* **Back to 2)**
	+ You know, if you read Romans 7, you’ll find that it was the 10th commandment that woke up the apostle Paul to his sin and God’s grace.
	+ He says in there, that this commandment showed him his heart.
	+ It showed him that he couldn’t trust what was on the inside.
	+ That he had to look outside of himself to God to truly understand who he was.
	+ He had to look to what God said about him to not only see eternal hope…but also to see how much he needed to be rescued.
	+ That’s the thing about coveting.
	+ You get so wrapped up in the chase of that thing you think will save you, that you sort of close your ears to everyone begging you to stop.
	+ That’s why spouses have affairs. They just can’t believe that this mistress won’t finally give them all they’ve dreamed of.
	+ That’s why parents continually spend more and more time at the office, even at the neglect of their children…because they can’t possibly believe that if they climb the ladder to the top of the corporeate world that it won’t be better for them and their kids.
	+ That’s why Dr. Phil couldn’t really talk any sense into that 13 year old car stealing knife wielding girl…
	+ …because she can’t imagine a universe where she won’t be happy if she gets all the desires of her heart.
	+ …but that’s not paradise…its actually the moment that God turns you over to yourself.
	+ **It's the moment you realize you have everything you ever wanted…and now you have to live with it for eternity.**
	+ **Phil 4:11**
	+ You know its funny, when Paul says he’s learned the secret of being content. The word he uses for content is the greek word *autarkeia*.
	+ *Arkeo* means to be full, to be satisfied.. It’s like when you’ve eaten a really good meal…and you aren’t stuffed, but just at the perfect amount.
	+ And Auto, well that means self. Arkeo- satisfied
	+ So this word content means to be self-satisfied.
	+ Does that mean Epicurus was right?
	+ Should you look inside yourself to find yourself and be satisfied WITH yourself?
	+ No.
	+ That's not what “content” means. Its not self-esteem.
	+ It means that you are so satisfied by God, who is outside of you. And in that you are content to do what he’s called you to do, and you don’t HAVE to have anything else.
	+ **You are completely satisfied, by yourself, with Him**
	+ That makes Jesus’ word in **Matt 6:33** even more beautiful.
	+ When the disciples are worried about food and clothing, Jesus tells them, keep your focus on me and my kingdom. That’s the road we are walking.
	+ But notice what he says…
	+ He doesn’t say… “You won’t need those other things. He doesn’t say you’ll have to learn to live without those other things.”
	+ Instead, he says, “Pursue me. And I’ll throw those other things in too.”
	+ That is the beautiful grace of God.
	+ When you pursue him and him alone…you get everything else thrown in.
	+ But if you pursue everything else…you lose him completely…and none of the gifts will ever satisfy you without the presence of the giver.

Transition: But before we finish…I want to show you how to find this contentment…and to do that…I’m going to have to admit that Epicurus was right about something.

**3) The road through suffering leads to a home without it.**

* + Epicurus said that the highest state of happiness was all about tranquility, freedom from fear, and an absence of pain.
	+ Now, doesn’t that seem opposite of suffering?
	+ I mean, tranquility, freedom from fear and absence of pain is exactly what you don’t have when you are suffering.
	+ Unless, of course, you are sure that God is with you.
	+ Unless you have an unshakable lock down sure promise that you will make it through suffering…then…you have the ability…even in suffering to at least have peace and a freedom from fear…even though you are still in pain.
	+ **Exodus 20:18-21**
	+ After Moses told the people of Israel the 10 Commandments they didn’t all cheer and say, “What a wonderful list!”
	+ Instead they trembled in fear.
	+ They didn’t feel closer to God…they wanted to run.
	+ They looked up and saw smoke and lightning…and they begged Moses… “Don’t make us go up. You go up for us. We can’t face God…we’ll die.”
	+ And that last line…its almost haunting.
	+ I don’t know who I’m most happy for and who I’m most sad for.
	+ On one hand, I’m sad for Israel because they stood far off from God, missing an opportunity of a lifetime…and I’m happy for Moses because …he got to stand in God’s presence.
	+ On the other hand, I’m sad for Moses and happy for Israel, because its scary up there. Moses had to go through thick darkness…and Israel didn’t have to face it, but still got the revelation of God in his commandments.
	+ So who would you rather be? Moses or Israel?
	+ Here’s the good news. Here’s the gospel. You don’t have to choose.
	+ See, Israel begged for a mediator. Someone to go between them and God…and Moses drew the short straw.
	+ But Moses was pointing to the only true mediator between God and man…Jesus Christ.
	+ See, on the Cross, Jesus was dying the death we deserved. He was going into the thick darkness…but he wasn’t going TO God the Father…he was going to the other place.
	+ He was descending to the outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.
	+ Jesus did the opposite of covet.
	+ He had everything, including the most important thing…a beautiful intimate relationship with God the Father. And on the cross, he was walking away from all that he had, so he could fully give it to you.
	+ But even in doing so, the book of Hebrews says that he was **pursuing his joy**…that is…bringing us to God. And the road to that joy went through a cross.
	+ See, We get to go up the mountain to God, without the thick darkness, because Jesus traded places with us on the cross.
	+ And though we suffer now, we are pursuing God’s kingdom…his ultimate presence… …and all these things…including the absence of pain will be added unto us.
* **Back to 3)**
* In Christ, you don’t find happiness by getting suffering out of your life. Neither do you find it by making yourself poor or purposely bringing pain into your life.
* In the middle of plenty or want, you look beyond your circumstance to Jesus Christ…the unshakable beauty that will never let you succumb to the darkness…because he already went into it for you.

**Baptism**