Q113. What is the aim of the tenth commandment?

A. That not even the slightest desire or thought contrary to any one of God's commandments should ever arise in our hearts. Rather, with all our hearts we should always hate sin and take pleasure in whatever is right.[1]

1. Rom. 7:7 – "What then are we to say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet, if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, 'You shall not covet.'"

Q114. But can those converted to God obey these commandments perfectly?

A. No. In this life even the holiest have only a small beginning of this obedience.[1] Nevertheless, with all seriousness of purpose, they do begin to live according to all, not only some, of God's commandments.[2]

1. 1 John 1:8–10 – "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
Rom. 7:14–15 – "For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin. I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate."
Eccl. 7:[20] – "Surely there is no one on earth so righteous as to do good without ever sinning."
2. Rom. 7:22 – "For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self,"
James 2:10 – "For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it."

Q115. Since no one in this life can obey the Ten Commandments perfectly, why does God want them preached so pointedly?

A. First, so that the longer we live the more we may come to know our sinfulness[1] and the more eagerly look to Christ for forgiveness of sins and righteousness.[2] Second, so that, we may never stop striving, and never stop praying to God for the grace of the Holy Spirit, to be renewed more and more after God's image, until after this life we reach our goal: perfection.[3]

1. 1 John 1:9 – "If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
Ps. 32:5 – "Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,' and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah"
2. Rom. 7:24–25 – "Wretched person that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with my mind I am enslaved to the law of God, but with my flesh I am enslaved to the law of sin."
3. 1 Cor. 9:24 – "Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it."
Phil. 3:11–14 – "if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal, but I press on to lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider that I have laid hold of it, but one thing I have laid hold of: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal, toward the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus."