

BEWARE OF COVETOUSNESS

LUKE 12

Text: Luke 12:15

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¹⁵ And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

Introduction:

Notice Exodus 20:17

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¹⁷ Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbour's.

The other commandments deal w/ actions, but this one with attitude. The others are about behavior, but this one is about our mind.

“Thou shalt not Steal” says keep your hands off.

“Thou shalt not Covet” says don’t even think about it!

Covetousness is an excessive desire for something you don’t have.

This is an excessive desire that compromises convictions to gain something you want. It is also an envious desire for what someone else has...desiring what they have to be yours.

Paul in his description of conditions of the last days he lists covetous and he lists it very high on the list.

2 Timothy 3:1-7

¹This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. ²For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, ⁴Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; ⁵Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. ⁶For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ⁷Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Notice:

1. THE PROBLEM OF COVETOUSNESS

Covetousness is a real problem in our society today, but it also is a problem among Christians and in churches today.

Where does covetousness spring from? Where are the roots from which it grows from? Where does it begin or arise from?

A. It Arises From Self Motivation

Mark 7:20-23

²⁰ And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. ²¹ For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, ²² Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: ²³ All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

Covetousness comes from a heart that is selfishly motivated instead of being spiritually motivated.

"The heart of the human problem is the problem of the human heart."

Man is self-centered. Man is seeking to satisfy himself.

The cause of covetousness is a selfish heart and this in turn leads to a selfish motivation.

B. It Arises From Spiritual Misunderstanding

Luke 12:15

¹⁵ And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

Jesus follows these words with a parable. The man in the parable was a materialist.

He knew how to make a living, but he did not know how to make a life!

He did not own possessions - they owned him!

A covetousness person is so taken up with this life that he loses sight of the eternal.

Ecclesiastes 5:10

¹⁰ He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this *is* also vanity.

2. THE POWER WITHIN COVETOUSNESS

Covetousness is a very powerful thing.

A. It Has the Power to Deceive Us

We can be so misled that we do not even recognize when we are committing this sin.

Covetousness is very deceitful.

In all my years of ministry, I have never had anyone confess to me the sin of covetousness.

I have never had anyone own up to the sin of covetousness.

Paul talks about a cloak of covetousness.

1 Thessalonians 2:5

⁵For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God *is* witness:

Covetousness is something no one thing he has.

We think the other person has it but not us.

B. It Has the Power to Dominate Us

1 Timothy 6:9

⁹But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

If allowed; covetousness to go unchecked, it will soon master us. We fall prey to its force and seem to have little power to overcome it.

C. It Has Power to Destroy Us

Let me remind you of some from the Scriptures that covetousness destroyed:

- Achan's covetousness led to theft and disobedience and ultimately the death of he and his family.
- David's covetousness led to adultery and to murder the death of his baby and a dysfunctional family.
- Ahab's covetousness led to the murder of Naboth.
- Ananias and Sapphria covetousness lead to lying to Holy Ghost and ultimately instant death

3. THE PRESCRIPTION FOR COVETOUSNESS

The Bible not only condemns covetousness but it also offers the best cure for those who have been poisoned by it.

Hebrews 13:5

⁵ *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

Contentment is the solution to covetousness.

You will always be covetousness until you learn contentment.

Contentment is the prescription for covetousness, and contentment is found in Christ.

Illustration:

Once there was a wealthy man in England who possessed a wonderful and unique art collection worth millions of dollars in our currency.

This man had one son whom he loved very dearly and had desired to leave his art collection to him upon his death. The son however, was killed during the World War II.

Since the wealthy Englishman had no other living heir, he stipulated in his will that his art collection was to be auctioned off upon his death, but with the requirement that the portrait of his son was to be sold first.

Eventually the wealthy man died. On the day of the auction, people from around the world were in attendance to bid on this priceless art collection.

The rich man's lawyer stood and informed the people present of the stipulation placed upon the auction by his client.

When the bidding was opened, no one wanted to bid on the portrait of the owner's son, because they were waiting for the more valuable pieces to come on the auction block.

However, there was a former servant of the owner in attendance, who had greatly loved the owner's son and had cared for him for many years. It was he who made the only bid on the portrait of the owner's son. Finally, the auctioneer said, "Going, going, gone, Sold, to the man at the back of the room."

The rich man's lawyer immediately stood up and said, "Ladies and Gentlemen, the auction is now closed. According to the terms of the will, whoever purchased the portrait of the owner's son took the rest of the collection as well."

The Lord is the secret of contentment.

If you have the Son, you have it all.

A. Be Thankful For What You Have In the Lord

- He Will Not Fail You
- He Will Not Forsake You

B. Be Peaceful In What You Have in Christ

Hebrews 13:5

⁵ *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

“The man who has God for his treasure has all things in One.”

- We Have His Assurance – “For He Hath Said”
- We Have His Assistance – “I Will Never Leave Thee, Nor Forsake Thee.”

Close:

A Jewish man in Hungary went to his rabbi and complained, "Life is unbearable. There are nine of us living in one room. What can I do?"

The rabbi answered, "Take your goat into the room with you." The man was skeptical, but the rabbi insisted, "Do as I say and come back in a week."

A week later the man returned looking more distraught than before. "We can't stand it," he told the rabbi. "The goat is filthy."

The rabbi said, "Go home and let the goat out, and come back in a week."

A week later the man returned, radiant, exclaiming, "Life is beautiful. We enjoy every minute of it now that there's no goat - only the nine of us."

Contentment is more a matter of our perspective than of our circumstances!

Where are you looking? If you are looking at things, you will be covetousness, but if you are looking to Christ, you will be content.