

Covetousness

(Luke 12:15)

Introduction:

1. In our study of giving in worship this morning, we covered passages that teach Christians to give:
 - a. as God has prospered us
 - b. as we have purposed in our hearts
 - c. bountifully
 - d. cheerfully.
2. Certain obstacles will prevent us from following these instructions.
3. This evening we are focusing our attention on one obstacle that Jesus warned His followers against in Luke 12:15 -- "*covetousness*" [greed].

Discussion:

- I. LET US BEGIN BY DEFINING "COVETOUSNESS"
 - A. "Covetousness" may be defined as:
 1. a greedy desire for more and more of what the world has to offer
 2. the love of money or possessions.
 - B. In addition to warning His followers against "covetousness," Jesus gave an illustration of it in a parable (Luke 12:16-19).
 - C. Now that we know what "covetousness" is, we need to understand that . . .
- II. THE SCRIPTURES CLEARLY TEACH CHRISTIANS TO AVOID "COVETOUSNESS"
 - A. See:
 1. Ephesians 5:3 -- "Covetousness" is a sin that is not to be once named among God's people.
 2. Colossians 3:5 -- "Covetousness" is a sin that is to be mortified.
 3. Hebrews 13:5 -- "*Let your conversation be without covetousness.*"
 - B. Why are these instructions directed to Christians?
 1. Anyone, including God's people, can be affected by covetousness.
 - a. For a time, Solomon got caught up in it (Ecclesiastes 2:4-11).
 - b. (Luke 12:13-14) It appears that 2 brothers had problems with it.
 - 1) One man kept what belonged to his brother.
 - 2) The other man, apparently a follower of the Lord, tried to get Jesus involved in that situation -- Jesus did not come for that purpose.
 - c. God's people are not immune to the effects of covetousness.
 2. Can anyone deny that our society has a serious problem with covetousness?

3. God's people tend to be affected by things that take place in society.
 4. We must heed these instructions that teach us to avoid covetousness.
- C. In addition to teaching us to avoid "covetousness," . . .
- III. THE SCRIPTURES TEACH US WHY "COVETOUSNESS" MUST BE AVOIDED (Let us consider 3 reasons)
- A. Reason #1: "Covetousness" will keep a person out of God's kingdom.
1. (1 Corinthians 6:9-10) Covetous people will be among those who do not inherit the kingdom of God.
 2. (Ephesians 5:5) A covetous person will have no inheritance in the Lord's kingdom.
 3. The rich young ruler shows how "covetousness" will keep a person out of God's kingdom (Luke 18:18-25).
 4. Let us not overlook what happened to the rich man in the Lord's parable as well as everyone who follows his example (Luke 12:20-21).
- B. Reason #2: "Covetousness" leads to evil.
1. (1 Timothy 6:10) *"The love of money"* is the "root" [cause] of all kinds of evil.
 - a. "Covetousness" has caused some:
 - 1) to err from the faith
 - 2) to pierce themselves through with many sorrows.
 - b. Judas Iscariot illustrates this point quite vividly (Matthew 26:14-16; 27:3-5).
 2. "Covetousness" can lead to other forms of evil that may not be quite so drastic.
- C. Reason #3: The Lord wants us to learn "contentment" (1 Timothy 6:6).

Conclusion:

1. "Covetousness" is a very serious matter, and we would do well to remember these principles that we have studied.
2. For a final thought, let us consider 2 questions found in Matthew 16:26.
 - a. Your soul is your most precious possession.
 - b. The welfare of your soul deserves your utmost attention.
 - c. If you lose your soul, anything you may have gained will not matter at all.
3. May God help us to be able to recognize "covetousness" in our lives and to shun it with all of our being!