

“Beware of Covetousness”

Luke 12:15

Introduction: Covetousness is an envious desire for what belongs to another. It is often an eagerness for wealth or possessions. It could simply be a craving for more or greed for gain. It is having a strong desire for things especially when it is unlawfully obtained.

I. Covetousness is wrong.

A. Paul said he would not have known covetousness was wrong unless the law said it was wrong (Rom. 7:7). It can be a subtle sin.

B. The Old Law clearly condemned covetousness (Ex. 20:17; Deut. 5:21). This command is one of the Ten Commandments.

C. Paul said covetousness should not even be named among Christians (Eph. 5:3). Covetousness is as hideous as fornication. The covetous will not inherit an eternal home (Eph. 5:5).

II. Covetousness is a common problem.

A. It contributed to the fall of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:1-6).

B. It caused Achan to disobey God and hide the spoils of war in his tent (Joshua 7:20-21).

C. It caused King David to take another man's wife (2 Sam. 11:2-4).

D. In later years, Israel was given wholly over to covetousness (Jer. 6:13).

E. It contributed to the fall of Babylon (Jer. 51:13).

F. The Pharisee's were known for their covetousness (Luke 16:14).

G. Covetousness is listed among the sins in which the wrath of God will be revealed (Rom. 1:18, 29, 32). In fact, those who are covetous are deserving of death!

III. Jesus taught against covetousness (Luke 12:15-21).

A. Covetousness makes a person think his life consists in the things he possesses (vs. 15). In other words, his standing and status in society depends on what he owns.

B. This man was blessed by the Lord (vs. 16). So the man thought, what does he do with the blessings? Notice his covetousness was revealed by what he does with those blessings.

1. He shows himself to be selfish (vs. 17-19). In three sentences he uses the pronouns “I” and “me” ten times. He only thinks of himself in the disposition of the blessings.

2. He shows himself to be materialistic (vs. 19). He only thinks of what will make him happy.

C. God calls him a fool (vs. 20-21) for two reasons.

1. He lived his life for gain and before he could enjoy it his life was taken (Rom. 8:5-8).

2. He was not rich toward God but laid up treasures for himself (Matt. 6:19-21).

IV. Covetousness is with us today. When a possession or desire becomes more important than Christ, we are covetous.

A. Covetousness could be evident in our lack of giving (1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:5-7; Gal. 6:6-8). The more we make, the more we should give.

B. Covetousness could be evident by the things we idolize. Covetousness is idolatry according to Colossians 3:5. It could be a car, sports, hobby, work or anything we put before the Lord (Heb. 13:5). It could even be our lives.

C. Covetousness could be evident by the passions we lust after (1 John 2:16). Many people desire a passion without concern for God's laws or how it will affect others (i.e. an adulterous affair, gambling, alcohol and drug abuse, pornography, smoking).

D. Covetousness could be evident by deceit (2 Pet. 2:3). When people want something bad enough they often resort to deception to get the things they want.

Conclusion: The remedy to covetousness is love (Rom. 13:9-10). Love would never think to do harm to another person. It considers the other person before himself. If you love your brethren, you will not covet what they have or what you want. If you love the Lord, you will not work despite the Lord or His commands. Do you love or do you covet?