

“Idol: Greed”

Colossians 3:1-5

Introduction

Warning lights in cars and other mechanical devices alert us that something needs our attention. Without this indicator light, issues that need attending to may not be noticed. Similarly, God uses money as an indicator light to our souls, alerting us to deeper issues that need to be examined. To be clear, money itself is not wrong. However, when our motivation to obtain it is not Godly, it leads to the idol of greed (1 Col 3:5). Greed is the illegitimate and unauthorized desire, pursuit, or acquisition of material gain. Romans 1:29-30 outlines just how catastrophic the idol of greed is when it lists it among other wicked behaviors, including murder.

Greed has affected our culture in many ways, influencing how we operate in the four relational spheres of God’s rule (i.e., individual, family, church, society). Slavery is the result of societal greed; the United States was built on the systematic forcing of people into perpetual labor based on their skin color to support the economic development of this country. Churches are greedy when they become more concerned about receiving the blessings of God rather than growing in relationship with Him or when they attempt to spiritualize putting gold before God and money before the Master. This is greed. Families and individuals who are in illegitimate debt, marked by payday loans and the excessive use of credit cards, are guilty of greed.

For those who think they are not driven by greed, Pastor Evans gave a list of indicators to greed. We are greedy when:

1. We use illegal or immoral means to acquire things
2. We complain more than we give thanks
3. We are more concerned about our cash than our character
4. Our financial life is increasing but our spiritual life is decreasing
5. We treat those with money better than those without it
6. We crave and plot to possess what legitimately belongs to another (covetousness)
7. We hurt others in order to get something for ourselves.

Paul’s epistle to the Colossians serves as a reminder to keep our focus on spiritual rather than material things. Ultimately, greed is really a heart issue and to overcome it, we must shift our hearts from receiving more to giving more. Because we cannot serve God and money, our focus should be on generosity with what we have and doing good works for others.

Getting Started

Before this sermon, how did you define greed? How does this definition differ from the one Pastor gave? What surprises you about his definition?

Let’s Get Personal

1. Do you find yourself guilty of any of the seven expressions of greed listed above? If you answered yes, do you feel the necessity to change your thinking and/or about how you obtain material gain? Explain.
 2. *Keeping up with the Joneses* is common in our society. Have you ever purchased or wanted to purchase something you couldn’t afford just to impress other people? What did it cost you spiritually? Was the material gain worth the spiritual cost?
 3. Read and reflect on 1 Timothy 6:6-19. What is Paul’s equation for gain? How does this compare with the greedy person’s way of obtaining gain?
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Take the Next Step

Community service is a way to ensure that our focus is spiritual rather than earthly. Make a list of the ways you currently serve. What specific things can you and your family do in the next 30 days to increase your service to others?

Renew Your Mind

“Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.”

Colossians 3:2

