

Staying Clean From Covetousness Part II

Why Is Covetousness So Dangerous? (Covetousness Is Idolatry)

A. Covetousness Is Idolatry

1. Eph 5:5 (KJV) For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.
 - a. (NLT) You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God. For a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world
2. Col 3:5 (KJV) Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.
 - a. (NLT) So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don't be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world.
3. Ex 20:3-5 (KJV) Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.
4. Lev 19:4 (KJV) Turn ye not unto idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods: I am the Lord your God.
5. The love of money is idolatry.

B. What Is Idolatry?

1. Ps 115:4-8 (AMP) The idols of the nations are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; they have ears, but they hear not; noses have they, but they smell not; they have hands, but they handle not; feet have they, but they walk not; neither can they make a sound with their throats. They who make idols are like them; so are all who trust in and lean on them.
2. What is an idol?
 - a. An image that represents a false god
 - b. Phantom, appearance, likeness
 - c. A vain thing—empty, worthless, unproductive
 - i. Acts 14:15 (AMP) Turn away from these foolish and vain things to the living God.
 - ii. (NLT) Turn from these worthless things to the living God.
 - iii. Jer 14:22 (AMP) Are there any among that false gods of the nations that can cause rain?

- d. A nothing in the world
 - i. I Cor 8:4 (KJV) As concerning the eating of these things that area offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.
 - e. A pillar in the garden
 - i. Jer 10:5 (BBE) It is like a pillar in a garden of plants, and has no voice. It has to be lifted, for it has no power of walking. Have no fear of it; for it has no power of doing evil and is not able to do any good.
 - ii. (CEV) An idol is no better than a scarecrow.
3. What is idolatry?
- a. Col 3:5 (AMP) So kill...all greed and covetousness for that is idolatry: the deifying of self and other created things instead of God.
 - i. Deify = To make a god of
 - ii. Deifying = To worship and revere as a god
 - b. The worship of a false god.
 - c. The worship and honor paid to anything created by man.
 - d. Worship—undivided attention, adoration, trust, reverence, devotion, honor, place
 - e. Trusting in the object’s ability to provide or destroy.
 - f. Turning away from God. Giving to something else what is rightfully God’s.
 - g. I Tim 6:10 (KJV) For the love of money (the worship and undivided attention, adoration and trust of it) is at the root of all evil: which while some coveted after (made it into an idol, an image that represents a false god) have erred from the faith (they have turned away from God) and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.
4. What is an idolater?
- a. One who worships the idol
 - b. An idolater is a slave to the depraved ideas his idols represent.
 - c. Gal 4:8 (NLT) Before you Gentiles knew God, you were slaves to so-called gods that do not even exist.
 - i. (KJV) You did service unto them.
 - ii. (AMP) You were in bondage to gods.
5. A covetous, greedy lover of money turns away from the living God, makes an idol out of his possessions, trusting them, worshipping them and becomes a slave to what the idol represents.
- a. Prov 11:28 (KJV) He that trusts in his riches shall fall, but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.
 - b. (NLT) Trust in your money and down you go.

C. The “Money-Idol” Test: How To Know If Money Has Become An Idol

1. Do you think about money all the time?
2. Does money run your life?
3. Does money control your emotions?
4. Is money the topic of most conversations?

5. Does faith or fear rise up when you think about money?
6. Are you constantly worried about money?
7. Is your vision limited to the funds that are available today?
8. Do you feel hopeless about your financial future?
9. Do you have a “fixed income” mentality?
10. Do you argue with your spouse over finances?
11. Are you consumed with how to pay your bills?
12. Do you lie awake at night thinking about money?
13. Does money have more influence in your decisions than the Holy Spirit?
14. Do you struggle at offering time at church?
15. Have you stopped tithing and sowing?
16. Are you cheap?
17. Do you tell your children, “We can’t afford that.”
18. When someone compliments you on clothing or a fine possession, do you let them know how cheap it was or that you got it on sale. “Oh, I got it on sale—it only cost me \$20.”
19. Do you financially compare yourself to others?
20. Does money get more attention than God?

D. How To Stop Money From Becoming An Idol

1. Matt 6:24 (KJV) No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.
 - a. (NLT) No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.
 - b. (AMP) No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will stand by and be devoted to the one and despise and be against the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (deceitful riches, money, possessions, or whatever is trusted in).
2. Ps 104:14 (KJV) He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth.
3. Settle three things.
 - a. I don’t serve money.
 - i. It is not my god.
 - ii. I don’t love it.
 - iii. It doesn’t control me.
 - iv. It is not an idol. I don’t worship it.
 - b. I serve God.
 - i. God tells me what to do.
 - ii. He is my provider.
 - c. Money serves me.
 - i. God tells me what to do with it.
 - ii. I direct it where to go.
 - iii. I use it for the work of the kingdom—to advance the work of God on earth.

4. Matt 6:33 (KJV) But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.
5. Jer 9:23-24 (KJV) Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.

“I’m convinced in my mind by my heart, the reason I want money is to do the work of the Gospel! Thank you, Lord, for the peace of that revelation.

Satan—you will never be able to make me believe ever again that the reason I want money is for selfish gain.

My God is my provider.”

—Jeremy Pearsons 5/6/98

My motivation for accumulation is distribution.