



ONE - Don't Covet What Someone Else Has

Covet is not a word that is part of our everyday vocabulary and yet we ought not think that this means we no longer have a problem with covetousness. Far from it. We, however, express it in different ways. Then we say, for instance, "The grass is always greener..." or "Our yearnings will always exceed our earnings" we are talking about this idea. We all have desires and many of them are very healthy. Some, however, are not. The problem that we so often encounter, however, is thinking that the only way we have to acquire the respect, love and other good desires is by the accumulation of material or "stuff" that we do not already have. When this happens we have started our often long, but vain journey down the road of covetousness.

The results are very often messy. "Get rich or die trying," is the mantra of a people that routinely offers up the things that should be important - quality of life, sanctity of life, family and friends - on the altar of self-created gods that will never be appeased. Though unseen and certainly

beyond the watchful eye of law, some of the darkest periods of human history are defined by covetousness. Governments want lands of neighboring governments so they war and fight. From corporate espionage to the unseen affair of straying spouses across neighborhood fences. Key to understanding is that covetousness is not simply an overt act. It is a desire of the heart. "Once we recognize the place that desire has in our actions, we get to deal with what is underneath the surface." Why do we desire what we desire? Why did Adam and Eve desire and then eat the forbidden fruit? Satan suggested, you may recall, that they could be "like God." Read James 4:1-2. Three areas most commonly ooze with insatiable desire - money, fame and power. Few years will go down in history politically like 2016. Never before has the political dog and pay show so wantonly displayed abuses and covetousness in these areas.

Questions for consideration - On the back or separate sheet of paper answer the following

1. What is covetousness?
2. Where does it come from?
3. What is a desire and what makes a desire wrong or right?
4. How can we tell whether we are being covetous or not?
5. Look up three verses in the Bible that mention the word "covet" or "covetousness" (try not to use those mentioned here) and describe what the author is talking about.
6. What is often the result of covetousness?
7. Why does Paul equate covetousness to idolatry in Col. 3:5?
8. How do you think we can "put to death" covetousness in our lives?
9. In Ephesians 5:3 Paul says that covetousness must not be named among them; that is their congregants. Why is this of such vital importance? What does covetousness do within the church? Do we have a biblical precedent or example?
10. Read Luke 12:15-21 What is the danger of covetousness as defined by the parable?

