

Home Bible Study Series

Problems of the Heart (#2)

- 1—Envy and Jealousy
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Lesson One

"Envy and Jealousy"

This is the second study on the theme of **Problems of the Heart!** We hope that you profited by the first study and look forward to a continuation of looking at these sins that can fill our hearts—and even destroy us. Our first study will be dealing with two conditions of the heart that closely resemble each other—**Envy and Jealousy!** Some versions of the Bible use these two words as similar and inner changeable. Are they the same; or, are they two different conditions of the heart? If they are different, how would you make a distinction between them?

Defining These Terms

ENVY

"To look with ill-will at another."

"To be envious of another man's possessions."

"It is pain at seeing another having what I want and don't have."

Eccl. 4:4 _____

Acts 13:45 _____

Gen. 26:14 _____

Gen. 30:1 _____

JEALOUSY

"We are jealous of our own things or people"

"Jealousy fears that it might lose what it has"

Num. 4:11-15 _____

Interest Note:

This word is almost exclusively used in the Old Testament. It is mostly used with reference to God, but in a good sense.

Deut. 32:16, 21 _____

Exo. 20:5 _____

The Apostle Paul used it in a similar sense:

2 Cor. 11:2 _____

It is used in the sense of upholding God's honor:

Num. 25:11 _____

It is used in a bad sense in the two following references:

Acts 7:9 _____

Rom. 13:13 _____

Both would be considered "sin" in their bad usage:

Gal. 5:21 _____

1 Tim. 6:4 _____

Envy & Jealousy Can be very Destructive!

Prov. 27:4 _____

Prov. 6:34 _____

Job 5:2 _____

Prov. 14:30 _____

Matt. 27:18 _____

Phil. 1:15 _____

Things Associated with Envy & Jealousy

Jas. 3:14-15 _____

Jas. 3:16 _____

1 Tim. 6:4 _____

1 Pet. 2:1 _____

We know something by its fruits—or by its association!

Matt. 7:15-16 _____

The Cure for Envy & Jealousy

If we can see the wrongness of these conditions of heart; then, we should also see the need to dealing with them properly. God has given us the way to put these sins of the heart to rest in our lives.

1. Die with Christ!

Rom. 6:6-8 _____

Gal. 2:20 _____

Is this something that we do or does God do it for us? _____

How does Paul's statement in **Gal. 5:16** fit into the above thoughts? _____

How does Peter's statement in **1 Pet. 2:1-2** help with the above? _____

2. Jas. 3:14-17 _____

How do we gain this wisdom from above? _____

3. 1 Cor. 13:4 _____

How does this love help us deal with Envy & Jealousy? _____

4. 1 Cor. 12:26 _____

How does Paul's statement in **1 Cor. 3:1** correspond with the above? _____

5. Phil. 4:11-12 _____

What does it mean to be content and how does that deal with Envy and Jealousy? _____

Concluding Thoughts

Are we willing to look within our lives and see if we are harboring this evil outlook within our heart; and if there, are we willing to listen to God's directions to deal with it?

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. Envy and Jealousy are the same and the Scriptures use these two words inner changeable.
- _____ 2. Envy is wanting to hold on to what we have.
- _____ 3. Jealousy is when someone desires what another person has.
- _____ 4. "Jealousy" only occurs in the Old Testament and is used only with reference to God in a good sense.
- _____ 5. The Apostle Paul talked about a "Godly Jealousy."
- _____ 6. Phinehas was jealous for God's honor.
- _____ 7. Envy is called a "work" of the flesh.
- _____ 8. Envy comes out of a "proud" heart.
- _____ 9. Jesus was delivered by the Jews to be crucified because they were envious of Him.
- _____ 10. It is possible to preach Christ to others, but do it out of an envious heart.
- _____ 11. James says that Envy comes out of a heart that is centered on the wisdom from below.
- _____ 12. We can identify someone's heart by the fruits that he does or does not bear.
- _____ 13. A person cannot deal with Envy unless he has the Love of God in his heart.
- _____ 14. God's wisdom is shown by the absence of Envy in our hearts.
- _____ 15. A contented person can still be envious of others.

Lesson Two

"Unwilling to Forgive"

To be unwilling to forgive is one of the things which causes so much unhappiness in the lives of so many people. To overcome this unhappiness, we must see the importance of forgiveness and seek to learn how to truly forgive those who have offended us. The following statements will help us see the value of a forgiving spirit:

*"To err is human; to forgive is divine."
"You are never more like Christ than when you forgive."
"Forgiveness is man's deepest need and highest achievement."
"To return evil for good is devilish; to return good for good is human; but to return good for evil is God-like."
"Never does the human soul appear so strong as when it foregoes revenge, and dares to forgive an injury."
"Doing an injury puts you below an enemy; revenging one makes you but even with him; forgiving it sets you above him."
"There are three kindred spirits which can be found in the human heart: giving, forgiving, and thanksgiving. Usually where one is found, there will be the others also."*

The following Scriptures illustrate the importance of overcoming our unwillingness to forgive!

- Col. 3:13** _____
- Matt. 7:12** _____
- Eph. 4:32** _____
- Matt. 6:14-15** _____

3 Basic Principles that leads to Forgiveness

1. Understand the difference between forgiveness and Justice!

Have you ever been angry and want to punish someone for a wrong—such is natural and **JUST** feelings! If justice were done, that person should be punished! Look at God for a moment. His creatures have rebelled against Him and gone their own way. Is He angry?

Ps. 79:5 _____
Ps. 85:5 _____

Is this a JUST REACTION on God's part?

Isa. 63:3-4 _____
Micah 5:15 _____

While God can justly feel this way, it does not solve man's problem. He is lost without God's forgiveness! Justice does not bring about reconciliation, but severance—forever! So....instead of bringing justice upon sinful mankind, he offers forgiveness instead! We deserve justice and punishment, but God did not send a destroyer or a "judge," but a **Savior** to the world.

John 3:17 _____

There is no plainer thought in Scripture than that God is willing to forgive all of our sins and remember them against us no more. This was God's only way to bring about reconciliation with His creatures.

And God is now calling upon us to be like Him—forgive! He does not want us to demand justice and just punishment when we are sinned against—not to vent our **Just** feelings of revenge against our fellow-man; but, to forgive!

Rom. 12:17 _____
Rom. 12:19 _____
Eph. 4:31-32 _____

It is only when we do this that the sinner can be saved and that true reconciliation can take place. It is **Just** to have feelings of anger, revenge, and wanting justice when we are terribly wronged. But such does not solve our problems among human beings. So, I must control my desire for justice. I must realize that this person needs my mercy, not my justice.

Luke 17:3 _____

2. I need to take the 1st step to bring about reconciliation!

Again, God is our perfect example. He was sinned against and could justly condemn and punish us. We literally deserve such.

Rom. 1:32 _____
Rom. 2:12 _____

God took the first step to bring about reconciliation—He gave the best of Heaven! He went to the Depths, the Heights, the Length, and the Breadth of His Being to bring about reconciliation with man. Jesus came as a sacrificial lamb for our reconciliation.

To be God-like, we too must take the first step! It is true that God calls upon the sinner to go to the one he has sinned against and ask forgiveness.

Matt. 5:23-24 _____

But to be like God, we need to take the first step! We must put aside our wounded and offended self—like God—and actually approach the offender to help bring about reconciliation.

Matt. 18:15 _____

Matt. 5:43-44 _____

3. Realize that forgiveness is conditional!

True reconciliation can not take place without true repentance. We can be willing to forgive (compassionate, loving, tender, kind), and take the first step towards reconciliation—but without repentance, there is no reconciliation!

Luke 17:3 _____

The wrong-doer must do his part to help make reconciliation possible! God cannot forgive until man repents! The same is true with human beings too. Repentance becomes the great stumbling block for God and man to bring about reconciliation. True forgiveness can only take place when:

1. The sinner is willing to recognize his offense;
2. He must express his regret and sorrow in word and deed;
3. He must show to the offended that he is truly sorry for his wrong.

Then, and only then, can true forgiveness take place and a restoring of the relationship as it was before. This is true in my relationship with both God and my fellow-man. It is to act as though the offense had never occurred!

Concluding Thoughts

What if the offender doesn't repent, what should I do? I can still manifest my willingness to forgive by returning good for evil. I can still encourage and plead for reconciliation—as Jesus does. But until true repentance takes place, there can be no reconciliation!

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. Forgiveness is man's highest achievement.
- _____ 2. Giving, Forgiving, and Thanksgiving are all found in the same heart.
- _____ 3. God commands man to be willing to forgive!
- _____ 4. To feel angry and want justice done when offended is not only natural but "just feelings."
- _____ 5. God does not get angry when man sins!
- _____ 6. God did not send a destroyer, but a savior for mankind.
- _____ 7. We do not know the reason why God is willing to forgive mankind.
- _____ 8. My fellow-man needs forgiveness, but he also needs to be punished for his wrongs to me.
- _____ 9. God commands man not to take vengeance, but to let him do the avenging for us.
- _____ 10. God tells the offended party to take the first step to bring about reconciliation.
- _____ 11. To take the first step involves setting aside our wounded and offended self.
- _____ 12. Forgiveness is unconditional on God's part.
- _____ 13. Repentance is a basic part of reconciliation between God and man.
- _____ 14. Without repentance, forgiveness cannot take place.
- _____ 15. Forgiveness is returning good for evil.

Lesson Three

"Selfishness"

One of the great challenges for human beings is to "grow up," "mature," or to become "unselfish." Adults can easily see selfishness in children and often-times in adults as well; but have a real problem seeing such in themselves. The selfish person thinks that the way he is conducting him or herself is the way of happiness, but in reality becomes the way of unhappiness!

Synonyms for "selfishness" can be helpful in trying to define the word. The following will give an idea of the value of such: **"Self-interest," "self-centeredness," "egotism," and "ego-centric."** Following are some efforts at defining the word.

"Caring unduly or supremely for one's self, regarding one's comfort, advantage, etc., in disregard, or at the expense of that of others."

"A selfish man is a person all wrapped up in himself."

"A selfish person is one who concentrates exclusively on 'number one.'"

"A selfish person is one who is in love with himself."

"A selfish person is one who lives for himself."

"A selfish man is like an egg—too full of himself to hold anything else."

Examples of Selfishness in the Bible

Check the following Scriptures to see if you agree with the comments about them:

Gen. 13:7-13. When given the choice, Lot took the best of the lands, leaving the inferior to his uncle Abraham, who had been the cause of his prosperity to begin with."

Matt. 20:20-28. The mother of Zebedee's children desired that her two sons be given a place of honor above all the others. Indirectly she would be the one who would benefit from such and possibly be praised.

Luke 15:11-32. The prodigal Son was thinking only of himself when he prematurely asked for his inheritance. The older brother was also selfish because he chaffed at the idea of throwing such a celebration for the returned Son.

Mk. 10:21-22. When told to sell all he had and give to the poor, he turned away sorrowfully.

Passages dealing with unselfishness

In what way do the following passages give insight as to how to overcome selfishness in your life?

1 Cor. 13:5 _____

Phil. 2:4-5 _____

2 Cor. 8:9 _____

1 Cor. 6:19-20 _____

Gal. 2:19-20 _____

Matt. 16:24 _____

<p>J -- Jesus 1st. O -- Others 2nd. Y -- Yourself 3rd</p>
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How Does Selfishness Affect Our Service to God?

What do the following passages show about the effect of selfishness on our service to God?

1 Tim. 4:10 _____

2 Pet. 2:14; 2:3 _____

Mark 7:22 _____

2 Cor. 9:5 _____

Col. 3:5 _____

How will the following things affect a Selfish Person?

Rom. 12:1 _____

1 Cor. 4:2 _____

1 Pet. 4:10 _____

2 Cor. 8:8 _____

2 Cor. 9:6 _____

1 Tim. 6:17-19 _____

Concluding Thoughts

There were some people in Corinth that were acting selfish and immature. Paul said they were not spiritual, but carnal, like babes in Christ (1 Cor. 3:1). They needed to grow up! God wants His people to be mature, complete, perfected in their lives—or.....to become like Christ! What a wonderful fellowship we can have when you have enough unselfish people to associate with.

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. An unselfish person is a grown up persons.
- _____ 2. A self-centered person is someone that is concerned about his life.
- _____ 3. A person without an ego cannot be a selfish person.
- _____ 4. Undue care for one's self is sowing that we love ourselves.
- _____ 5. Lot made a selfish decision and paid the price for it.
- _____ 6. The mother of James and John only wanted her sons to succeed in life.
- _____ 7. The prodigal son was more selfish than his older brother.
- _____ 8. The Rich Young Ruler was unwilling to give up his possessions because he was covetous.
- _____ 9. Love is the bond of perfection.
- _____ 10. It is impossible for us to think of others more highly than we think of ourselves.
- _____ 11. Only unselfish people can belong to God and glorify Him.
- _____ 12. To be crucified with Christ is to become unselfish.
- _____ 13. Joy is an outcome, not something one seeks and finds.
- _____ 14. Generous giving is always a sign of unselfishness.
- _____ 15. Love can be sincere or insincere.

Lesson Four

"Discontent"

Everyone has struggles in their lives with undesirable events that happen ever so often—sickness, discouragement, money crisis, friends that may disappoint you, disagreements in the family, etc. Obviously, life is not a "bed of roses!" Some people face far more of these things than others do, but we all face some. How we deal with these challenges will determine whether we will be content or discontent. This is definitely one of the problems of the heart with which the Christian needs to deal.

Content versus Discontent

The word "discontent" is found only one time in the King James Version of the Bible (1 Sam. 22:2). The word "content" is found some 15 times in the King James Version. We will be looking at these references shortly.

The word "content" is generally defined as: *"to be free from care because of being satisfied with what is already owned by the person."* A person who has a strong faith in God can be content irrespective of his outward circumstances. To be discontent is when we allow outward circumstances to control our mind and heart.

Can you make a distinction between these two words?

1. Satisfaction _____

2. Contented _____

Do you feel comfortable with the following distinction?

"Contentment is more inward than satisfaction! Contentment is a habit or permanent state of mind, while satisfaction deals with some particular occurrence or object." No ___ Yes ___

Do you feel comfortable with the following definition?

"Contentment is to come to a state of 'I don't care,' or to a state of 'apathetic indifference.'" No ___ Yes ___

Do you feel comfortable with the following definition?

"Freedom from care or discomfort." No ___ Yes ___

Do you agree with the following definition?

"It is quiet restfulness in the midst of all kinds of changing events....It is a cordial acquiescence in the arrangements of Heaven." No ___ Yes ___

Examination of Scriptures on Contentment

Joshua 7:7 _____

Judges 17:11 _____

Mark 15:15 _____

Luke 3:14 _____

Phil. 4:11 _____

1 Tim. 6:6-8 _____

Heb. 13:5 _____

3 John 10 _____

In some instances above, the word "satisfied" might fit better than the word "content." Pilate turned Jesus over to the soldiers to be crucified in order to "please" or "satisfy" or "gratify" the mob calling for his death.

To be "contented" or to be in a state of "contentment" seems to emphasize that the person has gained inner strength in order to cope with life's trials and tribulations.

"Contentment" does not discourage a person's efforts to improve his situation in life (Rom. 12:11; Eph. 4:28; 2 Thess. 3:11). But the Christian's trust and confidence in God's promises causes us to be content in whatever state we find ourselves in. We know that God will work out all things for our good (Rom. 8:28).

To be "content" is something that must be learned! The Apostle Paul said that he had learned it—to be content in whatever state he found himself. At times, he had plenty; at other times, he barely had enough to survive. At times, he was preaching and reaching many people; at other times, he was almost killed and run out of town. But his trust was in God—he learned this lesson from having to

deal with the circumstances of life and believing in God's promises to cope with them. **How about us.....have we learned contentment in our circumstances in life?**

Enemies of Contentment

God, it seems, did not intend for man's life to be without troubles (Job 5:7). When God said to Satan: "*Have you considered My servant Job?*" Satan's answer was: "*Does Job fear God for nothing?*" You have protected him so well that he serves you—take away your protection and bring calamities upon him and see if he will not curse you. It is easy to serve God when all goes well—but what about the bad times? How do the following things help to bring about discontent in people's lives?

Covetousness (Ecl. 5:10) _____

Unbelief (Matt. 6:24-25) _____

Envy (Prov. 27:4) _____

Pessimism (Phil. 2:14) _____

Self-Pity (Matt. 25:24-25) _____

1. We need to recognize the real enemies of our hearts and be ready for battle to overcome their influences in our lives. If we are going to be contented people of God, we will need to constantly count our many blessings (Jas. 1:17).
2. We must look on the cheerful and optimistic side of things in life (Phil. 4:4).
3. We need to place our affections on the higher, holier, heavenly things that are for ever, rather than the mundane things of this life (Phil. 4:8).
4. We need to recognize the things which cannot be changed, as well as to see the good things which we do have and express our gratitude to God for all things (Phil. 4:6-7).
5. Stay busy filling our lives with good works (Tit. 3:8).

Concluding Thoughts

We need to be content with what we have, but never content with who and what we are. There is always room for higher goals, living better, attaining to great heights, and learning more (Phil. 3:13-15; Heb. 6:1).

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. How we deal with life's challenges will determine if we are content or discontent.
- _____ 2. The word "discontent" is not found in our Bible.
- _____ 3. The word "content" is only found 5 times in our Bible.
- _____ 4. A person of strong faith will have a struggle with being contented.
- _____ 5. There is little distinction between "satisfaction" and "contentment."
- _____ 6. Contentment is more inward than satisfaction.
- _____ 7. Contentment is to come to a state of apathetic indifference.
- _____ 8. Contentment is freedom from care or discomfort.
- _____ 9. Contentment does not discourage a person's efforts to improve his situation in life.
- _____ 10. Contentment is something we learn.
- _____ 11. Job is an example of contentment in the midst of bad circumstances.
- _____ 12. Envy will make it hard for a person to be content.
- _____ 13. Constantly counting one's blessings can be a help towards being contented.
- _____ 14. Contentment is determined by where we place our affections.
- _____ 15. A person should be content with who he is.

Lesson Five

"Ingratitude"

There is a poem that states our lesson so very well, so succinct, and so plainly: *"Blow, blow, thou winter wind; thou art not so unkind as man's ingratitude!"* Luke records the event of Jesus healing the ten lepers (17:11-19). These men had leprosy—a terrible disease—possibly no disease more dreaded because it brings years of indescribable misery. The body becomes a hideous and awful sight and such separates you from the rest of mankind. Jesus healed these men of this dreaded disease, but only one out of the ten turned back to expressed his gratitude. In the realization of his deliverance, his heart swelled to overflowing—*"Praise and glory to the great God of heaven for his love and mercy."* One out of ten is not a very good response from blessed mankind.

Why is Mankind so Ungrateful?

There are possibly many reasons that could be given, but the following three things should be obvious to us all!

1. A lack of consideration! Thoughtlessness brings thanklessness!

Isa. 1:2-3 _____

We need to reflect often upon our blessings. We need to recognize the giver and the gift.

James 1:17 _____

Matt. 5:45 _____

We need to consider how greatly blessed we are to have heard and obeyed God's truth to be saved!

2. Familiarity! The Jewish people sort of expected Miracles from God. But the Samaritan, the Roman soldier, and the Syro-Phoenician woman all showed humility and gratitude when a Miracle blessed their lives or the life of a child. There was no familiarity with them. We can become so familiar with great blessings that we fail to be grateful for them—we become oblivious to all the good things sent our way. Jesus stated it clearly when He said: *"A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country."* Why? Because they are too accustomed to that person. I wonder how many people feel unappreciated because they are taken for granted!

There is a story told of a boy who lived on a mountain side in an ordinary house. Across the valley was a house with golden windows. He wanted some day to go to see them first hand. That day came and he made the journey.....but he could not find the golden windows—just an ordinary house. He asked a young girl, "Do you know where the beautiful house is that has the golden windows?" She replied: "Yes, over on the other mountain side." He looked and sure enough, there they were—it was his own house!

It is so easy to become familiar with even very important things. The story of the cross of Christ can become ineffectual with us if we are not careful. It's moral and spiritual grandeur can loose its luster. God's great mercy can be lost sight of—unless we are watchful! We can easily take for granted:

- ◇ Our husbands, wives, children, friends, neighbors;
- ◇ Our material prosperity, house, clothes, etc.;
- ◇ Our brethren in the church;
- ◇ The great privilege to be "in Christ" with hope!

3. Prosperity! God warned Israel of this grave danger!

Deut. 8:11-20 _____

It is easy to accept blessings. Possibly, the nine healed of leprosy may have been happy over being healed, but they did not return to express it! Do we have to learn gratitude through bitter disappointment and calamity?

The Command to be Grateful!

"Ingratitude is one of the basest and ugliest of all sins." People in all ages have been guilty of it (Rom. 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:1-2). God's word deals with this problem of the heart continually. Following are just a few passages in the New Testament we need to be aware of:

Eph. 5:20 _____

Col. 2:6-7 _____

Col. 3:15-17 _____

Col. 4:2 _____

Positive and Negative Examples in Scripture

The Bible gives many examples of both gratitude and ingratitude. The following are just a few to help to illustrate:

Matt. 11:25 _____

Ps. 69:30 _____

Deut. 32:18 _____

Dan. 6:10 _____

Phil. 1:3; 4:6 _____

Rev. 7:11-12 _____

Examples of gratitude on the part of others should help us see the value of continued gratitude on our part.

Gratitude needs to be Expressed!

1. In word and in attitude. The Samaritan cried with a loud voice his praise and thanksgiving to God and His Son. The Lame man healed through Peter and John did not fail to express his thanksgiving to God (Acts 3:8).

2. But also in action. Thanksgiving should lead to thanks-living! What is more reasonable than to serve the one who has delivered us? We show our gratitude by right living; right use of blessings; and sharing with others.

Concluding Thoughts

We need to cultivate the habit of continually looking to see how blessed we really are and expressing thanksgiving to the giver of these blessings. Gratitude will:

1. Open our eyes to see greater blessings;
2. Stimulate others to be grateful;
3. Make life go so much easier;
4. Help sustain us in the midst of life's misfortunes.

And what a blessing to hear others express gratitude to us for what little we have done to help them. Let's be a grateful people!

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. Winter wind is as cruel as ingratitude.
- _____ 2. The healing of the 10 lepers by Jesus shows both the gratitude and ingratitude of man.
- _____ 3. Thoughtlessness brings on thanklessness.
- _____ 4. Isaiah rebuked God's people for not being like an ox in their stall.
- _____ 5. James reminds us of where our comes originate.
- _____ 6. God's concern for His creatures is shown by His continually giving us all "sunshine and rain."
- _____ 7. "Familiarity breeds contempt" is a Biblical statement, not a principle.
- _____ 8. Men can easily take their blessings for granted because they receive them all the time.
- _____ 9. There is no way that a Christian will not be thankful for the privilege of being a Christian.
- _____ 10. Prosperity is an evil that brings a curse to mankind.
- _____ 11. God nowhere commands us to be gratitude, He just expects it of us.
- _____ 12. Examples of ingratitude are very seldom found in the Bible.
- _____ 13. Failure to openly express gratitude is a common failure of all mankind.
- _____ 14. Gratitude should be expressed in overt actions, not just in words—to be true gratitude.
- _____ 15. We should shun thinking that people should express gratitude to me for what I do for them.

Lesson Six

"Covetousness"

One of the most insidious problems of the heart is "covetousness." It is hard to convince a person that he is guilty of such. You never hear of people repenting of covetousness. It is the last of the "Ten Commandments" that was given to the Israelite Nation—"Thou shall not covet!" Both the Old and New Covenants have lots to say about this sin of the heart.

Covetousness Defined

The following phrases are attempts at defining the words from the Hebrew and Greek languages:

- "Grasping for more"*
- "To desire earnestly"*
- "To set the mind and heart upon anything"*
- "To desire to have more than a person has"*
- "An inordinate love of money"*
- "To gain dishonestly"*
- "To desire inordinately"*
- "To long for that which is unlawful to obtain or possess."*

What insight do the following Scriptures give to a working definition of covetousness?

Exo. 18:21 _____

Ezek. 33:31 _____

Lk. 12:15 _____

Lk. 16:14 _____

1 Thess. 2:5 _____

1 Tim. 3:3 _____

1 Tim. 6:10 _____

The Hebrew and Greek words are also translated "lust," "desire," "covet," or

"concupiscence." Desire within itself is not wrong when it is desiring the right things in the right way with the right attitude. Notice the following Scriptures:

Ps. 19:9-10 _____

1 Cor. 12:31 _____

1 Tim. 3:1 _____

Heb. 11:16 _____

But there may come a point at which desire which is legitimate may become illegitimate.

1. When we want something which cannot be obtained by right, loving, or lawful means.

Exo. 20:17 _____

Gen. 3:6 _____

2. Desire becomes wrong when it prevents us from serving the Lord and obeying His commands.

Josh. 7:20-21 _____

Luke 12:15 _____

3. Desire becomes wrong when it causes us to "use" people or try to "control" them.

2 Pet. 2:3 _____

1 Thess. 2:5 _____

4. Desire becomes wrong when we use unlawful means to satisfy our desires.

Micah 2:2 _____

Matt. 26:14-16 _____

Prov. 16:8 _____

5. Desire becomes wrong when we bring unpleasantness and unhappiness to others.

Prov. 15:27 _____

Prov. 20:7 _____

Covetousness and Leadership

It is interesting to notice that one of the qualities God desires in church leaders is to be free of this sin of covetousness:

1 Tim. 3:3 _____

1 Tim. 3:8 _____

Titus 1:7 _____

If God denounces this sin in the lives of all of His people (Eph. 5:3-5); then, how much more so for the leadership of His people.

A Cure for Covetousness

It should be obvious that if a person would put their faith in God's promises, that there would be no reason for covetousness.

Matt. 6:33 _____

Heb. 13:5-6 _____

Job 1:21 _____

Col. 3:1-5 _____

Concluding Thoughts

The covetous person will not see Heaven (1 Cor. 6:9-11). This alone should cause us to look deeply into our hearts and lives to see if we are guilty of this grave problem of the heart! Just look through the Scriptures at the sad souls that allowed covetousness to ruin their lives: Achan (Josh. 7); King Saul (1 Sam. 15:9, 19); Judas (Matt. 26:14-15); Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11); and Balaam (2 Pet. 2:15). We must deal with it or lose our soul forever.

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. Covetousness is one of the "Ten Commandments" in the Old Testament.
- _____ 2. The basic Greek word translated "covetousness" can also be translated desire, to long for, lust, or covet.
- _____ 3. Most of the Laws of the Old Testament are concerned with counteracting the spirit of covetousness.
- _____ 4. Covetousness was the first sin in the Church.

- _____ 5. Love of money and love of greedy gain are not the same thing.
- _____ 6. There is no way to really know if a person is covetous.

- _____ 7. "Desire" can be used in a good way as well as a bad way.
- _____ 8. Desire is sinful when we use unlawful means to satisfy our desires.
- _____ 9. It is okay to "use" people or "control" people if it brings a good end.
- _____ 10. Desire is wrong when we bring unpleasantness and unhappiness to others in fulfilling those desires.
- _____ 11. Men who are appointed as Elders must be free of Covetousness, but not necessarily Deacons.
- _____ 12. The most obvious cure for covetousness is faith and trust in God and His promises.
- _____ 13. Job reminds us a great and obvious truth—we brought nothing into this world and we will take nothing out with us.
- _____ 14. Both Ephesians and Colossians states that covetousness is idolatry.
- _____ 15. The covetous person will just barely make it to Heaven

