

Greed: Good or Bad? (part five of a twelve part study)

In this segment, we will consider the two step process involved in overcoming greed. The first step requires getting your priorities straight. As long as the acquisition of material wealth is your priority, your bondage to greed will grow deeper and stronger. If you are a Christian and have allowed yourself to become a captive of covetousness, then step one in overcoming your love of money comes straight from the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus says this in Matthew 6:33 –

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

Sounds simple, but it’s not easy. On the other hand, God knows your heart. If you truly want to overcome your bondage to greed and are seeking to live by the above principle, then God will give you the grace to overcome this sin. It won’t be without a measure of struggle and even some failure at first. It will be a learning process. But with your commitment and God’s grace, your love affair with wealth will be broken. This brings us to step two. Freedom from greed can only become permanent when it is replaced with something far better. That “something better” is revealed to us by the apostle Paul in Philippians 4:11-13 –

“Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”

Remember, before he became the apostle Paul, he was the self-righteous, money loving Pharisee Saul. Greed’s grip on Paul was so deep and profound that he had become blinded to its reality within him. Paul’s conversion to Christ helped him to see it, and the spiritual growth process of his Christian life enabled him to overcome it; a transformation known as progressive sanctification (Ephesian 4:22-24). So that at times we will grow spiritually by leaps and bounds. At other times, our growth will be slower, as we learn to “put off” a negative behavior (**covetousness**) and replace it by “putting on” a positive one (**contentment**). For Paul, as with others, his subjugation to the sin of covetousness meant overcoming the two most debilitating psychological facets of our fallen human existence. And that doesn’t happen overnight. In our next segment, our focus will be on what that involves.