

### **Greed: Good or Bad? (part one of a twelve part study)**

After engaging in this study of greed, and considering the enormous amount of Biblical data on the subject, I found it quite difficult to summarize why God views greed in such a negative manner. However, my conclusion is that greed, at its core, makes us guilty of misplaced trust. Rather than trusting in God for our salvation, as well as our daily provision, we trust in something else. More often than not, that something else is material wealth and its obsessive accumulation; to the extent that we don't need God and can live our lives independent of Him. This is the essence of why God views greed as equivalent to idolatry (Colossians 3:5).

In both Old and New Testaments, greed is portrayed as a misplaced and even delusional trust in something that cannot provide for one's salvation. Psalm 49 is as strong a proof text as any, where the emphasis throughout is upon the foolishness of trusting in material wealth rather than God; with the underlying reason given in vv5-9, where we read the following –

**“Why should I fear in the days of adversity, when the iniquity of my foes surrounds me, even those who trust in their wealth and boast in the abundance of their riches? No man by any means can redeem his brother or give to God a ransom for him – for the redemption of his soul is costly and he should cease trying forever – that he should live on eternally, that he should not undergo decay.”**

When greed compels an individual to misplace their trust in wealth, rather than God, they enter into a condition far more serious than they realize. This was true of the rich young ruler and our Lord's interaction with him in Luke 18:18-27. There we are given powerful insight by Christ into the bondage of greed, and how it can prevent someone from experiencing God's salvation, recorded in vv24-27 –

**“And Jesus looked at him and said, ‘How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter into the kingdom of God. For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.’ They who heard it said, ‘Then who can be saved?’ But He said, ‘The things that are impossible with people are possible with God.’”**

Why did Jesus relegate the rich into the realm of the impossible regarding their entrance into God's kingdom? His point of emphasis is designed to reveal to us that bondage to the sin of greed means that you have already chosen your god.