

Covetousness, the Sin of Our Time

by Stephen Jones

Covetousness is a grave sin that shows dissatisfaction with God and his provision, and it must be overcome by seeking to satisfy our desires in God.

Duration: 48:16

Scripture: Deuteronomy 5:21, 1 Timothy 6:6-12

Topics: "Covetousness"

Description

In this sermon, Dr. Stephen Jones addresses the sin of covetousness, which he believes is prevalent in our society. He emphasizes the importance of contentment and godliness, stating that these qualities bring great gain. Dr. Jones shares personal experiences that highlight the excessive consumerism and materialism in our culture. He also references a mission trip to Mexico, where he witnessed the stark contrast between the living conditions of the people there and the abundance of consumer products in a Walmart store.

Transcript

Join us now for the chapel hour, coming to you from the campus of Bob Jones University. Today's message was preached during a Sunday morning worship service held on the university campus. Following the reading of the scripture from 1 Timothy chapter 6, verses 6 through 12, our speaker will be the university president, Dr. Stephen Jones.

The title of his message is Covetousness, the sin of our time. Just before the message that will be preached by our president, Dr. Stephen Jones, Dr. Jones has asked that we turn our attention to 1 Timothy chapter 6, 1 Timothy chapter 6, verses 6 through 12. 1 Timothy 6, verses 6 through 12 for our scripture reading this morning.

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.

But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

Fight the good fight of faith. Lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called and has professed a good profession before many witnesses. If ever I love thee, my Jesus is now.

I've sung that song, heard that song, enjoyed that song, and thought that song was true. And from my heart thought, yes, I can identify with that. I love you, Lord, more than I have before.

But really, as they were singing, I was reminded what the Lord has done in my own heart in preparing for this message. Much of the time that I was saying that and thinking that with all sincerity, I actually had idols in my heart that were preventing me from loving Christ as I ought. And that's the burden this morning, something the Lord has been leading me to for some time.

And if you would, we'll start in Genesis chapter two. Yes, I realize that's different from either passage you've heard read so far, but there will be a number of passages that I'll ask you to turn to this morning because I want you to see what I have seen, that this is a theme that goes throughout scripture, though it is not a theme that is preached on as much as it needs to be in American culture. Just a moment.

We'll look at Genesis chapter two. Well, let me share one of the experiences that kind of highlighted this for me this Christmas. Right after you all left about a week after you left, we loaded up our van to go up to Illinois to my wife's parents house to spend a week up there, have a good time with all of her family had come back with their spouses and children.

It was packed. It was loud. It was fun.

It was tiring. It was all of those things. And then we went straight from there to Colorado.

And now we have a van that doesn't have four wheel drive. We were renting a place out in Colorado where my whole family, again, going to be loud and packed and fun and tiring with my family out in Colorado. But we didn't know what we're going to face.

So we needed to rent an SUV. I found a good bargain online and rented a midsize Ford expedition. And then after having packed the van in Illinois and unpacked the van in Illinois and then hit all the after Christmas sales in Illinois, I started thinking the night before I was supposed to pick up this rental vehicle, I was thinking we're not going to fit.

There is no way to get two car seats, three children, plus all of that stuff in that midsize expedition. So I started praying, Lord, you know how much we have. And if it's your will, it'd be nice if they offered us something bigger for the same price.

And I would even take it as high as gas prices are right now. The next one I walked to the counter and the girl said, well, we have a Ford excursion for you and we'll charge you the same price. And I said, thank you.

I'll take it. I was glad I had about 11 more inches of cargo space behind the third row of seats to use. So went out with great confidence, took all of our bags of clothing.

And since we were skiing, we had several extra bags of clothing with all those puffy things that you have to wear to ski in. And then took the pack and play, the walker, the child seat, the car seats, the portable DVD to keep everything peaceful in the car as long as possible. All those necessities of life.

And had a hard time shutting the back end of the excursion. It took probably two hours to load up that thing. And to fit it was quite a work and was not good for my sanctification.

And it was in that mode of really being peeved with everything that we had that it hit me all of a sudden. You know what? We wouldn't have this problem if we lived in India because we wouldn't have this much stuff. And that kind of kept with me the rest of the vacation, because everywhere we were going, we were being troubled by the mounds of stuff we have.

And we didn't have anything really extraneous. We had what we thought was necessity for the trip, for the different occasions and the different activities we were going to engage in. We had just that.

But it was too much. And then came home to unload that into our closets that had stuff still waiting and realized how much we have. Back in 1995, an author named Richard Swenson wrote, At last count, there were about 210 countries in the world.

Every year, Americans spend more on trash bags than the gross domestic product of 90 of those countries. We spend more on things to hold the stuff we're throwing away as junk. The 90 countries produce in a year.

Last weekend was out in New Mexico with a pastor. We were talking about a mission trip that was coming up going to Mexico. He had just talked about their previous trip down there and how startled he was by the conditions in which people lived.

And we walked into a super Walmart and walked in at one end and looked to the other end and was hit probably just because of the juxtaposition of those two conversations was hit with the fact that I was looking at more consumer products than most people in the world will see in a lifetime. And yet still, we walk in there and wish for more and better and newer. There was a book written by secular authors a couple of years ago called Affluenza.

Affluenza. They say this. Since World War II, Americans have been engaged in a spending binge unprecedented in history and fueled to a frenzy by the booming economy of the past several years.

We now spend nearly \$6 trillion a year, more than \$21,000 per person, most of it on consumer goods, which account for two-thirds of the recent growth in the U.S. economy. For example, we spend more on shoes, jewelry and watches, about \$80 billion a year than on higher education. About \$65 billion a year.

In the age of Affluenza, they say shopping centers have supplanted churches as a symbol of our cultural values. In fact, 70 percent of us visit malls weekly, and that is 30 percent more than attend houses of worship. And what we're dealing with this morning, I'm not lambasting American culture.

I'm lambasting the sin that we take part in. It's fed by our culture. And we are dealing with what is really the primal, the original sin on this earth.

It is also the first sin mentioned when the children of Israel went into the Promised Land. And it is one of the first sins highlighted in the account of the early church in Acts chapter seven. It's addressed there and numerous other times throughout the Bible.

And yet, as many times as it's mentioned, and as tightly as this sin is entwined with our human nature, C.H. Spurgeon in the 19th century admitted that in all of his years hearing people confess their sins, he

never once heard anyone confess this sin of covetousness. This is probably the sin of our time and the sin of American church. And American church goes.

Now, the Hebrew word translated covet. It's actually used both positively and negatively in the Old Testament and its synonyms in the Greek and the New Testament are used both positively and negatively. Let's look at Genesis for both a positive and a negative in Genesis chapter two, verse nine, probably where you are.

Genesis chapter two, verse nine. It says out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life also in the midst of the garden and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

This is a positive mention of it. The word there pleasant to the site. That's the Hebrew root that elsewhere is translated by the English to covet.

It is saying that God put there in that place every tree that is desirable or covetable. He gave them in the garden everything the hearts could want. He gave them things that were good to covet and desire.

Everything they could covet and desire. But negatively, it's used as well, probably just across the page in Genesis chapter three, verse six, we find the same Hebrew word. Speaking of Eve, it says, and when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and it was pleasant to the eyes and the tree to be desired to make one wise, she took up the fruit thereof and did eat.

And he also to her husband with her. And he did eat the word pleasant again in the phrase pleasant to the eyes in Genesis three, six is the same Hebrew word. When Eve saw that that thing, that tree was covetable, that it was desirable, she coveted it and she took it and she ate it.

Scripture is clear here that the first sin on Earth was not the sin of taking and eating. It was the heart indulgence of covetousness that she saw it and she wanted it. Even more than she wanted to obey her God who had told her no.

The sin of covetousness. The primal sin, the original sin on this Earth. Covetousness is desiring something not allowed like what Eve did or is desiring something that is acceptable, that's fine, it's not inherently wrong in itself, it's not out of bounds scripturally in and of itself, but desiring those acceptable things in a way that reaches beyond what is acceptable to an inordinate degree, wanting that or desiring what belongs to another in a way which is inconsistent with the command thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself or discontent with what God in his providence has allotted to you and me.

That's covetousness and it is rank before God and it is all too often present in our hearts. Look over at Exodus chapter 20 with me. Exodus 20, the first recitation in the Pentateuch of the Ten Commandments and the command that we should not covet is the Tenth Commandment.

Exodus chapter 20 verse 17 where Moses records God's giving of that Tenth Commandment. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

Now, it's been said at times that this Tenth Commandment probably means wanting something in a way that you're willing to take it without permission. But you know what? If so, then we've got a redundant commandment number eight, because that's the one that says thou shalt not steal. That taking without

permission, that taking what's unguarded or not offered or given, that's already been addressed.

This is not talking about the action. It's talking about the heart attitude, the desire within that becomes the motive for acts like theft or adultery or even murder, which breaks the eighth, the seventh and the sixth commandment in that order. But it's even more clear if you look over in Deuteronomy at the next statement of the Ten Commandments, Deuteronomy chapter five.

Deuteronomy chapter five. Look at verse 21. It's even more clear that we're talking not about an action, but an attitude that the law of God's concern reaches beyond what we do or even what we say to what we think and what we desire, what motivates us.

Look at Deuteronomy 5:21. Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbor's wife. Neither shalt thou covet thy neighbor's house, his field or his manservant or his maidservant, his ox or his ass or anything that is thy neighbor's.

Now, why have I read you two verses that are basically the same? There's a difference here in the English. You see, in verse 21, neither shalt thou desire thy neighbor's wife. And then it goes down and says neither shalt thou covet thy neighbor's house.

It's using two different English words, and that's on purpose, because really, there are two different Hebrew words here. Two different Hebrew words. There's the one that was used twice in Exodus chapter 20.

And then there's another one that Moses has added here under inspiration. Moses isn't just freewheeling with God's words. God is filling his mouth.

And Moses is saying under inspiration that these two things are the same. And the second word means a craving, a desiring. It points out the fact that it is all on the internal.

It's all on what's motivating and driving. And Paul in Romans chapter seven, verse seven refers to both of these verses, and he gives us yet another synonym for covetousness. And Paul, in the last half of that verse, says I had not known lust except the law had said thou shalt not covet.

Those are synonyms. Covetousness, it is the lust, the desire, the craving, the unbridled wish, hunger for more of what I do have or that which I don't have that ultimately makes me dissatisfied with all that God has given. I want to look very briefly at God at our responsibility regarding covetousness.

First, look at chapter five of Deuteronomy, where you are. Verse one, Deuteronomy five, verse one, where it sets the stage for everything that we've just read. And Moses called all Israel and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them and keep and do them.

Here, Moses calls all the congregation or at least the adult congregation of the children of Israel together. And he says, everything that I'm about to do, Israel, hear this. He says, Hear, O Israel, get this.

Regard, understand. And then he says, these things which I speak in your ears this day, that you may learn them and keep them and do them. It's an individual endeavor that nobody has a right to excuse himself or herself and say that doesn't apply to me.

Yes, it does. Everything that he says in the Ten Commandments, everything that he gives from the law of God is to be kept by every individual. And it is their responsibility to know it, to remember it and to follow it.

It's an individual responsibility. It was in the Old Testament. And it is for each of us today.

It's an individual endeavor, but it's also an important endeavor. Why am I just picking on one sin that's really not that consequential? See what Scripture says, because Scripture's view is very clear that covetousness is a grave sin. In fact, it's classified under the most with the most heinous of sins mentioned in the Bible.

Colossians 3, 5. Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence and covetousness, which is idolatry. Talking about lustful actions that we would all say, yes, that's wrong, that's wrong. And there's this one that doesn't seem to fit covetousness.

Lumped right in there with the most heinous and gross of sins. And so you can see it with me. Turn over to First Corinthians chapter six.

First Corinthians chapter six, looking at the importance of this endeavor of fighting, resisting, repenting of covetousness, the importance of it, because it is a grave sin. First Corinthians chapter six, beginning at verse nine. Paul says, Know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God.

And such were some of you. But you're washed, but you're sanctified, but you're justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the spirit of our God in this list of all these sins, the grossest of sins, the most frequently denounced of sins appears again covetousness. And it is said of the person who's driven and habitually lives in covetousness that that person shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

It's a sin that brings the judgment of God and the damnation of the sinner if there is not turning from that sin. But what is covetousness to dissect it? First of all, it's dissatisfaction. Dissatisfaction with our circumstances.

Lord, I don't have enough or Lord, my situation isn't appealing enough or I'm not comfortable enough or our house is not big enough or my life isn't easy enough. Dissatisfaction with our circumstances, dissatisfaction with our possessions. Lord, this car isn't good enough.

This house isn't big enough. My bank account isn't full enough. My clothes aren't good enough or stylish enough.

Dissatisfaction first and dissatisfaction with those things at its root is dissatisfaction with what is dissatisfaction with God, who is the one who gave all of those things that we're turning away from and scorning and saying it's not enough. It's not what's best. At its root, covetousness shows dissatisfaction with God, his person, his goodness, his sovereignty, his right to choose the way for us.

As we sang, it's dissatisfaction, but it's a desire as well. I'm going to give you a number of references. I want you to perhaps write them down, but listen to the categories.

What does covetousness cover? What are things that we tend to covet and the scripture denounce using the words, the Hebrew word in Deuteronomy chapter five. Where else does that appear in the Old Testament that gives us a category of things that we're not to covet? First of all, we're not to covet persons or possessions. That one's dealt with directly in Deuteronomy 5.21. The wife, the house, the field, the servants, the livestock, that we can covet those persons or possessions.

Covetousness is when you and I say, I don't think I can live without her. Or I don't think I can live without him. I have a craving.

I have a desire. I have this need to grasp, to take, to have that person, whether or not it's God's will. Or I don't think I can live without that, that thing, that salary, that promotion, that house in that suburb.

That's covetousness and it's forbidden in scripture. It's a desire for persons or possessions. It's a desire for luxuries or wealth.

Joshua 7, 20 and 21. You know the story about Achan. Let me read you verses 20 and 21.

And Achan answered Joshua and said, Indeed, I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel. And thus and thus have I done when I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment and 200 shekels of silver and a wedge of gold, a 50 shekels weight. Then I coveted them.

He uses that Hebrew word and took them. Behold, they are hid in the midst of my tent and the silver under it. It's the desire for things one esteems highly as being desirable or things to prize or things that set you in a class above or things that you can consume, luxuries or wealth, things you want a part of and you're craving it.

I want that life that that amount of wealth can bring. It's also a desire for sexual involvement. Proverbs 6, 23 through 25.

Those verses say for the commandment is a lamp and the law is light and reproofs of instruction are the way of life to keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman. Lust not after her beauty in thine heart. Neither let her take thee with her eyelids.

That word lust is the Hebrew word covet. Don't covet her beauty. Don't covet the sensual fulfillment that she is promising visually.

Don't covet that sexual involvement, that burning, craving desire to fulfill the lust of your flesh. That's covetousness to take something that God has not given you at this point from someone who is not your one spouse for a lifetime. That's covetousness.

And we're also not to desire the lifestyle of the wicked using the same Hebrew word again. Proverbs 24, 1. Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them. Desire for their lifestyle.

Wishing you could live like that. Could live like those who are unrestrained, who are unfettered, who can indulge whatever they want in whatever they want. And you want to do that.

You wish you could. Obsessed with the lifestyle of the wicked. Perhaps you watch the entertainment news about whatever celebrity is the flavor of the year.

And you look at that and you crave it and say, I wish I could be that attention grabbing or have a wardrobe like that or drive a car like that or live without restraint like that. That craving in you. And yes, I've had it too in me.

That's covetousness. And God considers it among the worst of sins. Those are the things that we desire, the categories of covetousness using that same Hebrew word.

But you know what? It's also a gross sin because it's the root of so many other sins. It's the root of so many other sins. I'll just mention these.

It's the root of theft and deception. Again, Joshua 7, the situation with Achan. That covetousness was the root of his taking something that was clearly forbidden from the spoils that God had given.

And then deceiving and assembling and hiding it, pretending like it was his. Deceiving those to say, oh, no, it wasn't there by appearance. That deception sprang from his covetousness.

What else comes from covetousness? Lying. You know the story of Gehazi, the servant. Who went after Naaman the leper and said, you know what? My master has two young prophets who are coming and he said, give me some of that gold and some of those ravens you've told me.

Give me those because there are these guests coming. I want to give them to. So Naaman gives him those things and he goes back and his master says, where were you? And he said, oh, I haven't gone anywhere.

What drove the lie to Naaman? What drove the lie to his master? He wanted those things and he wanted them. He coveted them so much that he didn't care how he got them and how he kept them. He was willing to lie for them.

It's also this the root cause, the sin of murder. You read before the service began the story of Ahab and Naboth's vineyard. He coveted it like a child.

That's how strongly he wanted it. He pouted. He was dissatisfied to the point he wasn't eating where he was turned away in a fit.

And his wife, in order to satisfy that covetousness, though not directly with her hand, she sealed Naboth's death. A man who didn't deserve it. And what was the root? Ahab's covetousness is what drove the murder of Naboth.

Another sin that comes springs from the root of covetousness. Departure from the faith. You heard this read by Dr. Hankins, 1st Timothy 6, 9 through 10.

But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all or all kinds of evil, which, while some coveted after, they have earned from the faith that pierce themselves through with many arrows. Covetousness in the life of one of those who's on the fringe of Christianity.

Covetousness can sell them out to greed over truth. So that they're willing to preach whatever will bring them gain. Whether or not it's part of the true faith.

Departure from the faith springs even from covetousness. Now, what is this not? Am I just saying you're never to desire a house or a spouse or clothing? No. Clearly not.

It's not forbidden to desire those things. Those are necessities. Look over at Matthew 6. Matthew 6. Again, I don't want you to believe it just because I'm saying it.

I want you to see it in Scripture. Matthew 6. These are necessities versus 31 and 32. Therefore, take no thought saying what shall we eat or what shall we drink or wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

These things are necessities that you have enough to eat, that you have enough to drink, that you have clothing for your body. Those are needs. So what are we not to do? We're not to take thought of, to obsess about, to constantly worry and look forward and say, where's this coming from tomorrow? Because those are necessities that God knows and God will provide.

And so we're to take no thought for them, but we're not forbidden to desire them because they are essential to life, to sustaining human life. They're necessities, but they're also blessings. Listen to Deuteronomy 6, verses 10 and 11, where God is telling them, Moses is telling them what they'll find in the land.

And he says, it shall be when the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land, which he is swearing to thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildest not, and houses full of all good things, which thou fillest not, and wells digged, which thou diggest not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantest not. He goes on with this list of all of these things that they're going to walk in and find all of these things ready made for them, left for them by the pagans who were the previous owners. And in that list, there was mention of house and vineyards, land, property.

Those are things that were mentioned in Deuteronomy 5.21, that you're not to covet your neighbors. Why aren't you to covet your neighbors? Because God has provided what is supposed to be yours. He has given you what you need.

He has given me my assignment, what I need. And so we're not supposed to look beyond our boundaries, beyond our possessions to the things of others and say, you know what? I want that one too. And I want that.

And I want more of this because God has given in his blessings all that we need. And therefore we're not to covet that of others. Richard Baxter, a Puritan preacher, in one of his messages, he dealt with the sin of covetousness.

And he highlighted 21 signs of covetousness. How can you know that you've been snared by the sin of covetousness? How can I know? He gives 21. I'm not going to give you all 21, especially because the Puritans, as you know, not very much is short.

But let me give you just a few excerpts from his 21. And look at this. Are you in any of these? Have you been snared by covetousness? Covetousness is desiring more than is needful or useful to further us in our duty.

Desiring more than we need for what God has given us to do today. Covetousness is an inordinate eagerness in our desires after earthly things, inordinate desire that we're focused on this earth, that it's the

focus of our attention. What's driving us? Covetousness, he says, is when our thoughts of worldly plenty are more pleasant and sweet to us than our thoughts of Christ and grace and heaven.

Do you think more happily about the things that you want? Do you think more frequently and passionately about those things than you think about Jesus Christ? Do those things cross your mind more each day than knowing God and serving Him and loving Him? That's covetousness. Covetousness, he mentions, is when our speech is freer and sweeter about prosperity in the world than about the concerns of God in our souls. What do you talk about more? Your Xbox 360? Your wardrobe? Your car? Or your Christ? What fills our conversation more? He says covetousness is when we can see our brother have need and shut up the bowels of our compassion or can part with no more than the superfluities for his relief.

When we see a Christian who needs something and we're not willing to part with anything we have because we're holding it as tightly as we can. Or if we give, we just give really what we didn't want anyway. Taking to the mission barrel the things that you were going to throw away anyway.

Covetousness, when we will venture upon sinful means for gain as lying, overreaching, deceiving, flattering, or going against our consciences or the commands of God. If you're willing to do anything that goes beyond what God has said or to reach for something that is beyond what God has said, you're driven by covetousness. When the riches which we have are used but for the pampering of our flesh and nothing but some inconsiderable crumbs or dribbles are employed for God and his service, that's when we're coveting.

When what we have is used to give us more of what we want and isn't employed at all to further the work, the kingdom of God, then we know that we've been snared. Our foot has been caught by covetousness. It's a matter of priority.

What takes first place? What things are having primacy? Those things? Or are you seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness? Covetousness, it's idolatry. Colossians 3, 5 says. Ephesians chapter 5, verse 5 says the same thing.

For this you know, that no whoremonger nor unclean person nor covetous man who is an idolater hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. You know what this is saying? If you place supreme value on something, if you're always looking for what's next, what I want, my next purchase, my next upgrade, my next move. If you're constantly focusing on that and placing supreme value on that, it is your God.

And you can't sing, if ever I love thee, my Jesus is now. Because there's an idol that you love more and that I love more. And we have broken the 10th commandment and we have also broken the first commandment.

That we are to have no other gods beside him. We have an idol in our heart. Now what do you do if you've been snared? There's replacement of covetousness.

Because you know what the Bible says? It says you can covet, you can desire, you can long for, you can crave right things. Covet right things. First, God's Word.

We reiterate a verse that you heard Dr. Hankins preach about several weeks ago. Psalm 19, 9 and 10. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever.

The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous all together. More to be desired. There's the Hebrew word again.

More to be desired or coveted. It's the law of God. Adherence to his law.

Knowing his law. Those are more to be coveted than gold. Yea, than much fine gold.

Sweeter also than honey and honeycomb. What's better than the luxuries that you're fixated on? God and his Word. Covet those things.

Pursue, think about, speak of, revel in, crave those things. What else should you covet? What else should I covet? Knowing Christ. Philippians 3, 7 and 8. But what things were gained to me, those I counted lost for Christ? Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but lost for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and who count them but dung, that I may win Christ.

All of those things are inferior. They don't deserve to be your God. The riches you have in Christ are infinitely superior to anything that you can get from him.

Know him. Pursue him. Covet.

Crave knowing Christ. So covet the right things. Replace that covetousness of wrong with covetousness of the right things.

And then second, contentment with the present things. Are you always looking at your next acquisition? Are you never satisfied with the current state of your wardrobe or your situation? Replace that dissatisfaction with contentment. Contentment with your circumstances.

Philippians 4, 11. Not that I speak in respect of want, for I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith, in that moment, in that situation, to be content. Content with possessions.

1 Timothy 6, 8. And having food and raiment. Let us be there with content. Contentment with all of God's provisions.

Both the circumstances and the possessions. Came across this quotation. He who prays, give us this day our daily bread, has no right to be dissatisfied with the heavenly Father's giving.

Have you prayed, give me this day my daily bread? If so, then you've got it. He will provide you what you need today. So you don't need to be dissatisfied with it.

It is wrong ingrateful and covetousness to be dissatisfied with it and to want more than what you have. In conclusion, there was a newsletter, August 14th, 2001, that gave an interesting perspective on our society. If the global population was only a hundred people, if that's all that lived on this globe, and if they all lived in one neighborhood, they take a snapshot and said, here's what your neighborhood would look like if you're one of those hundred.

57 of your neighbors, 57 people in that neighborhood would be from Asia. 21 of them would be from Europe. Just 14 from North and South America, eight from Africa.

Only 30 would be whites and 70 would be non-white. 70 would be non-Christians. Only 30 would be Christians.

Of that hundred, 59% of the wealth of all of them would be held by six. And all six would be Americans. 80 would be living in substandard housing.

70 would be illiterate. 50 would be malnourished. One would be near death.

Only one would be college educated and one would own a computer. Now, folks, does that spear you with conviction? Because you and I, since we're living in this country, we're college educated. Most of us, I would dare say, have a computer.

We would be the one. You know what? You and I already have wealth beyond what most people in this world can even begin to imagine. We have it.

So why do we want more and better and newer? We have more than heart could wish. And we're to be content, not dissatisfied. Have you ever considered why God placed you in the USA? You could have been born in one of more than 200 countries.

Why did God plant you here? He could have done differently. Why are you here? Is it to indulge? To spend on the comforts of your own life? Is that why He put you here? So you could indulge yourself. Did He put you here to accumulate for yourself? To enjoy for yourself? Did He put you there for that here for that reason? No.

Why did He? I had to come to some of my own conclusions. You'll have to come to some of yours. I believe the Lord put me here in America because my duty as a believer is to warn America, to warn the unsaved, to warn carnal Christians about spiritual reality, about what God says.

And I can do that as an American better than some foreign missionary could coming in and saying it. That's why I'm here. To warn them.

That's what I must be about. And also, I am here in a land of wealth beyond imagination. That what I earn, whatever God gives me, whatever my daily bread is, what position He puts me in, what salary He gives me, whatever it is, which is still beyond what the majority of the world has, I can take that not to satisfy myself, but to support the work of God, the gospel cause, both in the USA and in other lands where incomes are far tinier and the environment far darker.

Not for myself, but to use those things God has given for eternal value. So how have you been living? Where are your desires running this morning? If those desires are running to anything more frequently or more passionately and devotedly than those thoughts run to God, the idolatry of covetousness is set into your heart as it set into mine. Deal with it.

Confess it. Place God back where He belongs. As the desire, the craving of your heart and replace those inordinate desires with righteous desires for Him and for His word, and then be content with such things as you have.

If you would please bow your heads and close your eyes. Where you're sitting this morning, covetousness is a sin of the heart. I'm just going to ask you where you are to deal with it in your heart.

If you would say this morning, the Lord has convicted me, I am a covetous person. I didn't realize how odious that sin was before God. I didn't realize how saturated I was with it.

I didn't realize how snared I was. The Lord's convicted me of the idolatry, the covetousness of my heart. I'm saying, Lord, yes, you convicted me of it.

Lord, I respond, forgive me. Lord, take back first place. Be my God.

You're more satisfying than those things I was chasing after. Lord, make me content. You would say the Lord's convicted me as a believer today, but I'm covetousness and I'm asking right now, I'm dealing with it in my heart.

Lord, forgive me. Lord, help me to replace those inordinate desires with righteous desires. If that's the work the Lord's done in your heart, would just slip up your hand while nobody's looking.

The Lord's convicted me. I'm a covetous person. I'm saying, Lord, forgive me for this sin.

Thank you. Can just put them up and then straight back down. Anyone else? I'm a Christian.

Thank you. The Lord's pointed out I'm covetous. I'm saying, Lord, forgive me.

Lord, take back the throne of my life. Heavenly Father, we know that Jesus Christ said the greatest commandment is to love you with all of our heart and soul and mind. And many of us would have to admit today that we have not been loving you with all of ourselves because we've been loving other things and coveting.

Thank you for those who've indicated that you've dealt in their heart in that way. And Lord, who are now asking you to forgive them and turn them and help them to replace covetousness with desire for you. And contentment.

Father, do that work in our hearts, we pray. We have no idea how much more effective we might be as believers as you root out the sin from our heart. And take back the throne as the God of our life.

And then use us to glorify you as God with all of our heart and soul and mind. You've been listening to the chapel hour coming to you from the campus of Bob Jones University. Our speaker was Dr. Stephen Jones, president of BJU.

For a cassette or compact disc copy of today's message, send a check for \$6 to Campus Store, Bob Jones University, Greenville, South Carolina 29614. Be sure to mention the name of the speaker and today's date. The chapel hour has been sponsored by Bob Jones University.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/16/SID16112.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/stephen-jones/covetousness-the-sin-of-our-time/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net