

Of Examination of a Man's Self About Covetousness

by William Gouge

William Gouge's sermon emphasizes the importance of self-examination to uncover and combat the pervasive sin of covetousness in the Christian life.

Scripture: Psalm 119:36

Topics: "Covetousness", "Self Examination"

Description

William Gouge preaches about the sin of covetousness, emphasizing the importance for every Christian to examine themselves to see how deeply it has taken root in their hearts. He highlights that covetousness is an inward desire that can be deceiving, often masked under seemingly harmless qualities like prudence or thriftiness. Gouge warns that if left unchecked, covetousness can consume and destroy like thorns choking the soil or like the accursed thing brought into the camp of the Israelites by Achan.

Transcript

Covetousness being such a sin, as hath been declared, in the nature, practice, and heinousness of it, it nearly concerns every Christian to consider how far it hath seized on him, and how guilty he stands thereof. This duty lieth on every one in these especial respects:

1. Covetousness doth especially consist in the inward desire of a man, which is best known to himself. A man's desire is one of the things of a man which no man knoweth, 'save the spirit of man which is in him,' 1 Cor. ii. 11.
2. It is so hereditary a disease, as no man is altogether free from it. It will in some degree or other be found in the best, if they thoroughly sift themselves. Certainly he found himself addicted thereto who thus prayed to God, 'Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness,' Ps. cxix. 36; yet he was 'a man after God's own heart,' Acts xiii. 22.
3. It is so deceiving a sin, covering itself under the veil of prudence, providence, good husbandry, thriftiness, harmlessness, and sundry other presences, as if it be not thoroughly examined, it will hardly be discerned.

4. It is so eating, fretting, and consuming a sin, as if it be not searched out, but suffered to lurk and grow, it may prove like the thorns which soak out the heart of the earth, and make the seed fruitless, Mat. xiii. 22. The heart of many that frequent the word 'goeth after their covetousness,' Ezek. xxxiii. 31. This covetousness in the heart of a professor may prove like the wild gourds that were put into the pot of pottage, 2 Kings iv. 39, 40; and like that accursed thing that was by Achan brought into the camp of the Israelites, Josh. vii. 11.

5. Many, for want of thorough trying of themselves in this case, think better of themselves than there is cause. The Pharisees were covetous, yet they thought too highly of themselves, Luke xvi. 14,15, and xviii.

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