

Enemies of the Heart: Guilt, Greed, Anger, Jealousy

Lesson 2- Greed

Text for the series:

Proverbs 4:23 says, “Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.”

Quick review:

Guilt says, “I owe you.”

Anger says, “You owe me.”

Greed says, “I owe me.”

Jealousy says, “God owes me.”

1. What is greed?

When we think of a greedy person, perhaps our mind goes to the character of the miser, Ebenezer Scrooge. Maybe we think of someone who will not spend money and complains about how much things cost. The truth is that real greed is seldom on display like that. It’s much more subtle.

A. Those who struggle with the enemy of greed have a sense of entitlement. They believe that they deserve every good thing that comes their way. Just like those who struggle with anger, jealousy and guilt, they too have story in their background that causes them to *put their trust in things*.

B. It’s easy to understand why people who once lost everything would cling to what they have now. But it’s not as simple as that. Some people are frugal, some just save, some hate to waste. All of these are good virtues. **The person who becomes greed is a person who trusts things more than they trust God. Before long, the things in their life become more important than their relationships. They insult people to protect things.**

C. Here are a few signs that you may be struggling with greed:

- Greedy people talk a lot and worry a lot about money.
- Greedy people are not cheerful givers.
- Greedy people are reluctant to share.
- Greedy people are poor losers.
- Greedy people quibble over insignificant sums of money.

- Greedy people talk as if they have just enough to get by.
- Greedy people often create a culture of secrecy around them.
- Greedy people won't let you forget what they've done for you.
- Greedy people are reluctant to express gratitude.
- Greedy people aren't content with what they have.
- Greedy people attempt to control people.
- Greedy people are self centered – they think of themselves before they think of others.
- Greedy people have a sense of entitlement.
- Greedy people do what's best for them first and then others.
- Greedy people get upset with others handle their “stuff.”

Illust - YOU BE JESUS! A mother was preparing pancakes for her sons, Kevin, 5, and Ryan, 3. The boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake. Their mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson. "If Jesus were sitting here, He would say, 'Let my brother have the first pancake; I can wait.'" Kevin turned to his younger brother and said, "Okay; Ryan, you be Jesus!"

D. Greed knows no socioeconomic boundaries. There are greedy poor people and greedy rich people. Greed isn't a financial issue; it's a heart issue. Financial gain doesn't make greedy people less greedy. Financial gain or loss doesn't change anything, because greed emanates from the heart.

E. Greed is the feeling that you deserve “certain rights” and “things” because of what you've been through and before long you become so attached to “your rights” and “your things” until it begins to effect every relationship in your life. Before long you start living life self-centeredly and those around your “pay” for it.

F. Fear is the driving force behind greed. Fear fuels greed. *People with greed lodged in their heart fear that God either can't or won't take care of them.*

1. So greedy people shoulder the burden to acquire and maintain everything they need to provide the sense of security they desire. **But therein lies the problem: There's never enough. Greedy people can never have enough to satisfy their need to feel secure.**

G. Consequently, greedy people are rarely at peace with others and never at peace with themselves. Greed eventually strains their relationships at every level, eroding long-term relationships over stuff.

H. The issue of control. The person whose heart is coated with greed **believes he has earned** the good things that have come his way and, therefore, is determined to **control his possessions** and wealth the way he sees fit. Greedy people have a supersized sense of ownership and self centeredness.

I. The fear factor.

Greed is fueled by fear. Once you peel back all the excuses and the endless “But what if ...?” scenarios, you discover a heart full of fear. **Specifically, this person fears that God either can't or won't take care of him.** And if God won't, then who will?

2. What does the Bible say about Greed?

Jesus had something blunt to say on the on the topic of greed.

Luke 12: 15-21 (Message)

15 Speaking to the people, he went on, "Take care! Protect yourself against the least bit of greed. Life is not defined by what you have, even when you have a lot." 16 Then he told them this story: "The farm of a certain rich man produced a terrific crop. 17 He talked to himself: 'What can I do? My barn isn't big enough for this harvest.' 18 Then he said, 'Here's what I'll do: I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. Then I'll gather in all my grain and goods, 19 and I'll say to myself, Self, you've done well! You've got it made and can now retire. Take it easy and have the time of your life!' 20" Just then God showed up and said, 'Fool! Tonight you die. And your barnful of goods—who gets it?' 21 That's what happens when you fill your barn with Self and not with God.

A. Life is not defined by your possessions.

Jesus goes on to uncover the lie that fuels all greed: “Life is not defined by

what you have, even if you have a lot.”

B. Why do I have an abundance?

But the greedy man or woman doesn't see the world “that way—what comes their way does so because they've earned it. And since this landowner believes he has earned this abundance, **he never considers the notion that God might have had anything to do with it.** When I come into a little extra, I think, Lucky me! Like the landowner in the parable, I can always come up with a plan for the extra. **And I generally assume it's meant for me.**

C. The land owners solution was to hoard it for himself.

Luke 12:18–19

Then he said, “This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. And I'll say to myself, ‘You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.’

D. The issue of trusting God for stuff and for life

He'll die sometime in the night. He's about to learn the hard way that his life is not equivalent to the amount of his possessions. He will run out of time before he runs out of stuff. God said to him, **“You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself? Someone else will end up with everything he has “earned” and consequently “deserved” and therefore stored up. He could have had an eternal reward, or done something good with his life, but he lived his life for himself.**

E. Jesus closes his parable with a stern warning: **That's what happens when you fill your barn with Self and not with God.**

Luke 12:21 NIV

This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.

**F. Here's a question we all need to ask ourselves from time to time:
Why do I have so much?**

1. Chances are, it's **more than your parents had at your age.**
Perhaps it's considerably more than **most people in the world.**
So why do you have so much?
2. Because a consumer-driven culture keeps us laser-focused on what we don't have, and focusing on what we don't have leaves our hearts vulnerable to greed. As long as we're on a quest for more, then we will never have enough. There is never enough stuff to satisfy the quest for more. Just one more.....car, house, vacation, etc....

3. How do we Confront Greed and it's need to Control?

A. Self centered verses selfish, what is the difference?

Some people do not consider themselves self-centered, because they are not selfish. Selfishness means you can't share or give to others. Self-centeredness means, you can give, but you have to control it. As a matter of fact you have to control everything in your life in order to feel safe. Greed is fueled by the fear that you have to take care of yourself because no one else will. When a self-centered person is confronted with any given situation, their first thought is always, "how will this affect me." Their choices are often what is best for them, even if it's not best for others. They fool themselves into thinking they are looking out for others when in reality, they are controlling their circumstances to protect themselves.

B. The solution to conquer greed is GIVING LIVING.

GIVING conquers the FEAR that is FEEDING YOUR GREED - Will God take care of me, or do I have to take care of myself?

Illust – The bait stick.

1. We have to open our hand in order to open our heart.
Our giving must impact our lifestyle if it's going to break the power of greed. The best way to do that is to become a percentage giver. That one act alone turns my FEAR into FAITH. It says, I don't care if I earn a little or a lot, I'm still trusting God to take care of me.

C. But it's not just about money, its about giving up your right to be self-centered. When you give up the need to protect yourself, it allows you to trust God to protect you. Once again, you are turning

your fear into faith.

1. When I'm tempted to be upset or worried, or when I lose my joy, the first thing I ask myself is, "What am I focused on?" Nine times out of ten I'm thinking about me. When we get all caught up in "me," it's a formula for depression and discouragement. We must learn to get our focus of life off of ourselves.

D. The ultimate test that I have conquered greed – I MUST GIVE SOMETHING AWAY!

1. The Old Testament teaches, when you feed the hungry, when you clothe the naked, when you encourage the oppressed, then your life is going to break forth like the dawn and your healing is going to come.
2. In other words, when you reach out to hurting people, that's when God is going to make sure your needs are supplied. When you focus on being a blessing, God makes sure that you are always blessed in abundance.
3. We should concentrate more on being a blessing than trying to be blessed. We need to look for opportunities to share God's love, His gifts, and His goodness with others. The more you help others, the more God will make sure that you are helped.
4. Let's get practical. If you have things lying around your house or in storage that you are never going to use again, why not give those things away to someone who could use them? Those extra things aren't doing you any good stacked in your attic, basement, if it's not meeting a need, turn it into a seed!
5. How about you? Are you so focused on getting what you want, or what you think you need, or can you hear that still small voice when God tells you to bless others?
 - a. What can I give? You can give a smile. You can give a hug. You can mow somebody's lawn. You can bake somebody a cake. You can visit someone in the hospital or in a senior citizens' center. You can write somebody an encouraging letter. Somebody needs what you have to share. Somebody needs your smile. Somebody needs your love. Somebody needs your friendship. Somebody needs your encouragement.