

COVETOUSNESS

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To covet is to wish for enviously. It is to desire what belongs to another inordinately (immoderately, excessively) or culpably (blame worthy). It is to feel inordinate desire for what belongs to another.

Covetous is marked by inordinate desire for wealth or possessions or for another's possessions. It is having craving for possession.

Covetous is synonymous to GREEDY, ACQUISITIVE, GRASPING and AVARICIOUS

“**COVETOUS** mean having or showing strong desire for material possessions; **GREEDY** stresses lack of restraint and often of discriminating in desire; **ACQUISITIVE** implies both eagerness to possess and ability to acquire and keep; **GRASPING** adds to **COVETOUS** and **GREEDY** an implication of selfishness and often suggest unfair or ruthless means; **AVARICIOUS** implies obsessive acquisitiveness especially of money and strongly suggest stinginess” (Webster 9th Colligate Dictionary).

Covetousness is a desire that comes from the inside of man.

Deut 5:21

21 "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife. You shall not set your desire on your neighbor's house or land, his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

NIV

Mark 7:20-23

20 He went on: "What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.' 21 For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, 22 greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. 23 All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.'"

NIV

Covetousness is a desire that if not checked and put out can obsess the person to covet. Covetousness is an inordinate desire for wealth and possessions or for another's possessions which includes wife, husband, money, field, house man servant, maid servant, goods and property. A Covetous person not only has or show strong desire for material possession, but manifests lack of restraint and often of discrimination in desire. He is always eager to possess whatever, he wants. And he manifests the ability to acquire and keep whatever he has acquired without letting it out, which implies selfishness and often suggests unfair or ruthless means. The covetous man is indeed a selfish and self-centered person who only thinks of what he wants and not about the interest of others. He can be ruthless, deceitful and unfair in achieving his own desire.

The covetous man is obsessed with the desire for acquisition, especially for money. Such person is very stingy - they find it difficult to give out. No crumb falls from their table. It is always "I don't have" even when it is obvious to him that the person asking for help knows that he has. He finds it difficult to give.

Giving of tithe, giving to support the work of God, giving to men of God, giving to those in need is a very difficult thing for him, because he feels he doesn't have enough, so he must get more and not give out.

Eccl 5:10

10 Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. This too is meaningless.

NIV

Prov 22:9

9 A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor.

NIV

Covetousness is love of money in manifestation. It is not only rich people who covet, poor people also covet. Some people are lovers of money and stingy. They are misers. A lover of money will do anything to make money and keep what he has to himself. The Bible says,

1 Tim 6:10

10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

NIV

The covetous man is always envious of others who have what he does not have. When you enviously desire what belongs to another e.g. clothes, shoes, etc. you are manifesting covetousness. If that desire is not put out immediately, you will see yourself coveting them.

If you are the type that doesn't like tithing and giving, you are covetous. If you are the type that gives grudgingly each time you give, you are covetous. Covetousness is idolatry.

Col 3:5

5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

NKJV

It is idolatry in the sense that the object of covetousness is so strong in the heart of the individual, that God's word doesn't mean anything to him. As far as he is concerned only money or whatever he is coveting that is important. It has become an idol (another god) in his heart. Anything you cherish so much that you are willing to set aside the word of

God to do it or have it is an idol. Anything in your life that will not allow you to obey of God is an idol. Covetousness is idolatry. Your inability to give and tithe is a proof that money is an idol in your life. Giving is a proof that money is not an idol in your life.

Covetousness can lead one to many other sins, or rather one who covets commits other sins that are closely aligned to covetousness. One who is covetous is wicked and evil, envious of those who have what he doesn't have. He can and do deceive and lie to get what he wants. He is full of strife. He can malign and slander somebody either to get what he wants or to cover up what he has done. He is a hater and a stingy person, and full of greed. He is never content with what he has. As a result of that, he is unthankful and ungrateful.

He can be ruthless and heartless. He invents evil ways of possessing what he wants. He can steal, and falsely accuse another to possess what he wants or cover up what he has done. He is disobedient to the word of God; and might be a hater of God. He is inhuman in possessing another's property. He can and sometimes is proud and arrogant. He is a lover of self and selfish too. He is a lover of money and pleasure. He can be an adulterer and fornicator

Rom 1:28-32

28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, 30 backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; 32 who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

NKJV

2 Tim 3:1-7

3:1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! 6 For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, 7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

NKJV

Covetousness is a bundle of iniquity. That is why the Bible calls it idolatry.

Eph 5:5

5 For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

NKJV

Col 3:5

5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

NKJV

The degree of manifestation of covetousness varies from person to person.

GOD'S RESPONSE TO COVETOUSNESS

1. God commands us not to covet because he hates it and because it is a wrong done to another thereby putting the person into suffering, difficulty and shame.

Ex 20:17

17 "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."

NKJV

Deut 5:21

21'You shall not covet your neighbor's wife; and you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, his manservant, his maidservant, his ox, his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.'

NKJV

2. God's anger and punishment against covetousness is severe. The covetous has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God

Eph 5:5

5 For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

NKJV

He is given over to his depraved mind to continue in his wickedness awaiting God's judgment.

Rom 1:28-32

28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, 30 backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; 32 who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them

NKJV

Mic 2:1-11

:1 Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand. 2 And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage. 3 Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, against this family do I devise an evil, from which ye shall not remove your necks; neither shall ye go haughtily: for this time is evil. 4 In that day shall one take up a parable against you, and lament with a doleful lamentation, and say, We be utterly spoiled: he hath changed the portion of my people: how hath he removed it from me! turning away he hath divided our fields. 5 Therefore thou shalt have none that shall cast a cord by lot in the congregation of the LORD. 6 Prophecy ye not, say they to them that prophesy: they shall not prophesy to them, that they shall not take shame. 7 O thou that art named the house of Jacob, is the spirit of the LORD straitened? are these his doings? do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly? 8 Even of late my people is risen up as an enemy: ye pull off the robe with the garment from them that pass by securely as men averse from war. 9 The women of my people have ye cast out from their pleasant houses; from their children have ye taken away my glory for ever. 10 Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest: because it is polluted, it shall destroy you, even with a sore destruction. 11 If a man walking in the spirit and falsehood do lie, saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink; he shall even be the prophet of this people.

KJV

Josh 7:20-26

20 And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: 21 When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it. 22 So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it. 23 And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD. 24 And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor. 25 And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones. 26 And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day.

KJV

The covetous shall be destroyed.

HOW TO OVERCOME COVETOUSNESS

1. Know what the word of God says about covetousness.

Hos 4:6

6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

KJV

Prov 4:20-23

20 My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. 21 Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. 22 For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh. 23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

KJV

2. Put every word of God you hear to practice.

Ps 119:9-11

9 Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. 10 With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. 11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

KJV

Ps 119:105

105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

KJV

3. Separate yourself from the sin of covetousness. Stop being covetous.

Prov 28:13

13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

KJV

1 John 1:9

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness

KJV

Eph 5:1-10

5:1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; 2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. 3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; 4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. 6 Let no

man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. 7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them. 8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: 9(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) 10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

KJV

4. **Beware of covetousness.** Run whenever you see it coming. When the thought to covet comes, put it out immediately. Quote relevant scriptures that will counter that thought. Rebuke the thought; give thanks to God for what he has given you and what he has given the other person if the thought of covetousness is towards another person's possession. And finally remove your mind from it and think on something else that will give glory to God. If the thought persist, repeat the same exercise over and over again until it leaves you.

Luke 12:15

15 Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

NIV

5. **Learn to appreciate and give thanks to God for what he has given to others.**
6. **Learn to be content with what God has given to you.** Do not be an ungrateful and complaining person.

Eph 5:20

20 always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

NIV

Luke 3:14

14 Then some soldiers asked him, "And what should we do?" He replied, "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely-be content with your pay."

NIV

2 Cor 12:10

10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

NIV

Phil 4:10-13

10 I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. 11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty.

I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

NIV

Phil 4:18-19

19 And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

NIV

Mal 2:1-3

2:1 "And now this admonition is for you, O priests. 2 If you do not listen, and if you do not set your heart to honor my name," says the LORD Almighty, "I will send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have already cursed them, because you have not set your heart to honor me. 3 "Because of you I will rebuke your descendants; I will spread on your faces the offal from your festival sacrifices, and you will be carried off with it.

NIV

7. **Do not love money, pleasure and possessions.** You can have money without loving it. You can have possession without loving them.

1 Tim 6:6-10

6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 9 People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

NIV

8. **Store treasures in heaven and not on earth.** Invest your money into the work of God. To give to God is to store treasure in heaven. To give to the needy is to store treasure in heaven.

Luke 12:32-34

32 "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

NIV

Col 3:1-4

3:1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not

on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.
NIV

9. **Give out generously and God will prosper you.** You destroy covetousness by being a habitual and cheerful giver. Giving destroys greed.

Prov 11:24-28

24 One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. 25 A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed. 26 People curse the man who hoards grain, but blessing crowns him who is willing to sell. 27 He who seeks good finds goodwill, but evil comes to him who searches for it. 28 Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf.

NIV

Luke 6:38

38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

NIV

2 Cor 9:6-15

6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. 9 As it is written: "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever." 10 Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. 11 You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. 12 This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. 13 Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. 14 And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. 15 Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

NIV

Deut 15:7-11

7 If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward your poor brother. 8 Rather be openhanded and freely lend him whatever he needs. 9 Be careful not to harbor this wicked thought: "The seventh year, the year for canceling debts, is near,"

so that you do not show ill will toward your needy brother and give him nothing. He may then appeal to the LORD against you, and you will be found guilty of sin. 10 Give generously to him and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to. 11 There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land.

NIV

Eccl 11:1-6

Cast your bread upon the waters, for after many days you will find it again. 2 Give portions to seven, yes to eight, for you do not know what disaster may come upon the land. 3 If clouds are full of water, they pour rain upon the earth. Whether a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where it falls, there will it lie. 4 Whoever watches the wind will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap. 5 As you do not know the path of the wind, or how the body is formed in a mother's womb, so you cannot understand the work of God, the Maker of all things. 6 Sow your seed in the morning, and at evening let not your hands be idle, for you do not know which will succeed, whether this or that, or whether both will do equally well.

NIV

Gal 6:6

6 Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor.

NIV

CONCLUSION

Covetousness is greed and it is evil and deadly. Kill it before it kills you. Covetousness is idolatry. It is love of money, pleasure and possession. It destroys and makes one an enemy of God. Follow the steps I have outlined and deliver yourself out of covetousness. Don't postpone action. Start now.