

The Danger of Covetousness

Luke 12:15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: **for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.** People think there is great value in earthly possessions, and success and blessing are measured by the amount of possessions one can accumulate. This is the view of the world, not of God.

Matt 6:19 **Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth,** where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: **20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven,** where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: **21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.** **22** The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. **23** But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! **24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.** **25** Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

Covetousness is idolatry, and it is a grave problem, that is possible to come into our lives and dominate our lives. To be a Christian, one has to believe in the promises of God. When God promises us riches in heaven, we have to believe him. Every unconverted person grabs what he can of this world that he thinks is of value to him. But when you come to Christ, God offers you something **of more value, eternal life.** To go after eternal life, **you have to leave what you already have (the values and treasures of this world) and seek the treasures of heaven even harder. Repentance is a change of mind and direction. It is for us to leave what we were chasing to pursue what God tells us.** **Matt 13:44** Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. **45** Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant

man, seeking goodly pearls: **46** Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, **went and sold all that he had, and bought it.** Jesus reveals to us the same truth, that **if one does NOT "give up" everything he considers precious to pursue the heavenly treasure of eternal life, then he is not saved.**

Faith is to trust the supreme value of eternal life. It is to trust her, that obtaining eternal life, nothing else matters. Then, how should we consider our earthly needs?

Matt 6:31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? **32** (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. **33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you.**

The difference between an unsaved person and a child of God is how he looks on on life. The

unsaved man worries and worries about the things of this world, his food, his housing, his clothes. A child of God is marked or distinguished in having left these things as the priority of his life, and follows God as the priority of his life.

Covetousness is an Idol

1Tim 6:6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. **7** For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. **8** And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. **9 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.** **10** 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.**

Prov 23:4 Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom. The serious error here is in this mistaken thought that there is something in this world that is eternal or of important value, that there is something that one can really have or possess that one will never lose. At the time of death, God declares to us that everything we have gathered is left behind for those left on earth to fight over, and at the end of time, God will burn the whole earth and the heavens and make new heavens and new

earth will be made without any man's claim on them, just what God says and gives. **2Pet 3:13** **Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.** That is, what a true Christian is marked by is his hope and vision set upon his heavenly inheritance, and the lack of importance and priority in what the pagans of this world are crazy to obtain. Paul made it very clear that when people die, everyone will lose everything they have accumulated, and they will leave this world just as they entered this world (with nothing). The disappointment or deception of thinking that you really own something beyond death is a serious spiritual error, in which, it causes the person to lose all hope of eternal life (salvation) in the next life, and is the cause of great, serious, and trouble and "many pains" in this life. **Prov 15:27** He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house...

Phil 3:7 **But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.** **8** Yea doubtless, and **I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,** Paul saw "the knowledge of Christ" as the supreme possession of all time. You cannot "win Christ" by still clinging to earthly things, and nothing can be compared to this treasure (Christ). **Prov 1:18-19** speaks of greed, saying that one entraps their self when one is in greed, and that **Prov 1:19** "So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; which taketh away the life of the owners thereof."

In addition, the desire to join possessions and wealth is what deceives the person so that he is not saved. **Mark 4:19** And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. **The greedy is not saved, and no one who has "riches on his mind" will do something really acceptable before God.**

The Requirement for Leaders

Exodus 18:21 Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth,

hating covetousness: and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: God makes the requirement that the leaders of God's people be people who hate greed because this affects their ministry (**Exo 23:8; Deu 16:18-19; 1 Sam 8:3; 12:3-4; Isa. 33:15; Eze 22:12**). It is important to understand that God imposes the requirement of being totally clean of bribery, greed, and coveting what is not yours honestly as a minimum requirement to enter the ministry.

1Tim 3:3 ... not greedy of filthy lucre; ... not covetous; **1Tim 3:8** not greedy of filthy lucre; **Titus 1:7** ...not given to filthy lucre; **1Pet 5:2**... not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; **2Pet 2:14** Having ... an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: **15** Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; **Isa 56:11** Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter. **Jer 6:13** For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. **Jer 8:10 Mic 3:11** The heads thereof **judge for reward**, and the priests thereof **teach for hire**, and the prophets thereof **divine for money**: We can even say that this spiritual qualification was what God worried more about repeating so that we understand that this is where men fall more frequently in the ministry. This also applies to every Christian, because the character required in the ministers of God is what is exemplary for all the people of God, and then it is obligatory for everybody.

God identifies as false prophets these men pretending to be ministers of God, because they **1Tim 6:5 that gain is godliness**: Paul understood these men as having *corrupt minds, destitute of the truth*. Paul's command was "from such withdraw thyself." I cannot emphasize enough the importance of examples that influence spiritually to cause imitation of the same in others. You copy what you see. This is why every minister has to declare war against greed and covetousness. The mistake of

false prophets is to place importance and priority upon possessions, wealth, and not highly esteem eternity over these things. N.T. ministers also regularly reminded their followers of this rule of God for all. They lived it. **Acts 20:33** *I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.* (**Num 16:15; 1Sam 12:3-5; 1Cor 9:12, 15, 18; 2Cor 7:2; 11:9; 12:14**)

The False Prophet and his Covetousness

2Pet 2:3 And **through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you**: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

The false prophet is marked by his goal and objective of enriching himself, perverting the Word of God to achieve his ends. He is going to organize his ministry and manipulate the situation so that he finally gets a lot of money in his pocket. Your mind is set for this above all. He does not spend his money if it is not finally to enrich him in some way. Their control, influence, preaching (like Balaam) are for their purpose of accumulating the temporary possessions of this world, because their concept of eternity is their bank account on earth. In the ministry he is flexible, and in getting rich he can't stop himself, he is his own supreme god, and his income cannot be affected or he will be angry.

Conclusion

Yes, the ministers who work in the gospel must live of the same (**1Co 9:14**) from whom locally (in the same local church) receive the benefits of their ministry (**Gal 6:6**), but they should not charge them. It must be a voluntary offering. Likewise, the brothers should give him a good salary (**Matt 10:10**), and double if he deserves this for the excellence of his work (**1Ti 5:17**). In no way should he show an eagerness or desire to be rich.

The Christian and his Money

By David Cox

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Phil 4:19 *But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

Today, there is a serious error in the thinking of many Christians, and this error is to think that God's blessing on a child of God will always make him rich. The thinking of many is that God has all the money in the world, and I am a child of God, and **God loves me, so God will give me everything I want**. In this false line of thinking, they incorrectly presume that **(1) it is good to accumulate all the wealth and money that they can collect**, and (2) it is God's obligation to make one rich. In addition, this error has been promoted by pastors and ministers of large ministries. They teach that this is not error, and it is the will of God so that they themselves can take advantage of the brothers by making themselves rich off the brethren.