



Avoiding the pitfalls of life!

A topical series for men!



DANGER

Covetousness

Exodus 18:19-21

Men's Breakfast

Sermon given on November 19, 2016



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Danger: Covetousness

Exodus 18:19-21

Opening Comments

- Today we continue the series: **DANGER: Avoiding the pitfalls of life!**
- This is the fourth message in this series
- In the first one, I said that many men deal with anger
- In the second one I said that most men deal with lustful temptation of the eye
- Third one all men deal with: pride
- If you missed any of them, we have CDs or you can go online and listen
- This month we are going to look at one that we may not give a lot of thought to, but is more pervasive than we might think
- And I am guessing that many men fall into this pitfall without realizing it
- And the consequences are much greater than you probably understand
- Let's pray and ask God to begin to show us a pathway to victory
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **Danger: Covetousness**
- This month's topic is **Covetousness**
- Turn in your Bible to **Exodus 18**
- This is a big deal to God
- In fact, coveting made God's top ten things not to do **Exodus 20:17**
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.
- The very first occurrence of the word 'covetousness' is in a text that is very appropriate for a group like this
- It occurs in the account of Moses' father-in-law Jethro giving Moses some advice

- Moses was working himself to death and not sharing the load of leadership
 - **Exodus 18:19-20**
 - Jethro tells that those things that only you can do, do those things, but everything else
 - **Exodus 18:21**
 - Jethro tells Moses that one of the characteristics to look for in the leaders he would choose is men who hate covetousness
 - 3,400 years later God is still looking for men to lead His people
 - Paul also said in 1 Timothy 3 that a spiritual leader is not covetous
 - Men, you were created to be a spiritual leader
 - Covetousness is a pitfall which men God created to lead fall into and lose their influence and effectiveness
 - It is my desire that we would learn to identify this pitfall, learn how to avoid it, and how to get out of it if we do fall into it
 - **Covetous = feeling or showing a very strong desire for something that you do not have and especially for something that belongs to someone else.**
 - In many ways covetousness is a very insidious sin
 - It finds its source in our desires
 - Desire is not necessarily sinful, God can and does give us desires
- Psalm 37:4**
Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.
- It is the sin in us that turns the good desires that God puts into our hearts into sinful desires and covetousness
 - Some believe covetousness is not that bad of a sin, Jesus disagrees
- Mark 7:20-23**
What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. ²¹ For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, ²² thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. ²³ All these evil things come from within and defile a man.
- Paul had a similar list in Romans 1
 - Jesus warned us to watch out for it **Luke 12:15**
Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.
 - Paul says in Colossians 3 that covetousness is idolatry

- Covetousness always has an object that is being desired
- It is something you want, but cannot attain with the provision that God has given
- Or it is the dissatisfaction with what you have because someone has something better or newer or bigger or faster
- This dissatisfaction is usually accompanied by some amount of resentment that they have it and you don't
- Covetousness and jealousy are very similar
- So what's the big deal, why is this a pitfall?
- Turn to **Joshua 7**
- The problem is what covetousness will cause you to do
- Covetousness is not content to stay in your heart
- It will lead you to act, unfortunately in a manner that displeases God
- In Joshua 7 we have an account that explains to how God feels about covetousness
- Joshua has led the people of Israel into the Promised Land
- They have just conquered one of the greatest obstacles when God caused the walls of Jericho to fall – an amazing act of God
- Just before the walls fell and they went into the city, the Lord through Joshua told the people to destroy everything in the city – was accursed
- All the silver, gold, bronze, and iron was to be brought into the treasury of the Lord
- After destroying Jericho, they move on to the much easier target of Ai, where they are resoundingly defeated
- The Lord reveals that the problem is because someone has 'an accursed thing in their midst'
- **Joshua 7:10-12**
- Someone had taken something that the Lord told them not to
- They identified Achan as the man who had sinned
- **Joshua 7:19-21**
- Covetousness will always lead to some sin of compromise or disobedience to the plain Word of God
- It will cause people to lie, cheat, steal, and manipulate others to get what their heart desires

- God punished Achan severely as a witness to us that God takes this sin seriously
- And if God takes it seriously, so should we
- Guys, if we allow Covetousness to dwell in our heart, we may be bringing God's holy discipline into the lives of our family, or whatever circle you find yourself in

- Paul gave a serious warning about this **1 Corinthians 6:9-11**

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

- As Christians we have the promise of the kingdom of God, or salvation based on the finished work of Christ on the cross
- But if we allow these kinds of sins to continue in us, even though Jesus broke the power of sin in our lives, we rob ourselves and those we are called to lead from experiencing the kingdom of God today
- Jesus said the kingdom of God is within us – sin keeps us from experiences the temporal blessings of that
- So what do we do about it?
- First – **Sanctify Your Desires**
- The word sanctify means to set apart as holy unto the Lord
- If there is a desire in your heart, take it to the Lord in prayer
- If that desire is from Him, ask Him to confirm it and then to fulfill it

James 1:17

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

- God as a loving Father loves to give His children good gifts
- If the desire is from Him, trust Him to provide it to you in His timing
- If it is from Him, you should be able to find confirmation in His Word
- No matter how many I have read the Bible I still can't find where God wants me to have a 1963 split-window Stingray Corvette in metallic blue
- It is also wise to discuss it with someone spiritually more mature than you are

- Sanctified or holy desires will be fulfilled when God deems you are ready to receive them
- Trust Him and wait, preparing yourself to enjoy those blessings
- Sometimes we discover as we talk with God about our desires that they are not from Him
- Often our desires are from our wrong view of our life or of God's role in our life
- The second thing we do **Sacrifice Your Desires**
- I would love to have a Corvette, but God has never confirmed to me that He wants me to have one
- So what do I do with that? Put it on the altar of His love let it be burned up
- One of the ways that I confirm whether a desire is from God or not is by asking why I want it
- Why do I want a Corvette? Because it would make me happy, it would please me
- I can't really call that a holy desire
- Paul tells us what to do with our more fleshly desires **Colossians 3:5-7**

Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, ⁷ in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

- If we can't confirm a desire as from the Lord, we need to sacrifice it to Him – we need to put it to death
- If we don't it might end up being an idol in our lives
- If I was spending hours on end researching and looking at pictures and reading articles about Corvettes, it might be an idol in my heart
- Every idol in my heart is a competitor to God for my affections
- And God will not tolerate any competitors for my heart
- Sanctify your desires – set them apart to the Lord – ask Him to confirm that they are from Him
- Sacrifice any of your desires that do not come from the Lord
- Do not allow them to become idols in your heart
- Third and finally – **Be Satisfied**

- Turn to **2 Corinthians 12**
 - One of the symptoms of covetousness is dissatisfaction
 - If there is something in your life that you are not satisfied with, may be a sign of covetousness in some area of your life
 - The Apostle Paul gives us a good example of this process
 - **2 Corinthians 12:7-8**
 - Paul was used by God in powerful ways and he did a radical ministry
 - But some type of physical ailment was allowed to come into his life, as Paul declares to keep him from getting a big head
 - Many believe this was an ailment of the eyes
 - Whatever it was, it was getting in the way of his ministry
 - His desire was that it be taken away
 - **2 Corinthians 12:9-10**
 - Paul set it before the Lord three times and the Lord confirmed that He was not going to take it away
 - And so Paul sacrificed his desire to be healed because God said He wasn't going to heal him
 - Instead Paul accepted the reality of his situation and refused to talk to the Lord about it again
 - Instead, Paul used the reality of his situation to bring glory to Christ
 - Paul would write a few years later to the church in Philippi while he was imprisoned for preaching the gospel **Philippians 4:11-13**
- I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: ¹²I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. ¹³I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.**
- Contentment is something that must be learned – it is not natural
 - It is learned by being in need – by having desires that are not met
 - Having desires is not sinful – it is what we do them that makes them holy or wicked desires
 - Guys, we live in a time and culture that doesn't understand what I taught in this message
 - We must model it for this generation
 - Sanctify Your Desires – set them before the Lord and confirm that they are from Him

- If they are not – Sacrifice Your Desires – Deny your flesh – die to your self-will
- And then Be Satisfied with what God has given you
- Trust God to be the loving God that He is – trust that if you will seek Him and put your trust in Him that He will supply all your needs and even fulfill some of your desires
- I still don't have a Corvette, but I believe God is able, in His timing and when he knows it will be good for me, give me the desires of my heart
- He will do it when it can be done in a way that glorifies Him, blesses others, and can be used to grow my faith
- Amen?!
- **Prayer**