

Lust and Greed - Deadly Sins



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Lust and greed are termed deadly sins because both are dangerous and lethal if left unchecked. The Bible speaks clearly on the serious sin of giving in to lust. Proverbs 6:25 *“Do not lust in your heart after her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes.”* Proverbs 6:26 *“The adulteress preys upon your very life.”* Yielding to such temptations is a violation of Exodus 20:14 *“Thou shalt not commit adultery.”*

Immoral sins are serious, so we must be on guard every moment, as the devil is subtle and deceitful with his temptations. Since we began life with this tendency to lust after anyone or anything, Satan has a distinct advantage over us, and can easily lead us into such sins.

Let us begin where the Bible begins—our thoughts. Jesus said Matthew 5:28 *“Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”* Entertaining such thoughts moves us toward yielding to the temptation. The more we think about it, the more the temptation returns. If this is repeated enough, our ability to resist is greatly diminished.

The apostle says to think about things that are *true, honest, just, and pure* Philippians 4:8; *not things that are false, dishonest, wrong, and impure*. We have to deal with this tendency to sin and take action against putting ourselves in tempting situations.

Colossians 3:5 *“Put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idol-*

atry.” Being involved in such sins is evidence they are idols in our heart. Lust is translated lasciviousness; an intense longing for; a craving, and strong desire for the wrong thing or wrong person.

When in Samaria, a woman asks Jesus for the living water He spoke of; to which He replies John 4:16-18, *“Go, call your husband and come back.”* *‘I have no husband,’ she replied. Jesus said to her, ‘You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.’*

The woman was living in adultery because she would be a scriptural wife only to the first man. The marriage ceremony is only a formality and legal requirement—being intimate with another is binding in the sight of God. It is 1 Corinthians 6:16 being *“joined to”* another that *“the two shall become one flesh,”* Matthew 19:5; Genesis 2:24. The words *marriage* or *ceremony* are not even mentioned.

The desire of the heart and the lust of the eye can be very strong indeed, so Satan uses every opportunity to catch someone in his deadly trap. Immoral sins are serious sins, and many warnings are given in Scripture. Proverbs 6:25 *“Do not lust in your heart after her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes.”*

In today’s world, when morality is *rare* and immorality is *common*, we have to be more careful than ever of this deadly trap the devil sets for us. Commercials and ads bombard the general population with tempting images of every type—appealing to the lust of the eye. God warns Proverbs 6:26 *“The adulteress will hunt for the precious life.”*

Yielding to the lust of the eye, which begins with a thought, has us following Adam’s sin, which can have serious consequences. First there is guilt, then shame, and then the loss of inner

peace—all from wanting something outside the parameters of God’s Word. Satan provides all the tempting images necessary to have us fall into his snare.

This lust of the eye is not always for someone, but can be for something. Satan tries to get people to lust after riches or possessions. Many fall into those very temptations—and not considering who is hurt in their quest for more. The apostle says *“Love never ends”* 1 Corinthians 13; but lust has no lasting quality—it is based only on desire—not commitment.

With a commitment to obey God’s Word, and empowered by His Spirit, we *can* be pure in heart. We must be honest with ourselves and always with God, for He already knows our heart and our secrets. We must confess before God and forsake unscriptural things—magazines, movies, books, worldly fellowship, or anything else that does not have God’s approval. The problem must be admitted, and then action taken to remove such things.

Any literature, web page, or iPhone app that feeds the wrong desires, should be dealt with as they did in the first century. Many believers Acts 19:19 *“brought their books together, and burned them.”* The total was *“several million dollars.”* It was not a matter of money, but morality.

Jesus does not condemn the Samaritan woman, but He offers her a new life. He would give her His Spirit within, *living water*, that would inspire her to make corrections in her life, and enable her to be on Scriptural grounds in her marriage.

We are to be ready and willing to make changes in our thoughts or activities. The Holy Spirit will help anyone who wants to change, and will enable them to make scriptural decisions. Jesus promised John 8:32 *“Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,”*—from lust,

impure thoughts, and wrong desires that wage war on our soul.

Greed is an excessive desire for something, especially money or material possessions. To be greedy is to desire for more than one needs, and to take all you can get with no thought for anyone else. Freedom from greed means giving up idols. Jesus said Luke 12:15 *“Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”*

We should ask God to search our heart and to reveal any idols we may have. We see to the needs of our family, of course, and then we should consider the needs of other believers. The sin of greed has caused serious harm to many people, but this should not be surprising, as it has always been about lust for money. The huge increase of gambling casinos indicates how important money and possessions are to the world.

Avarice or greed is shown by dishonest business practices, cheating, lying, gambling, tax evasion, charging too high for services—the list could be very long. Greed is an excessive love of money and possessions; but the Bible is clear Luke 12:15 *“Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”*

A man asked Jesus Matthew 19:16-17 *“Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?”* Jesus said in reply, *“If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.”*

And those commandments are Matthew 22:37 *“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind,”* which would eliminate greed in our heart. If we love Jesus, we will obey Him, and love others too—which means we want to *give and share*; rather than *keep and save*.

Jesus knows everyone’s heart, and He is trying to free the man from greed—which is evident because of holding on to his riches. The man had

laid-up treasure and resources, in case of future needs. What he possessed—possessed him. Jesus says Matthew 19:21, *“If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”*

Jesus was teaching God’s truth on finances—which is to eliminate greed and get rid of financial security; but the man left without following. The idol in his life, won out over God’s truth. Jesus is saying that any accumulated wealth, would prevent someone from entering Heaven. Three times Matthew 19:24; Mark 10:25; Luke 18:25, Jesus said, *“It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”*

Greed is a serious hindrance to spiritual progress. Serving God means giving up anything placed ahead of Him. Jesus said Luke 14:26 *“If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother—[and naming other loved ones], yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.”*

Jesus wants us to be entirely devoted to Him, and this is not possible if we just give Him one hand, and hold on to possessions with the other. Jesus says we cannot serve God and money at the same time. If we love God with all our heart, soul, and mind, then we obey Him on finances.

Greed will put some person, thing, or interest ahead of God. With the rich man, it was the possessions he owned, but it can be anything laid-up, placed aside, or stored up for security. When we hang on to idols, and we love them more than we love God, they become a burden; entangle our feet, and are a hindrance to spiritual growth. Exodus 20:4 *“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing.”* Many things, people, or interests can become idols.

The story of the rich man in Hell Luke 16, is followed by the story of Zacchaeus Luke 19. Zacchaeus was a rich tax collector in Jericho. He

wanted to see Jesus, but could not, so he climbs a tree. When Jesus came to where he was, He said Luke 19:5 *“Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.”*

The crowd Luke 19:7 *“all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner,”* but Zacchaeus immediately says 8, *“Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.”* Repentance and faith assures him of Heaven.

9-10 *“Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”* Zacchaeus is now a follower and a believer, because he was willing to obey God like Abraham did, who left his home and possessions. Because of that Scriptural attitude, Jesus promises Zacchaeus salvation.

Jesus calls us to that same attitude and to rid ourselves of anything that would hinder our preparation for Heaven. Hebrews 12:1 *“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us.”*

When we do as Jesus asks us to do, we then find true peace, contentment, and happiness—which is not in lustful desires or accumulated things, but in knowing that the Holy Spirit within our heart, will free us from unscriptural desires, thoughts, and idols. Jesus meant it when He said to someone willing to repent and be scriptural on finances, *“This day is salvation come to this house.”*



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