

Greed v. Contentment

One of Satan's greatest weapons that he uses against us is the weapon of greed. There are various types of greed, but at the end of the day, they all have to do with wanting something that you don't have. You are willing to do anything to get it.

Greed is a sin of excess, and according to the writings of Thomas Aquinas, is evidenced when a "man condemns things eternal for the sake of temporal things." Jesus listed greed as one of the things that a man holds within himself that condemns him. (Mark 7:22) His desire for more and more will eventually manifest itself in sin. In spite of what the world thinks, continually wanting more and more temporal things and receiving them is not the key to a satisfying life. Jesus said in Luke 12:15: "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."

Solomon knew that. After achieving great wealth, wisdom, and recognition, he determined that all of the things he had accumulated were meaningless – as he put it "a chasing after the wind." The only thing of any value, he concluded, was a right relationship with God. "Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." (Proverbs 12:13)

Paul includes greed in his lists of sins that we must avoid. Romans 1:29, I Corinthians 5:10-11, 6:10, Ephesians 5:3-5 and Colossians 3:5 lists greed as one of the sins that will keep one from entering into the kingdom of heaven. Colossians 3:5 equates greed with idolatry—placing the hunger for wealth or fame above service to God.

What is the opposite of that kind of greed? Contentment. Instead of desiring more and more from this earth, be satisfied with what you have. God promises that those who do what he says will be taken care of. The Hebrew writer said in Hebrews 13:5:

"Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

We need to be satisfied with what we have, and not be greedy for more and more. Paul, in Philippians 4, said that he had learned to be content with his life in any and all circumstances. "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." (Philippians 4:12) His secret? Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Him who gives me strength." If I have Christ, I don't need anything more. Having Him makes us more godly, and as Paul told Timothy in I Timothy 6:8: "godliness with contentment is great gain."

Count yourselves among those that Paul says in 2 Corinthians 6:10 “(has) nothing, and yet (possesses) everything.” Remember that greed, whether it be for fortune or fame or anything else worldly, is not pleasing to God. We have God, and He is all we really ever need.