

Be On Your Guard Against Every Form of Greed

Luke 12:13-21

One of the early names for Christians was “Those who follow the Way” (Acts 9:1-2). Christianity is not just a religion of peace; it is a religion of principle. The Way speaks of a path that is to be followed and a Person that is to be believed: “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (John 14:6). Our Savior and Lord tells us that we are to be on our guard against every form of greed in our lives. **Greed** can be simply defined as “*the desire to have more*” – (Greek – pleoneksía; lit., “to have numerically more.”). This desire destroys.

I. My natural desire is to have more things, but Jesus teaches me to live content.

Someone in the crowd said to Him, ‘*Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me*’ (v. 13). It was the custom among the Jews that the firstborn son would receive a double inheritance from dad. Could there have been good reasons for the brother to request that his older brother divide it? Sure. The issue Jesus confronts in this man is not the request itself as much as it is a heart of covetousness. David began envying the prosperity of the wicked, and so God turned David’s eyes within (Psalm 73).

A. Desires for more act like anesthesia to decay in my heart.

I will never make any progress in the Way until I first stop at the crossroads of self-examination.

B. Christ moves within me before He ever arbitrates over me.

“Man, who appointed Me a judge or arbitrator over (between) you” (Luke 12:14). The point Jesus makes is that I am called to come to Him for a change of heart, not for a change of circumstances. *Till there’s a change in the atmosphere, what thaws in the sun will once again freeze in the shade.*

II. Every form of greed is a deadly disease that will destroy my life.

Then Jesus said to them, ‘Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has abundance does life consist of his possessions’ (v. 15). Let’s look at this principle.

- A. **Greed comes in multiple forms** – “*every form of greed.*” It’s not just numerical financial gain, though this particular text speaks of this form of greed. There is the desire to have more fame, more praise, more power, more influence, more etc... The desire for more saps real life.
- B. **When I get more, it never satisfies** – “when one has abundance, he still doesn’t have life” (v. 15). The only way I’ll ever find real Life is to learn to live in the Way that brings contentment. “Godliness with contentment is great gain” (1 Tim. 6:6). I came with nothing; I leave with nothing.
- C. **Greed is so insidious it requires a two-fold warning:** “Beware, and be on your guard” – One speaks of an acknowledgment that there is potential danger (beware), and the other of the need to fight (be on your guard). What are some indicators that I am successfully fighting greed?
 1. I find myself rejoicing when others are rewarded.
 2. I am loving to give more than I am longing to get.
 3. I am able to wait on wants until the Spirit supplies them (e.g. no debt or promises).

III. Jesus parable of the rich fool helps me to fight against greed in me.

Jesus closes His talk on greed by telling a story (parable). There are several key things about this man consumed with greed that we can learn about ourselves and how to be on our guard against it.

A. I fight against greed by learning to see myself as a steward of what God owns.

The parable shows a man saying “my _____” – my house, my barn, my grain, my goods, etc...

B. I fight against greed when I always keep my mortality and eternity in mind.

All he planned was without God in mind – “eat, drink and be merry... for years to come” (v. 19).

C. I fight against greed by learning what it means to be rich toward God.