

did so because the gods offered something they needed. Baal is the storm god, you sacrifice to him so that he will send rain, your crops will grow and you will survive the year. An idol is about security for the future. Greed is idolatry because it puts trust in possessions or money to provide security for the future. Even where we have possessions or money God still wants us to trust Him with our futures. Greed supplants God.

If this is true can our worship of God become idol worship?

If you are worshiping God so that He will feed your desire for good things – your greed then YES.

My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to hear your words, but they do not put them into practice. Their mouths speak of love, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain. Ezekiel 33v31
What do you think this means?

Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 1 Timothy 6:9

What do you think this means?

Keep your lives free from the love of money Hebrew 13v5

How do you put to death greed?

Nine

Read 1 Corinthians 5v9-13

What should our attitude be to unbelievers who are greedy? Why?

Paul makes an interesting distinction between what is acceptable and who is responsible for greed in the world and greed in the church.

Why shouldn't we eat with greedy Christians?

Are we allowed to eat with greedy non Christians?

Ten

But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them--bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping. 2 Peter 2:1-3 cf Thessalonians 2v4-5 Jeremiah 8v10-11

How did the people in this passage feed their greed?

Do you think this is still a problem?

How are you going to know if greed is a problem in your life?

Judus, (Matthew 16v15); Lot, (Genesis 14); Gehazi (2 Kings 5); and the young man of Matthew 19v23 all struggled with greed.

What effect did it have for each of them?

"...Monsters are real, and ghosts are real too. They live inside us, and sometimes, they win." Stephen King

10 Verses about greed

One

I was enraged by their sinful greed; I punished them, and hid my face in anger, yet they kept on in their willful ways. Isaiah 57v17

Two

For from within, out of your hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile you." Mark 7v21-23

Three

Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor practicing homosexuals nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. 1 Corinthians 6v9-11

The First Testament, Jesus and Paul all speak against greed. The catholics consider it to be one of the deadly sins. John calls it the lust of the eyes, and identifies it as one of the three 'core' temptations. 1 John 2v16

The first question we have to ask is "what is greed?"

The dictionary defines greed as an "excessive desire to acquire or possess more (especially more material wealth) than one needs or deserves"

Often greed is associated with coveting, Exodus 20v17.

Is it the same thing?

Coveting involves a compassion with other – you want what they have – greed does not have to have an eye on what others have. Greed just wants more.

Four

Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions." Luke 12v15

Why do we need to be on our guard against greed?

Greed is one of those sins you don't realise you have. It is also a sin that leads to other sins.

Jesus says all kinds of greed in this passage. What kinds of greed are there?

Consumption, like food. Wanting more, like money. Hoarding, like possessions. Maybe greed can also be about needing to be the centre of attention.

What is the opposite of greed?

If a person is greedy what else will they be?

Why is greed a problem?

Greed is a problem because of the attitude it creates in us. It is also a problem because of the things it causes us to do. In a world where there are limited resources our greed is almost always at someone else expense. Greed is competition.

You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. James 4:2

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." Hebrews 13:5

But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 1 Timothy 6:8

But godliness with contentment is great gain. 1 Timothy 6:6

I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. 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

What is the secret of being content?

What kind of things should we be content with? What should we not be content with?

Paul and the author of Hebrews want us to be content with our physical lives. They do not want us to be content with injustice, sin, or even our current relationship with God. There are some things that it is OK to want more of!

Are there some things it is OK to be Greedy for?

The word greedy implies selfish – so probably not.

Read Luke 12v15-21

How did greed show itself in this person?

What kind of greed was it?

What did the man want out of life?

Why is Jesus critical of the man in this passage?

What does it mean to be rich towards God?

Is there a link between sudden wealth and greed?

Blessing seemed to bring the worst out in this man. The moment you see, you want, before you saw you didn't know to want.

Faced with an abundant harvest, what do you think Jesus would have wanted the man to do?

It is interesting to note that this parable came out of a real life situation to do with an inheritance. It is equally significant that Jesus goes on to teach about trusting God, not worrying and seeking first the kingdom of God.

If Jesus is right and "life does not consist in an abundance of possessions." what does life consist of?

Is it wrong to want a good life?

When is it wrong to want a good life?

Do you think greed is a form of addiction?

How does greed show itself in today's society?

It has been said that greed and avarice are the foremost sins of the western world. Is this true?

What is corporate greed?

Woe to you who add house to house and join field to field till no space is left and you live alone in the land. Isaiah 5:8

What do you think this means?

People curse those who hoard grain, but they pray God's blessing on those who are willing to sell. Proverbs 11:26

What do you think this means?

Five

The greedy bring ruin to their households, but those who hate bribes will live. Proverbs 15v27

Why does greed bring ruin? How does greed bring ruin?

What kind of ruin?

The ruin may come because of a continual strives for what you don't have. Or it may be that ruin is inherent to greed even when it brings the rewards hoped for. The ruin could also be God judgement.

The ruin is to the household. It seems the idea here is that greed has succeeded, goods have been accumulated and the bank balance is good, but the price is a broken family, wrong priorities, a warped personality, unhappiness and strife. Greed fails even when it succeeds.

Six

The greedy stir up dissension, but those who trust in the LORD will prosper. Proverbs 28v25

Why does greed stir up dissension?

Greed creates competitions. It is usually at someone else's expense. Both lead to strife. Greed assumes a lack of internal peace, a dissatisfaction. So the dissension is internal as well as with those around.

What is the opposite of greed in this proverb? Why?

Seven

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean. Matthew 23v25-26

What is the link between greed and self-indulgence?

What effect does Jesus suggest dealing with greed will bring about?

Why do I need more?

In this passage Jesus is denying that sin comes from outside, that it can be caught. Here He is suggesting that greed leads to all kinds of impurity in our lives.

What kind of impurity?

How do you deal with greed?

Eight

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for the Lord's people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person--such a person is an idolater--has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Ephesians 5v3-5

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. Colossians 3v5-6

Why is greed idolatry?

Most Christians get quite confused here because they associate idol worship with love. But people did not sacrifice to Baal or kill their babies at a shrine to Molech because of love. They