

GREED

An old preacher was dying. He sent a message for his banker and his lawyer, both church members, to come to his home. When they arrived, they were ushered up to his bedroom. As they entered the room, the preacher held out his hands and motioned for them to sit on each side of the bed. The preacher grasped their hands, sighed contentedly, smiled and stared at the ceiling. For a time, no one said anything. Both the banker and lawyer were touched and flattered that the old preacher would ask them to be with him during his final moments. They were also puzzled; the preacher had never given them any indication that he liked either of them. They both remembered his many long and uncomfortable sermons about greed and covetousness that made them squirm in their seats. Finally the banker said, "Preacher, why did you ask the two of us to come?" The old preacher said weakly, "Jesus died between two thieves and that's how I want to go."

The definition of greed is: Excessive desire to acquire more than one needs.

Another way to describe greed is with the word covetousness. Last of the 10 commandments.

(Deuteronomy 5:21)

"You shall not covet your neighbor's wife. You shall not set your desire on your neighbor's house or land, his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

The dictionary definition of "covetousness" is "grasping for more." This is the sin of selfishness. You're never content.

Today we are going to talk about three forms of greed: Greed for money, greed for sex, and greed for power

Greed for money ; This is the most common form of greed and at one time or other we are guilty of it.

Luke 12:15 Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

Greed is the reason consumer debt has doubled in the last 10 years and why most Americans go into debt at a rate of \$400 per paycheck. It is why credit card debt in US stands at \$1.6 trillion.

Ephesians 5:4 neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.

While all of these are included, it is especially the money hungry person who is identified as an idolater. It becomes these people's god or idol and they give their all to it. It is a harsh taskmaster, never satisfied. Just one more dollar!

That is exactly how it is with all of us. Jesus warned,

(Matthew 6:19) "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

(Matthew 6:20) But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.

There is a Greed for sex.

Ephesians 5: 5 For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

.....Sexual immorality can definitely be a god or an idol-

Yes, adultery is wrong but premarital sex is alright – some say. I don't see where the Bible explicitly says sex outside of marriage is a sin, but I do see That sex was made for marriage to produce children. If sex outside marriage brings children that in many cases lead to murder in abortion.

Ephesians 5:4 neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.

Ephesians 5:4 tells us not to joke about sex but to give thanks for it. That's hard for me because I find humor in almost everything. Sex is wonderful and good in a marriage relationship. Outside of a marriage relationship sexual relations are destructive. It destroys individuals, friends, families, churches, communities, and nations. On an individual level it destroys us physically, socially, and spiritually.

Sex is a powerful force. In marriage it is for the good. Outside of marriage it is for the bad.

Sex is like a fire. Many of you may have fireplaces in your homes and when the fire is contained within that structure it provides warmth and enjoyment. But if that fire escapes from the fireplace, it can become uncontrollable and burn down your house.

on hot coals without his feet being scorched?

What about greed for power

Isn't it interesting that the two biggest problems in marriages are money and sex? Why? Because they are the two biggest issues of power and control.

Yes, there are people out there who love to have people follow their commands. There are people who love to have titles and positions of power.

(Mat 23:6) they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues ;

(Mat 23:7) they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them 'Rabbi.'

(Mat 23:8) "But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have only one Master and you are all brothers.

In India they are said to catch monkeys by setting out a small box with a tasty nut in it. There is an opening in the box that is large enough for the monkey to reach in his outstretched hand, but too small for him to withdraw the hand once he's clutched the nut. When the monkey has grabbed the prize, he must either let go of it and regain his freedom or keep hold of it and stay trapped. Most monkeys hold onto the nut, making it easy for hunters to pick them up. Many of us are caught in the same kind of trap. Instead of a nut, however, we are refusing to let go of money, a hobby, an inappropriate relationship, a promotion, or even a job. Now, we might argue that the person who puts the goody in the box controls the ones who grab it. Look at

Ephesians 5: Therefore do not be partakers with them.

If we are willing to let go of the goodies we could go away free. The choice is ours. I'm not saying the choice is always easy, but the choice is ours.