

Something is missing. "We Americans have more to make life easy than any people who have ever lived. We live in the finest houses, wear the nicest clothes, and eat the best food that any generation has ever known; yet, at the same time, today we have more suicides, more divorces, more people in jail, more mental illnesses than any people of all time. For many people, life is a grim, desperate, unhappy affair" (Charles Allen).

A few weeks ago we studied the first three chapters of Ecclesiastes and learned that what unbelievers are missing is God, that human beings cannot be fulfilled without God, that when it comes to formulas for fulfillment unbelievers say Everything – God but that = Nothing! Matthew 16:26A.

So what is our problem? Why are so many believers just as grim, desperate, and unhappy as unbelievers? This morning we will learn that what many believers are missing is the choice to be content with God, that human beings cannot be fulfilled if they think they need anything besides God, that when it comes to formulas for fulfillment some believers say God + Something but that = Nothing.

If God is not enough for us, nothing will satisfy us.

Not money. Ecclesiastes 5:10 ("increase" NKJV). "A study ... asked people how much money they thought they needed to be happy. Everyone, no matter what they made, thought they needed more. People who made \$20,000 thought \$30,000 would do it; folks at \$45,000 were convinced \$65,000 was the magic number, people at \$100,000 were sure \$200,000 was it. The only thing that changed was that as people's income grew, their magic number grew exponentially" (Ryan).

Not looks. In "a book done by photographer Francis Scavullo ... he photographed the world's most beautiful women. There they were, page after page of breathtaking women, teamed with comments from the women themselves. Not one of them was satisfied with the way she looked. Everyone complained about something: their nose was too big, their hair was too thin, their mouth was too wide" (Ryan).

Not anything! Jeremiah 2:13

What does the Bible call it when God is not enough for us? Covetousness! Luke 12:15

### THE MEANING OF COVETOUSNESS

The Greek word is *pleonexia*, a compound of *pleon*, more, and *echo*, to have. Thus, *pleonexia* is literally wanting "to have more" (W. E. Vine).

Is it always wrong to want more? No. But it is wrong to want more when we are not ...

1. Permitted to get more. Exodus 20:17.
2. Content until we get more. Luke 3:14; Numbers 11:4-6, 10, 33-34 (lit. "the graves of greediness").
3. Satisfied when we get more. *Pleonexia* is insatiableness" (NIDNTT). Covetousness is the 97th Ferengi Rule of Acquisition, "Enough ... is never enough."

### THE Pervasiveness of Covetousness

Covetousness is a widespread problem. We may not have ever heard of anyone being withdrawn from because of covetousness, but we should have many times over. Jeremiah 8:10.

Colossians 3:5 is a regression analysis of sin: Sexual immorality (fornication)—first mistake? No, before that impurity (uncleanness)—first mistake? No, before that passion (vs. self-control)—first mistake? No, before that evil desire—first mistake? No, before that greed (covetousness)!

So the first step off the highway of holiness is not desiring evil, but not being contented with good. This makes perfect sense. If we are contented with good we will not desire evil. We only desire evil if we first choose to be discontented with good.

We should now be able to see why the love of money or greed or covetousness is literally described as a root of all the evils in 1 Timothy 6:10—the KJV is not as far off as we imagined!

It may or may not be the ONLY root of all the evils, but it is definitely A root of all the evils. Franky, I challenge anyone to name even one sin that isn't rooted in covetousness, i.e. discontentment with good.

## THE SERIOUSNESS OF COVETOUSNESS

### 1. In relation to God. *Covetousness is spiritual ...*

- A. *Adultery*. Imagine being married and having your wife tell you that she needs you, but since you don't completely satisfy her, she is going to start having extramarital affairs. That's exactly how God feels when we tell Him, in our deeds if not in our words, "You are not enough for me." Ezekiel 16:28-30, 38; Jeremiah 5:7-9.
- B. *Idolatry*. Colossians 3:5. Whether we realize it or not, if we are not satisfied with God we are saying that something else can provide us what He can't. Thus, we elevate that something to the level of God and serve it as if it were God. God takes idolatry very, very seriously. Exodus 20:3, 5A. Our pluses (G + S) are idols!

### 2. In relation to other people. *Covetousness ...*

- A. *Takes advantage of other people*. It is the reason people steal (Micah 2:2), teach false doctrine (2 Peter 2:3A), and commit sexual immorality (1 Thessalonians 4:3-6A).
- B. *Asks too much of people*. Genesis 30:1-2; certain spouses; me and disciplining my kids; parents who won't let their children leave and cleave; etc.
- C. *Damages the effectiveness of our service to other people*. Philippians 2:14-15. Apply to prodigal children. "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him" (Piper).
- D. *Makes other people miserable*. 1 Samuel 1:1-3A, 4-7.

### 3. In relation to ourselves. *Covetousness ...*

- A. *Makes us miserable*. 1 Timothy 6:10; Esther 5:9B-13.
- B. *Damns our soul*. Ephesians 5:5-6.

## APPLICATIONS

1. **There is only one true formula for fulfillment, God + Nothing = Everything.** Colossians 2:10. Christians must quit saying, "If I had this I would be satisfied, or "If I had that I would be content." We already have everything we need to not only be fulfilled, but overflowing.
2. **We must find our plus.** What do we foolishly think we need in addition to God to be fulfilled? There are many possibilities and we can certainly have more than one plus.
  - A. My plus has been the approval of people. However, I have repented and am working hard to perfect the application of the following thought: "If I am trying my best and that's not enough for people, I am content because I know it's enough for God and that He is enough for me."
  - B. So what is your plus? What do you foolishly think you need in addition to God which is, in fact, the very thing that stands between you and the joy of the Lord you so desperately desire?
3. **It is not about us.** We must be made complete in Christ for God and other people. Our covetousness hurts them deeply. For their sake we had better start taking the command to rejoice in the Lord always very seriously or we will have an eternity in hell to contemplate how selfish we were to have had it all and choose to still want more.

Yes, something is missing. Namely, a sense of just how truly awesome God is and how incredibly blessed we are to be in Him. For far to many Christians what is missing is an acute awareness that nothing is missing, that the saved are absolutely complete in Christ.