

Materialism and Greed

Objective

To discuss the signs and development of materialism and how it may be overcome.

Reference

The Holy Bible

Scriptural Verse

“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Timothy 6:10)

Introduction

- Materialism – Preoccupation with or emphasis on material objects, comforts, and considerations, with a disinterest in or rejection of spiritual, intellectual, or cultural values (i.e., tangible objects are of more value than intangible).
- Greed – Excessive desire to acquire or possess more.
- Greed leads to materialism.
- Greed is based on the love for money, not the possession of it:
 - Poor people can be greedy
 - Rich people can be charitable
- “No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” (Luke 16:13)

Lesson Outline

Signs of materialism

- Blind to the needs of others
 - Too focused on my own success to worry about the needs of others.
 - Other people slow me down and are obstacles in my way
 - Tithing reduces my bank account – it hurts to give
 - Not considering there are many poor people all around in need of our help (James 5:1-6)
- Insatiable desire for more
 - Collecting money becomes a hobby and a goal
 - Richness can cause us to neglect our spiritual life
- Not being able to let go of wealth (Luke 18:18-23)
- Constantly comparing with others (James 2:2-4)
 - How do I feel when a friend buys something new?
 - My attitude towards poor and wealthy people says something about my value system
- Showing off (Jeremiah 9:23)
 - Do I feel the need to show off my things to other people?
- Willingness to disobey God to obtain more
 - Mistreating others (i.e., possessions are of more value than people)
 - Lying, cheating, stealing...
 - Working more than is necessary at the expense of other things – not leaving time for God each day

How does materialism develop?

- Focus of the worldly things (1 John 2:16)
 - Experiencing a luxury without having the maturity to handle it
- Giving in to covetousness (Luke 12:15)
 - Looking at what my neighbor has and thinking life would be better if I had it too
 - Seeking after material possessions for that reason alone
- Confusing necessities with luxuries (1 Timothy 6:8)
 - How much of what we have do we really need?
 - What are some things that we THINK we can't live without?
- Seeing money as security (Luke 12:16-21)
 - The need to "secure" our future by saving more
 - Faith in money more than God
- Listening to the media
 - Our greed can be fueled by the media, credit card companies, companies that want us to buy their product, etc...

How do we fight materialism?

- Giving and serving (Mark 12:41-44)
 - Giving what we have makes us realize how blessed we are
 - We can live with much less than God has given us
 - Giving God a chance to bless us – Gideon example
- Redefine what is valuable (Luke 12:34)
 - Satan tempted the Lord Jesus Christ with food (desires of the flesh), glory and riches
 - How much time do we spend seeking after these vs. purity and holiness?
- Fasting and prayer (Matthew 4:4)
 - Learning to live with less food – rely on God more
 - Praying focuses us on the heavenly things more than the earthly
- Ask God to satisfy what we lack (James 4:2)
 - God who knows our actual needs wants to bless us even beyond our bare necessities. We should ask Him to provide for us what is right and be content with what He gives

Conclusion

- Many of us are caught in the web of greed
- And we think it's normal and healthy because we see it all around us
- Honest self-examination
- Confession

Activities/Discussion Points

Have an open discussion about ways to personally overcome materialism