



THE SECRET OF SATISFACTION

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





The Secret of Satisfaction

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The Secret of Satisfaction

SERMON REFERENCE: Exodus 20:17

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #1864

Exodus 20:17 reveals the final Commandment, which is, "You shall not covet..."

God has given us a desire for love and happiness. It's not wrong to want success or victory, nor is it wrong to acquire these things. Rather, this commandment warns against unlawful desire. Covetousness has an appetite that is never satisfied. Whether material possessions, money, power, fame, or status, we have been tricked into believing that newer, bigger, or better will bring us happiness. If we want to know the secret of satisfaction, we reject any trace of covetousness in our lives.

First, think about the perplexing problem of covetousness. It is a very deceptive and debasing problem; not many acknowledge that they struggle with this sin. We are egocentric by nature and often wear the cloak of self-righteousness. Adrian Rogers says, "The heart of the human problem is the problem of the human heart."

It's a destructive problem. There is a reason why the Bible condemns making riches our lifelong goal. When we do that, we make gods out of wealth when our desire should actually be to "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33).

Covetousness is also a lack of perspective. A covetous person is a person who has not put his eyes on the Lord, for contentment is found in Jesus Christ alone. Hebrews 13:5-6 says, "Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we may boldly say, 'The Lord is my Helper. I will not fear. What can man do to me?'" Adrian Rogers says, "The only truly satisfied people in this world are the ones who've let go of this world and taken hold of Jesus Christ with both hands."

As Christians, we have everything we need: We have our salvation and family, our brothers and sisters in Christ. We have knowledge of the Word of God, and wisdom that comes from our time spent in Scripture. We have the peace of God that passes understanding; when we gain this righteous perspective, we can see we are very, very rich.

Life Application

If we want to rid ourselves of covetousness, we must apply this daily practice:

1. Trust in the Lord
2. Develop a habit of thankfulness
3. Learn to love other people
4. Learn to give



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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) We have been told by Madison Avenue that we can be happy and satisfied if we just have that different car, a better vacation or that more wonderful house, etc.
- b) The truth is, though, that things do not bring happiness.
 - i) A noted research firm discovered that most couples argue over money and possessions than anything else, and many of these couples have many material possessions.
- c) Exodus 20:17 commands us to not covet.
- d) What does it mean to covet?
 - i) This is not a command against legitimate and lawful desire.
 - (1) It is not wrong to want a home, a family, clothes, success, victory, etc.
 - (2) Deuteronomy 8:18
 - ii) Covetousness goes beyond that which is lawful to that which is illegitimate, harmful and hurtful.
 - iii) To covet is an unlawful desire.
 - (1) Wanting something that someone else has that you do not have, and you have no legitimate, lawful reason to have what they have.
 - (2) This may involve money or possessions, but may also include influence, power, fame, appearance, etc.
 - (3) Because you do not have it, your happiness is hindered.
 - (4) The spirit of covetousness says that you must have that thing in order to be happy, and you are not satisfied with what you have.
 - (a) This disobeys the commandment to be thankful in all things.
 - (i) Ephesians 5:20
- e) A philosopher once said, "To whom little is not enough, nothing is enough."
- f) Covetousness has an appetite that is never satisfied.
- g) This commandment in Exodus 20:17 is different from the other nine commandments in that it deals not with what we do but with what we are.
 - i) It deals with attitude not action.
 - ii) It deals with desires not deeds.
- h) This commandment rightly sums up the others because it shows what is in our hearts.

2) A PERPLEXING PROBLEM

- a) Covetousness is a very deceptive problem.
 - i) 1 Thessalonians 2:5
 - (1) We can wear the cloak of self-righteousness but be guilty of sinful coveting.
 - ii) Few, if any, people ever admit to being covetous.
 - iii) Romans 7:7
 - (1) Paul recognized that the sin of covetousness was in his heart and life.
 - (2) We may never have committed the act of a certain sin, but can we say that we never



- wanted to?
- (3) We may never have stolen anything, but can we say that we never really wanted what belonged to another person?
- b) Covetousness is a debasing problem.
- i) Mark 7:21-23
 - ii) Covetousness shows the vileness of our hearts.
 - iii) Covetousness comes from within.
 - iv) We have a “me first” attitude.
 - v) Many people define themselves by what they have rather than who they are or to Whom they belong; we belong to the Lord Jesus Christ.
- c) Covetousness is a destructive problem.
- i) 1 Timothy 6:6-10
 - (1) This passage does not refer to those who are rich, but to those who seek to be rich.
 - (2) The Bible does not condemn wealth.
 - (3) The Bible condemns making wealth your goal.
 - (4) Matthew 6:33
 - ii) Covetousness can cause us to disobey the other commandments.
 - (1) Exodus 20:3-4
 - (a) Colossians 3:5
 - (b) Covetousness is idolatry.
 - (c) Covetousness breaks the first two commandments.
 - (2) Exodus 20:7
 - (a) How many have used God and Christianity to try to get ahead and to get for themselves the things they want?
 - (b) A person’s religion in this case becomes only a form of self-service and hypocrisy.
 - (3) Exodus 20:8
 - (a) Covetousness prompts businesses to stay open on the Lord’s day.
 - (4) Exodus 20:12
 - (a) Often times, we fail to care for aging parents or even decide against having children due to coveting other things.
 - (5) Exodus 20:13
 - (a) Covetousness is often the motive.
 - (6) Exodus 20:14
 - (7) Exodus 20:15
 - (8) Exodus 20:16
 - (a) When we break this commandment, we are stealing someone’s reputation or trying by dishonesty to get ahead.
 - (9) Each one of the above commandments are transgressed by disobeying the commandment in Exodus 20:17.
 - iii) Ephesians 5:5
 - (1) Covetousness is no a minor sin.

3) A PROPER PERSPECTIVE (Hebrews 13:5-6)

- a) The secret of satisfaction and contentment can only be found in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- b) The only truly contented and satisfied people are those who’ve let go of this world with both



hands and have taken hold of Jesus Christ with both hands.

- c) We must have a proper perspective.
 - i) How rich we are when we are saved and have God.
 - (1) Psalm 73:25-26
 - ii) We are rich indeed when blessed with a family.
 - (1) Proverbs 18:22
 - (2) Psalm 127:3
 - iii) As Christians, we have friends and brothers and sisters in Christ.
 - (1) Proverbs 17:17
 - iv) We have wisdom and knowledge of the Word of God.
 - (1) Proverbs 3:13-14
 - v) We have peace that passes all understanding in God.
 - (1) Philippians 4:11
 - (2) Isaiah 48:22

4) A PROPER PRACTICE

- a) What must we do to find satisfaction and how can we teach our children contentment?
 - i) Trust in the Lord.
 - (1) A covetous person does not have his or her eyes upon the Lord.
 - (2) Only God can satisfy the deepest longing of our hearts.
 - ii) Develop a spirit of thankfulness.
 - (1) Be thankful to God and bless His name.
 - (2) Help children understand how wealthy they are in Christ.
 - (3) The problem we face with covetousness is not that we want more, but that we want more than somebody else.
 - iii) Learn to love other people.
 - (1) If we love others, then we will rejoice with them that they have what they have.
 - (2) We covet what someone else has when we do not love that person.
 - (3) When we are jealous of someone else, it is a good indicator that we do not love that person.
 - (4) Learn to enjoy the grace of God in someone else's life.
 - iv) Learn to give.
 - (1) This is one of the best ways to deal with covetousness.
 - (2) We are often selfish with our lives and with our things.
 - (a) Psalm 24:1

5) CONCLUSION

- a) In learning to give, the first place to start is by giving your heart and life to Jesus Christ.
- b) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- c) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16



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Take your Bibles and open, would you please, to Exodus chapter 20 and we look now at verse 17. And while you're finding it, may I say that Madison Avenue has done a job on the American people. It has given us a bad case of the, "I wants" and we can't be satisfied unless it's newer, bigger, better, shinier, or different. And we've been told that we can be happy. We can have that different car, that better vacation, that more wonderful house, the more stylish clothes. If we can have this experience and the right credit card to go with it, we have got it made. But the truth of the matter is, these things are not bringing happiness. To the contrary, a noted research firm has found out that homes that are having the most arguments are not having arguments over sex, children, or in-laws but primarily over money, over possessions. And many of these are people who have, outwardly, many things. You know it's strange isn't it that couples who get married today want to have in three years what it took their parents thirty years to accumulate and they can get it temporarily with the false god of credit. And they remain happily married until debt does them part. And this is happening all over America. How many truly happy and contented homes and people do you know? Most people are being sucked down in a swirling sewer and whirlpool of discontent.

Well let's see what God's Word has to say about it. Look if you will in Exodus 20 verse 17, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's." "Thou shalt not covet." I'm talking today on "The Secret of Satisfaction." Now what is this command? I mean what is it when God says, "Thou shalt not covet?" Well what God is talking about is unlawful desire. He's not talking about lawful desire, but He's talking about wanting those things to which we have no legitimate right. Now it may involve money or things, but it may deal with other things: influence, or power, or fame, appearance, popularity. Whatever it is that someone else may have, you do not have and you have no legitimate lawful reason to have what they have. And because you don't have it your happiness is hindered. You see the spirit of covetousness says, "I must have that thing in order to be happy." You're not satisfied with what you have. You have disobeyed the commandment to be thankful in all things and rather than being humbly grateful, you're grumbly hateful. A great philosopher said this, "To the man to whom little is not enough, nothing is enough." Don't forget that. "To whom little is not enough, nothing is enough." Covetousness has an appetite that is never satisfied, and so we could just say thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's large salary, his education, his advantages, his good looks, his automobile, his dishwasher, or whatever else it is that makes you envious.

Now this command is not a command against legitimate and lawful desire. When God saves you, He doesn't make you passionate less where you have no passion, where you have no desire. It's not wrong to want a home. It's not wrong to want clothes. It's not wrong to want a family. God has given you a desire for love, for satisfaction, for happiness, for success, for victory. It's not wrong to want these things. It's not wrong to want to acquire things. Deuteronomy 8:18 tells us that it's the Lord thy God that giveth thee power to get wealth. But we're going to see that covetousness goes beyond that which is legitimate to that which is illegitimate, harmful and hurtful. Now this command is different than all of the other nine that we've looked at, because this command deals not with what we do, but it deals with what we are. It deals with attitude



and not action. It deals with desires and not deeds. This is the commandment that rightly sums up all of the others because it shows that the heart of the matter is the matter of the heart.

Now I want you to think with me first of all about what I'm going to call **the perplexing problem of covetousness**. In the first place I want to say it's a very deceptive problem, a very deceptive problem. Few if any people ever say, "You know I've got a problem. Pray with me about it. I'm a covetous person." Now, you just don't hear that. The Bible speaks of the cloak of covetousness in First Thessalonians 2 verse 5. We have a cloak, we kind of hide in that cloak, and some people with the very best reputations are inwardly covetous. Charles Hadden Spurgeon, the great, great preacher of London, England, some say the greatest preacher who ever lived outside the apostle Paul, said this; he said, "I have seen thousands coveted but I've never seen a covetous man converted." Now, he was saying that tongue and cheek. What he meant was, "I've never seen anybody who said, 'Oh, thank God. God saved me from covetousness.'" He said, "You know they say they've been saved from alcohol. They've been saved from adultery. They've been saved from pride and many things, but few people recognize the sin of covetousness."

A great Roman Catholic leader, Francis Xavier, you know the Catholics take confession and people confess their sins to the priest. He said, "In my lifetime I've heard thousands and thousands and thousands and thousands of confessions. But," he said, "I have yet to hear a person confess the sin of covetousness." It's such a deceptive sin and many of you may be sitting there saying this preacher talking right now may be wondering if any of those old covetous people are going to get the message today. The apostle Paul was a splendid man, I mean outwardly. Paul himself looked like a perfect 10. He kept the law. He was meticulous. He was a Pharisee. He was a leader. He was educated. He had morals. He had character. He had it all, and Paul gave his testimony in Romans 7. He said, "I was checking myself up." He said, "I had the Ten Commandments out there and I was going down the list. 'Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.' He said, 'Well, I don't have any other gods.'" "Thou shalt not make any graven images." He said, "I don't make graven images." "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." He said, "I don't do that. 'Remember the Sabbath.' Yes, I've done that. 'Honor your father.' Boy, he's just checking it off. He said, "I was doing well. I was doing good till he said I got to the commandment that said, "Thou shalt not covet." And he said, "That one slew me. That one killed me. That was the one that knocked the props out from under me." I'll give it to you. Romans 7 verse 7, "What shall we say then is the law sin? God forbid, yeah I had not known sin but by the law. For I had not known lust except the law had said, 'Thou shalt not covet.'"

And then God showed him the things that were in his heart. And he had to say maybe I've not committed adultery but can I say I never wanted to. I might say I've never taken anything that didn't belong to me, but could I say I never really wanted what belonged to another person? This was the thing that brought Paul into that deep conviction of sin. It is this commandment that says thou shalt not covet. You see we can wear the cloak of self-righteousness. I heard about a preacher who was out playing golf one day and he was with some men who were rather worldly and they were using some language that golfers sometimes use. But the preacher was very circumspect in his language though he sometimes made some very bad shots. And one of the men said to the preacher, he said, "You know I just really admire you. You're under such control. He said you don't use language like other men. He said, "Well that is true," but he said, "I want to confess to you if you'll look and see where I spit, the grass never grows again." Sometimes it's such a deceptive thing. It comes out of the heart, this sin that's in the heart. It's not that a man may not curse, but he may want to.



It's a deceptive problem and **it's such a debasing problem.** You see this problem comes out of the heart. I want you to take your Bibles and look if you will in the Gospel of Mark with me for a moment and chapter 7 and verse 21 through verse 23. Here's something that may amaze you. Listen to it, "For from within, out of the heart of men, "now notice this, "out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts," and now watch this, "covetousness." Do you see the company that covetousness keeps? "Wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evil things come from within and defile the man." Covetousness comes from within. It comes out of the heart. It is a debasing sin. It shows the vileness that's in our hearts. Now, as we've said before the heart of the human problem is the problem of the human heart. We're born with it. We have a "me first" attitude. We are egocentric by nature. Little children their first words are often me, mine. Their first movements adhere to their mouth, satisfying the ego. Remember when you were two, you were in the corner of the room, you were surrounded by about 20 toys. Your mother had a guest. She had a little baby, took one of those toys, sat that little baby in the corner with that other toy. You left your 20 toys, went over there and bopped him on the head and took that one toy. You didn't want him to have it. You had all this over here. That's just human nature. We think it's cute when it's in little children, but I tell you it is born in the heart of people and it drags us down.

Charles Kingsley said this, "If you wish to be miserable, think about yourself, about what you want, about what you like, what respect people ought to pay you, and then to you nothing will be pure. You will spoil everything you touch. You will make misery for yourself out of everything good. You will be as wretched as you choose." Now the attitude that Charles Kingsley just described is covetousness. I was reading an article, an interesting article. The title was interesting. The title was, "The Time of the Living Dead." And this article went on to talk about MBA students at Duke University at the Fuqua School of Business. These MBA students at this very prestigious school were asked to go to write their life's goals, what they wanted to do, what they wanted to achieve. Now these are MBAs or students working in the business school and this is what they aspire to. Listen to that. They said with few exceptions. They wanted three things: money, power, and things, and very big things including vacation homes, expensive foreign automobiles, yachts, and even airplanes. They were primarily concerned with their careers and with the growth of their financial portfolios. Their personal gains contained little room for family, intellectual development, spiritual growth, social responsibility, or even effective management. Their mandate to the faculty was, quote, "Teach me how to be a money making machine. Give me only the facts, tools, and techniques to incur my instantaneous, financial success. And then this article, this is a secular article called, "The Time of the Living Dead." And then the article went on to quote the psychologist Eric Fran and he said one of the most penetrating things that I've read in a long time. He said this and I quote, "If I am what I have, and what I have is lost, then who am I? If what I am is what I have and then what I have is lost, then who am I?" That's why so many people jumped off of buildings in the Great Depression, because what they had was who they were. But it wasn't really what they had, it had them. And they lost it.

You see it's so deceptive. It's so debasing, and **it is so destructive.** Put this verse in your margin by Exodus 20 verse 17. First Timothy chapter 6 verses 6 through 10. Listen to it, "But godliness with contentment is great gain." And by the way I want to say that's the answer to the sermon title, The Secret of Satisfaction. "Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment," that is food and clothes, "let us be therewith content." Now verse 9, listen to it, "But they that will be rich." Now it doesn't say those who are rich. Some of the most



godly people on this earth are rich. Some of the most mean people you'll ever meet are poor. Some poor people are godly, and some rich people are ungodly. But the Bible does not condemn riches.

But the Bible condemns making riches your goal. If you do, you are headed for industrial strength problems. "They who will be rich;" that is my desire. When you make it your goal to be rich, do you know what you've done? You've just gotten another god. Your goal, your desire must be what Jesus said in Matthew 6 verse 33, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." And don't ever tell young people make all the money you can just so you make it honestly. Because if you tell him that, he'll be making money when he ought to be soul winning. He'll be making money when he ought to be praying. He'll be making money when he ought to be sleeping, or fishing, or spending time with his ten-year-old son. "They who will be rich," listen to it, verses 9 and 10 of First Timothy 6, "fall into temptation and a snare and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after," underscore that; we're talking about covetousness, "for while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

"Pastor, I don't understand that when you say, 'The love of money is the root of all evil.' There are other kinds of evil." Yes. But peel it back and covetousness causes us to break all the other commandments. For example, what are the first two? Exodus 20 verses 3 and 4, "Have no other gods." Verse 5, "Don't make any graven images." Well you read in the Bible in Colossians 3 verse 5, covetousness is idolatry. When gold becomes your god and creed your greed you've broken the first two commandments.

Then what does the next one say? In verse 7 it says, "Don't take God's name in vain." How many people have used God and tried to use religion to get ahead and to get for themselves the things that they want? And their religion is only a form of self-service and hypocrisy.

Exodus 20 verse 8, "Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy." Why is it today that business places cannot close down on the Lord's day? Covetousness.

Exodus 20 and verse 12, "Honor your father and your mother." Why is it that we fail to take care of our aged parents and sometimes just warehouse them or let other people take care of them? Why is that parents don't become honorable parents and take care of their children as they want? Why are people not even having children today? Covetousness. Many of them, not all of them, many precious people want children and cannot have them.

Exodus 20 verse 13, "Thou shalt not kill." I read in the newspaper where some young men saw a automobile with big hub caps on it, wanted those hub caps, killed the owner to get the hub caps. "Thou shalt not kill." What was behind that? Covetousness.

Verse 15, "Thou shalt not steal." Well we take what belongs to other people. We want what they have. Covetousness.

In verse 16, "Thou shalt not bear false witness." Why? We're stealing someone else's reputation, or trying by dishonesty to get ahead. And we falsify contracts and tell lies that things may come to us. Every one of the commandments is transgressed by this last one in Exodus 20 verse 17, which says, "Thou shalt not covet." Covetousness is an octopus that wraps itself around the soul and cannot be shaken off. Homes are being destroyed by covetousness. And the worst thing about covetousness is this. It will drag you down to Hell. You say, "Pastor that's a little strong." Well then I want to refer you to the Word of God. Put this one down. Ephesians 5 verse 5, "For this ye know," you know this, "that no whoremonger, nor unclean person,



nor covetousness man who is an idolater hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." Pastor, read that again. "For this ye know that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man who is an idolater hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." Folks, listen, covetousness is not a minor thing. God says it's a form of idolatry. Well, that's the problem.

Now, how do we get hold of this thing? Well not only do we see this perplexing problem, but it's so important that we get a proper perspective. **Covetousness is a lack of perspective.** You see what is the secret of satisfaction and contentment? It is promised and provided in the Lord Jesus Christ. Here's a great verse, oh write this one down, your kids need it. Listen to it. Hebrews 13 verses 5 through verse 6, "Let your conversation," the word conversation here means your lifestyle. "Let your lifestyle be without covetousness and be content with such things as ye have. For He hath said, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee,' so that we may boldly say, 'The Lord is my Helper. I will not fear what man shall do to me.'" The only truly contented and satisfied people in this world are people who've let go of this world with both hands and taken hold of Jesus Christ with both hands.

Ernest Hemingway, a great, great writer, I have enjoyed reading Hemingway, and at least familiarizing myself to some little bit with the talents of this man. But he died of suicide. And here's what he said. This is what the great, vaunted, successful, rich Hemingway said. "Life is just a dirty trick; a short journey from nothingness to nothingness. There's no remedy for anything in life. Man's destiny in the universe is like a colony of ants on a burning log." Too bad he didn't know Jesus. Too bad he did not know the Lord Jesus Christ who is the answer to everything. You see you've got to get a proper perspective. Hemingway didn't have it. And without Jesus I can understand why people would be a pessimist. I would be a royal, first class pessimist if I saw the world crumbling down around me, I saw rampant crime, I saw meaninglessness, and all I could look forward to was a hole in the ground to die and rot! Thank God in the Lord Jesus Christ. We have contentment. Listen, he says in Hebrews 13:5, "Let your conversation be without covetousness and be content with such things as you have for He hath said, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.'" I'm satisfied with Jesus. You just think of how rich you are. If you've been sitting around envying some fat cat, some Hollywood mogul, some wheeler dealer, let me tell you how rich you are.

You've got to get a perspective. First of all are you saved? I'm talking to God's people. You're saved! Listen to Psalm 73 verses 25 and 26. "Whom have I in Heaven but Thee? And there's none upon Earth I desire beside Thee. My flesh and heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." Friend, if you can say that, you are a multi-billionaire: to have God, to be saved, to have a hope that is steadfast and sure. Do you have a family? Oh, how rich you are. Proverbs 18 verse 22, "Whoso findeth a wife, findeth a good thing and obtaineth favor with the Lord." Psalm 127 and verse 3, "Little children are an heritage of the Lord." "And the fruit of the womb is His reward." You've heard me say many times, thank God for your children. They're your wealth! They're the heritage that God has given you. Oh, in this day when we put little babies to death in the womb, what a tragedy! "Well they will hold me back from my career." Oh? Children don't make a rich man poor. They make a poor man rich. The rich man can't take his riches to Heaven. I'm taking all my children to Heaven.

Think what we have in our Lord; not only salvation and family, but the friends that we have. Think about our brothers and sisters in Christ. Our friends that we have in the Lord Jesus Christ. Proverbs 17:17 says, "A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." How rich we are. Do you have a knowledge of the Word of God? Do you have the wisdom that comes from this one book? Proverbs 3 verse 13 and 14,



“Happy is the man that findeth wisdom and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver and gain, and the gain thereof than fine gold.” You don’t have to have diamonds dripping from your fingers and gold around your neck, if you’ve got God’s Word in your heart and you have wisdom; you know more than Ernest Hemingway knew. You know more than all the wise acres in the Pentagon put together if they don’t know the Lord Jesus Christ. How rich you are to have the wisdom of God. Do you have the peace of God that passes understanding in your heart that gives you satisfaction and you can be satisfied with your needs and not your greeds? Can you say with the apostle Paul in Philippians 4 verse 11, “Not that I speak in respect of want, for I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content.”

John Muir, M-U-I-R. If you ever go to California out in San Francisco go to Muir Woods; it’s named after him, where the redwoods are. John Muir was talking to a railroad magnate, an industrialist, a man who was a wheeler dealer, a man who had millions. John Muir who lived a simple life said to that man, “I am richer than you are.” He said, “Oh yeah. How is that so?” He said, “Because I have everything I want and you don’t. I have all I want and you don’t. I am contented and I have enough.” If you have the peace that passes understanding, listen folks, you’re rich.

I was witnessing to a man. He was standing in front of his house. I went up to talk to him. He was not a Christian. It was in another city. I asked him to give his heart to Christ. He said, “I’m doing just well.” He said, “I’ve got a steady income.” Said, “You see that house? It’s paid for.” Said, “You see that car? It’s paid for.” He said, “You see me? I’m doing fine.” He said, “I’ve got a wife. She’s a good woman.” He said, “I really don’t need what you’re talking about.” I looked him right in the eye. I said, “Sir, would you be absolutely honest with me?” He said, “Of course.” I said, “No, no, no, no, don’t say it easily.” I said, “Would you be absolutely honest with me.” He sobered his eyes, he said, “Yes, I will.” I put my eyes right into his eyes and I asked him this question, “Sir, do you have peace in your heart?” He said, “I own my house.” I said, “No. You said you’d be honest. Do you have peace in your heart?” I saw his chin as it began to quiver. I saw his eyes as they welled up with tears and he said, “No! I don’t have peace. How did you know?” I said, “Because the Bible says in Isaiah 48:22, ‘There is no peace’ sayeth My God to the wicked.’” You don’t have peace, you’re poor! I don’t care what else you have. If you have the peace of God that passes understanding, if you know that you have a hope that is steadfast and sure, my friend how rich you are. “Be content with such things as you have for He hath said, ‘I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.’”

Now, I want you to learn some steps very quickly. We’ve talked about a problem. We’ve talked about a perspective. Let me talk with you very quickly about **a practice**. What must you do? How can you teach your children contentment? What is the secret of satisfaction? Well number one: **trust in the Lord**, trust in the Lord; get to know Him. A covetous person is a person who has not put his eyes on the Lord. Only God can satisfy the deepest longing of your heart. God has so engineered you. God has made you where this world will not satisfy the hole in your heart.

Number two: **develop in your heart and in your children a spirit of thankfulness**. Be thankful unto Him and bless His name. Children today, they go to the closet. There’s not even enough room in the closet for all of the clothes, and they complain, “I don’t have anything to wear.” They’re surrounded by toys, and gifts, and trinkets, and video games and they say, “I’m bored. I want something new. I want something different.” They get their hair fixed. They get the right kind of perfume. They get the right kind of jeans. They get the little



insignias. They get all of this, and they say, "I have a poor self-image." Teach your children. Go over the little list that I've just given you. Help them to understand just how wealthy they are. Do you know the problem friend? It is not wanting more. Do you know the problem with most of us? It is not that we want more. We want more than somebody else. We can be perfectly satisfied with what we're wearing when we see somebody wearing something different. We can be perfectly satisfied where we live till we go off to visit the Gotrocks. And then they have a little bigger, a little better, a little nicer and then no longer are we satisfied. It's not that we want war, more. We want more than they want. Develop the habit of thankfulness.

Learn to love other people. Do you know why you covet what other people have? It's because you don't love them. If you loved them, you would rejoice that they have it. I make it a habit when I go into a home and I see all the finery and the nice things and the automobiles that someone may have; I make it a habit to bow my head and say, "Thank you God for blessing these people." I'm glad. Listen, I visited with my children over in Knoxville. They were showing me around their home, some things they'd done. Do you think I felt bad because they had some pretty things? Do you think I was envious? No. I was saying, "Thank you, God, you've been so good to my children." Why? Because I love them. When you love somebody else, you don't covet what they have. You thank God that they have it. And if you're jealous of somebody else I can tell you one thing; you do not love that person. Learn to enjoy the grace of God in somebody else's life.

And last of all and this is so very important. Do you know what the best way to deal with covetousness is? **Learn to give**, learn to give. I was listening to John Maxwell. And he told about a congressman who he was talking with. This was a congressman from Ohio. This congressman was a believer. This congressman said to him, and I'm repeating it to you; he said, "I want to tell you what God taught me about stewardship." He said, "I took my son to McDonald's. My son wanted a large order of McDonald's french fries." He said, "I put the money down on the counter, bought my son those french fries. We were having some father and son fellowship." And he said, "He sat down and began to eat those french fries." And he said, "You know what they smell like don't you? You know how good french fries smell?" And he said, "I just put my hand over there to get about two of those french fries and put them in my mouth." He said, "My son put his hand on my hand and said, 'Dad, those are mine.'" And he said, "I thought to myself, 'My son has a bad attitude. My son has a bad attitude.'" And he said, "In five seconds God spoke to me and gave me one of the greatest lessons I've ever had." And he said, "I thought this." Said, "In the first place my son doesn't know where those french fries came from. I bought them for him." And he says, "Those are mine. Secondly, my son doesn't know this, that I have the power to take them away from him if I want to. And furthermore, I have the power to get him a whole lot more. I've got enough money in my pocket. I could go up there and buy twenty large packs of fries and bury him in french fries, if I wanted to. And the third thing he needs to know is that I don't need those french fries. I could go buy my own, and eat them by myself. I don't have to sit here and eat french fries with him." And he said, "God spoke to me. And He said, 'That's the way you are when you're covetous and selfish. Don't you understand that everything you have I have given you? Don't you understand that I could take it from you? Or don't you understand that I could give you more? And don't you understand that I don't need your french fries.'" Don't get the idea that God needs what you have. "The Earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." Psalm 24 verse 1. God is not broke! You're the one that has a problem! If this is your attitude, "That's mine! God get your hands off my life." Friend, covetousness will kick your soul to death. Learn to give! Give your heart to God. Give your life to other people, and I'll tell you joy unspeakable and full of glory will burst out in your life. God keep us from covetousness.



Bow your heads in prayer. Heads are bowed, eyes are closed. No one stirring, no one looking around. Now folks, the problem with us is not that we break the Ten Commandments. That's only the symptom of the problem. The problem is in our hearts. Whether the problem is idolatry, profanity, dishonesty, whatever it is; the real problem is in our hearts. It's the heart that needs healing. We need Jesus. These things come out of our hearts and it's time that we let Jesus come into our hearts and move these things out and replace them with Himself. Do you know Jesus? Are you saved? Do you know that you know that if you died today you'd go to Heaven? Has that burden of guilt and sin been removed? Does God's dear sweet spirit whisper gently to you, "You're saved, you belong to Me, you're My child?" If you're not saved, you can be right now. Jesus died to save you. He carried your sins to the cross. He paid for them with His blood, and if you will repent of your sin and trust Him I promise you on the authority of the Word of God that He will save you today.

I want you to pray a prayer like this if you want to be saved. And by the way if you are saved and you know it, begin to pray for others right now. May be the person around you. You don't even know them, but just say, "Lord if that man, that woman, that boy, or that girl needs Jesus, help them right now." And probably precious friend right now there's somebody praying for you. Right now. And while they're praying for you I want to guide you in this prayer. If you're not absolutely certain that you're saved. If there's a doubt or if you know that you're not saved, pray this prayer, "Dear God," that's right just talk to Him. "Dear God, I know that You love me and I know that You want to save me. Jesus, You died to save me. You promised to save me if I would trust You. I do trust You, Jesus. I believe You're the Son of God. I believe You paid my sin debt with Your blood on the cross. Thank You for taking my place. Thank You for dying for me. I believe that God raised You from the dead. You told me if I would trust You, You would save me. I do trust You right now this moment I do trust You." Tell Him that. "I do trust You. Come into my heart forgive my sin. Cleanse me. Take control of my life and begin to make me the person You want me to be. Save me, Lord Jesus." Just pray it, "Save me, Lord Jesus." Ask Him, "Save me, Lord Jesus." Did you ask Him? Then thank Him by faith. Pray this way, "Thank You for saving me. I receive it by faith like a child. You're now my Lord, my Savior, my God, and my friend. And now Lord Jesus, because You died for me I'll live for You. And Lord Jesus, help me never to be ashamed of You. Give me the power to make this public. In Your name I pray. Amen."



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