

COVETOUSNESS

1. WHAT warning did Christ give concerning covetousness?

“And He said unto them, *Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.*” **Luke 12:15.**

2. What commandment forbids this sin?

“Thou shalt not covet.” **Exodus 20:17.** *Covetous:* “Inordinately desirous; excessively eager to obtain and possess (especially money); avaricious.” *Webster.*

3. What showed this principle to have been strong in the rich man who already had abundance?

“And he said, This will I do: *I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.*” **Luke 12:18, 19.**

4. What did God say to him?

“But God said unto him, *Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?*” **Verse 20.**

5. What application of this parable did the Saviour make?

“So is he that layeth up *treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.*” **Verse 21.**

6. What does Paul call covetousness?

“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and *covetousness, which is idolatry.*” **Colossians 3:5.**

NOTE — “Do not wade far out into the dangerous sea of this world’s comfort. Take the good that God provides you, but say of it, ‘It passeth away;’ for indeed it is but a temporary supply for a temporary need. Never suffer your goods to become your god.” *Spurgeon.*

7. What do these sins bring upon mankind?

“For which things’ sake *the wrath of God* cometh on the children of disobedience.” **Verse 6.**

8. What double service did Christ say is impossible?

“Ye cannot serve *God* and *mammon*.” **Luke 16:13.**

9. Of what sin were the Pharisees guilty?

“And the Pharisees also, *who were covetous*, heard all these things: and they derided Him.” **Verse 14.**

10. What reply did Christ make?

“And He said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for *that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God*.” **Verse 15.**

11. How does the Lord regard the covetous?

“For the wicked boasteth of his heart’s desire, and blesseth the covetous, *whom the Lord abhorreth*.” **Psalms 10:3.**

12. What did this sin lead Achan to do?

“When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold, . . . *I coveted them, and took them*.” **Joshua 7:21.**

13. What did covetousness lead Judas to do?

“And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, *to betray Him* unto them. And when they heard it, they were glad, and *promised to give him money*. And he sought how he might conveniently *betray Him*.” **Mark 14:10, 11.**

14. Why are the last days to be perilous?

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be *lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers*.” **2Timothy 3:1, 2.**

15. What parable did Christ give to correct the false idea of the Pharisees that wealth was a sign of special favor with God?

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus. **Luke 16:19–31.**

16. What did He point out as one of the dangers of the possession of wealth?

“And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto His disciples, *How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! . . .* Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, *how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!*” **Mark 10:2:3, 24.**

NOTE — And how hard it is for those who have riches not to trust in them!

17. As a rule, what class generally accept the gospel?

“Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen *the poor of this world* rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?” **James 2:5.**

18. How difficult did Christ say it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God?

“It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.” **Mark 10:25.**

NOTE — If Christ here referred to a small, low gate in the walls of Jerusalem, called “The Needle’s Eye,” as is thought by some, the force of the statement still remains; for, before a camel could pass through this gate, it was necessary that he should be relieved of his burden, and get down on his knees and creep through.

19. Why was the rich young man desiring salvation, unwilling to sell what he had and give alms, as Christ told him to do?

“But when the young man heard that saying, *he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.*” **Matthew 19:16.**

20. What is the love of money declared to be?

“For the love of money is *the root of all evil.*” **1Timothy 6:10.**

21. What evils befall those who are determined to be rich?

“But they that will be rich *fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.*” **Verse 9.**

22. Who gives man the power to get wealth?

“But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for *it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth.*” **Deuteronomy 8:18.**

23. How may all, rich and poor, honor God?

“Honor the Lord *with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase.*” **Proverbs 3:9.**

24. What caution is given concerning riches?

“If riches increase, *set not your heart upon them.*” **Psalm 62:10.**

25. Can riches be retained to men’s hurt?

“There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, *riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.*” **Ecclesiastes 5:13.**

26. What charge is given to the rich?

“Charge them that are rich in this world, *that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.*” **1 Timothy 6:17–19.**

27. What makes rich without adding sorrow?

“*The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it.*” **Proverbs 10:22.**

28. How are true riches obtained?

“*By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honor, and life.*” **Proverbs 22:4.**

29. How did Moses esteem the reproach of Christ?

“Esteeming the reproach of Christ *greater riches than the treasures in Egypt:* for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.” **Hebrews 11:26.**

30. What two classes of rich men are mentioned in the Bible?

“There is that maketh himself *rich, yet hath nothing:* there is that maketh himself *poor, yet hath great riches.*” **Proverbs 13:7.**

NOTE — In **Luke 12:16–20** is an example of the first class; in **Acts 4:34–37** are examples of the second.

31. What solemn warning is addressed to the rich who, in the last days, have heaped up treasure, and oppressed the poor?

“Go to now, ye rich men, *weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.* Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and *the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire.* Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.” **James 5:1-5.**

32. Will silver or gold be able to deliver in the day of wrath?

“Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord’s wrath.” **Zephaniah 1:18.** See also **Proverbs 11:4.**

33. What will the rich men do with their money then?

“*They shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be removed:* their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord: they shall not satisfy their souls, neither fill their bowels: because it is the stumbling-block of their iniquity.” **Ezekiel 7:19.**

NOTES — When the steamer “Central America,” with nearly six hundred passengers aboard, was wrecked off Cape Hatteras, Sept. 12, 1857, in a fearful storm, many of the passengers who were returning miners from the gold-mines of California, divested themselves of their treasure belts and scattered the gold upon the cabin floors, telling those to take it who would, lest its weight about their persons should carry them to their death. “Full purses, containing in some instances thousands of dollars, lay around untouched. Carpetbags were opened, and the shining metal was poured out on the floor with the prodigality of death’s despair. One of the passengers opened a bag and dashed about the cabin twenty thousand dollars in gold-dust, and told him who wanted to gratify his greed for gold to take it. But it was passed by untouched, as the veriest dross.” “*Our First Century,*” pages 642, 643.

When the steamship “Arctic” was lost from a collision in mid-ocean, Sept. 20, 1854, one passenger offered thirty

thousand pounds sterling, or one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, if the life-boats would put back to save him. They turned to do so. but he sank before they reached him. *Id.*, page 614.

34. As stewards of God's gifts, what are we told to do?

“And I say unto you, *Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.*” **Luke 16: 9.** “As every man hath received the gift, *even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*” **1Peter 4:10.**

Is not the way to heavenly gain
Through earthly grief and loss?
Rest must be won by toil and pain;
The crown repays the cross.

HENRY F. LYTE.