

**Scripture: Numbers 11:4-35**

**Notes:** Remember we have already learned an attitude is a *pattern of thinking about things—a way of approaching life. Attitudes are patterns of thinking formed over a long period of time.* Today we are going to look at covetousness.

**I. Definition of Covetousness.** Dr. Macdonald defines covetousness as *is wanting wrong things or wanting right things for the wrong reasons, or at the wrong time, or in the wrong amount.*

**1. Wanting the wrong things.** One example is an obsessive desire to be in control to be in in charge when you don't need to be. The wrong thing is power. Another perfect example is drugs, alcohol, or sexual desires outside God's design for sex.

**2. Wanting right things for the wrong reason.** This is evident among spiritual leaders. It is right to teach people about Jesus, desire to see the lost saved and impact as many people as possible for Christ. It is wrong to do it for personal glory or to push your own agenda. The purpose always must be designed to give the glory to Jesus.

**3. Right things at the wrong time.** One right thing wrong time is young couples over extending themselves so they can have the house and car it took their parents 20 years to work for. There is another type of covetousness plaguing our country.

**A. There is covetousness which places desires of the flesh ahead of God. 2 Timothy 3:1-5** 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, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. These verses describe perilous times. Everything on this list disrupts a believer's relationship with God. One interpretation for "lovers of their own selves" is I am my own person I will do what I want whether God likes it or not. Paul actually uses the word covetous as an example of a perilous character trait and how about "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God". We are not talking about the world now we are talking about the church. I can't come to church on Sunday because I have a "pleasure" that I will miss if I go to Sunday school or church. The real peril here is that last verse "having a form of godliness"; what I am doing is a right thing therefore it is God's will. Notice the phrase "by denying the power thereof", the power is the indwelling Holy Spirit, the relationship with Jesus, and the fellowship of the saints. Folks really don't want to hear this **2 Timothy 4:2-4** Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. Folks have said be careful preacher so many people are living this way and when you offend them they will not come. But to not preach the words means to ignore the problem and allow people to continue to be in ignorance of the nature of covetousness. Preaching the word and sound doctrine is designed to bring the person to a place in their walk with God that they will want more of him. Its design is to make aware of what the enemy is using to destroy us.

**4. Right thing in the wrong amount.** Money is an obvious example of this. Money is not evil. The love of money becomes a lust for money which is covetousness.

**II. Covetousness is a sin. Exodus 20:17** Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's. This is going beyond admiring the neighbor's house, wife or anything he has that you perceive to be better than what you have. God you have provided better for my neighbor than you have for me. This is the tenth commandment.

**1. The root of covetousness is a rejection of God's sufficiency. Numbers 11:4-6** And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes. Remember God gave the people Manna but that wasn't good enough, they wanted something better. What they wanted was the blessings of Egypt. Chances are they saw Egyptians eating the bounty while they received what their slave masters allowed them to have. It's like why can't I have the new car and the big house. Why can't I eat steak and Lobster tail each day? I deserve more than you are giving me God. One of the great problems in our country today is the sense of entitlement. This rejection of God's sufficiency causes us to focus on what we are lusting for meaning we don't focus on the Lord disrupting our relationship.

**2. Covetousness is a condition of the heart. James 1:14-15** But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. The word which jumps out in these verses is lust. Temptation originates in an area of the mind which covets something which God has forbidden. Some folks believe the mere thought is sin and it can lead to that but lust means long to possess or long to experience something. If you focus long enough on what you covet it will become an obsession. **Covetousness becomes active sin when we yield.** Remember the story of David and Bathsheba. He looked then he lusted then he acted. He committed the sin of coveting his neighbor's wife, committed adultery and arranged to have her husband killed. Lust conceived Sin producing death sure played out there. Unfortunately similar stories have played out over the years. **When we lust after a desire yielding is a matter of time.** For David yielding to his desire was rapid because the opportunity was easy to arrange.

**III. Receiving what we covet may consume us. Numbers 11:31-33** And there went forth a wind from the LORD, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits high upon the face of the earth. And the people stood up all that day, and all that night, and all the next day, and they gathered the quails: he that gathered least gathered ten homers: and they spread them all abroad for themselves round about the camp. And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD smote the people with a very great plague. And he called the name of that place Kibroth-hattaavah: because there they buried the people that lusted. And the people journeyed from Kibroth-hattaavah unto Hazeroth; and abode at Hazeroth. God says you want meat, here you go and he sends quail. The people are so greedy they become gluttonous. God gets angry at their lusting rebellious spirit and kills them. Sin has consequences. The addict may overdose or destroy families. Adultery breaks up families and leads to problems for children. Folks may gamble away a home or a college fund or worse yet there may come a generation which doesn't realize the importance of a relationship with Jesus because they were taught family, pleasure, good jobs and more toys were more important than Jesus. Next time we will look at the replacement, "contentment".