



The Danger of Keeping Up with the Joneses
1 Corinthians 10:14
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I. Introduction

A. Poseidon – 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

II. Proposition

A. Do not crave money, stuff, fame more than God, for that is idolatry, and idolaters will not inherit the kingdom of God.

III. Exposition

A. **Do not crave money/stuff more than God, for that is idolatry and idolaters will not inherit the kingdom of God.**

1. Craving money/stuff = covetousness, and that is idolatry!
 - a. The Ten Commandments may be summarized as, “Thou shall not Covet”!
 - 1). Do not covet your neighbors’ gods (Exodus 20:2-6). That is open idolatry!
 - 2). Do not covet your neighbors’ stuff (Exodus 20:17). That is idolatry of the heart!
2. Interestingly, covetousness is the only work of the flesh directly identified as idolatry in NT (Col. 3:5).
3. Why is coveting (the craving for wealth, possessions, wanting more) so dangerous?
 - a. Because wealth, possessions lure us away from God and anchor us in this world (10:6, 11).
 - 1). Deuteronomy 31:14-20 – Luke 18:19-25 – Luke 8:14
4. We are prone to crave money/stuff more than God and are continually tempted to look to money to save us.
 - a. We think if we only had more money then our problems would be solved, so we put our hope in it.
 - 1). We are tempted to lie, cheat and steel to get more money.
 - 2). We try to get rich quick: gambling, shady deals, risky investments.
 - 3). We willingly go into debt to have the stuff we want – read debt statistics.
5. Ask yourself these questions to see if you are serving the idols of money/stuff:
 - a. Do you think about money/stuff more than you think about God?
 - 1). Do you spend countless hours wheeling and dealing?
 - 2). Are you continually irritable, angry over your financial situation? Marital conflict?
 - 3). Do you continually compare what you have with what other’s have – the Joneses?
 - b. Why do you wake up in the morning? What is your purpose in life?
 - 1). To accumulate as much as possible? Is this your purpose?
 - 2). Is your education, career track driven by a desire to be rich?
6. Perhaps cravings for money/stuff are merely symptoms that expose deeper idols (success, fame, control)?
 - a. Do you buy name-brand stuff to impress others or to give a certain impression?
 - b. Are you consumed with how much you make? What others make?
 - c. Do you spend lots of time trying to make money so that you will be in control and independent?
 - d. Do you spend countless hours at work in order to achieve worldly success?

- e. Are you consumed with what others think about you-as a success/failure, fame in your industry?
 - 7. Are you placing your hope in the things of this world: money, wealth, stuff, fame, success?
 - a. What sacrifices are you willing to make to the idols of money/stuff (success, fame, control)?
- B. Flee the idolatry of money/stuff or you will be bound to this world and eventually destroyed (10:14)!**
- 1. It is foolish to trust in wealth and possessions (Luke 12:13-21; James 1:9-11).
 - 2. Those who place their trust/hope in wealth and possessions will come to ruin (Prov. 11:28; 1 Tim. 6:9-10).
 - a. You will sacrifice your marriage, family, relationships, body, ultimately your soul (Eph. 5:5)!
 - 3. One wrong way to flee the idolatry of money/stuff: legalistic denial (asceticism)!
 - a. God is not against wealth: Abraham (Gen. 13:2); Isaac (Gen. 26:12-14); Job, Joseph of Arimathea.
 - b. Asceticism does not address the heart issue; it only hides it!
- C. How do you flee the idolatry of money/stuff? Renew your mind and develop a heavenly perspective.**
- 1. **Remember, you have been raised with Christ (Col. 3:1)!**
 - a. This means your significance is in Christ, not in how much money you make or how much you have or success/fame!
 - 2. **Since you have been raised with Christ, seek the things above (Col. 3:1-4).**
 - a. This world is not your home; your inheritance is in heaven (Eph. 1:11-14).
 - 1). This eternal or heavenly perspective frees you from bondage to this world!
- D. How do you develop an eternal or heavenly perspective on wealth and possessions?**
- 1. **Recognize everything belongs to God, and from His wealth He provides for us (Ps. 24:1-2; 50:10-12).**
 - a. Put your hope/trust in God for your provision (1 Timothy 6:17).
 - 1). Go to your Father in heaven with your needs (James 4:1-3).
 - 2). WARNING: Do not presume upon God's provision (James 4:13-17).
 - b. Knowing that God is our faithful provider frees us from anxiety (Luke 12:22-31).
 - 2. **Receive God's provision with thanksgiving and boast in God as your provider (1 Chron. 29:10-13).**
 - a. Jeremiah 9:23-24
 - b. Contentment – Hebrews 13:5
 - 3. **Remember, we are mere stewards of God's wealth, since it all belongs to Him (Luke 16:10-13).**
 - a. As God's stewards, we are to manage God's wealth and possessions and deliver them where they are supposed to go to advance God's kingdom (Luke 12:32-34, 42-48).
 - 1). As Randy Alcorn says, we are God's Fed Ex/UPS guys!
 - a). We are not to hoard money/possessions, but deliver them where God wants them.
- E. How will we know we have an eternal or heavenly perspective on wealth and possessions?**
- 1. When we hold on loosely to the things of this world.
 - a. Begin budgeting your finances; commit to debt-free living; and dematerialize your life!
 - 1). Dave Ramsey – quick budget form in bulletin
 - 2. When we freely, joyfully, sacrificially give of God's wealth to advance the kingdom and encourage the saints.
 - a. Giving (delivering) is the only antidote to the idolatry of wealth and possessions!
 - 1). **Giving evidences our love for God and trust in God as faithful provider.**
 - a). Mark 12:41-44; 2 Corinthians 9:8-11
 - 2). **Giving evidences a renewed heart and mind (Luke 3:7-14; 19:1-10).**
 - 3). **Giving evidences our love for others above ourselves (2 Cor. 8:1-5).**
 - b. How can we at High Pointe be better stewards?
 - 1). Regular giving – operating expenses (10% goes to fund missions)

- 2). Special giving – WHC (10% to missions), LMCO (100% to missions), Benevolence
- 3). Special needs – Haiti is just one example.
- 4). Our desires: church planting, internships

IV. Conclusion:

- A. What does the way you view and handle money and possessions say about you and where your heart is?
 1. Are you anchored to this world or is your heart in heaven?
- B. Have you placed your hope in the uncertainty of riches or the certainty of Christ?
 1. If your hope is in the things of this world, repent and ask God to change your heart!
 2. Fight covetousness and materialism by believing that God is your faithful provider!
 - a. He has given us His Son; He will not withhold any good thing from us (cf. Rom. 8:32).
- C. How will you know that you are overcoming the fight against covetousness and materialism?
 1. When you begin to see yourself as a steward of God's wealth and begin freely investing in heaven through giving.
 - a. Note giving resources at visitors center and exits. *Treasure Principle* in bookstore.
- D. How do we begin to take the first steps of faith in giving?
 1. Give regularly (1 Cor. 16:1) – Tithe: the training wheels of giving.
 2. Give purposely, generously, sacrificially and with joy (2 Cor. 9:6-7).
 3. Such giving greatly glorifies God and encourages the brethren (2 Cor. 9:12-15).

Exodus 20:2-6 (ESV)

"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.
³"You shall have no other gods before me.
⁴"You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Exodus 20:17 (ESV)

"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's."

Colossians 3:5 (ESV) Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

Deut. 31:14-20 (ESV)

And the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, the days approach when you must die. Call Joshua and present yourselves in the tent of meeting, that I may commission him." And Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the tent of meeting. ¹⁵And the LORD appeared in the tent in a pillar of cloud. And the pillar of cloud stood over the entrance of the tent.

¹⁶And the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers. Then this people will rise and whore after the foreign gods among them in the land that they are entering, and they will forsake me and break my covenant that I have made with them. ¹⁷Then my anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and hide my face from them, and they will be devoured. And many evils and troubles will come upon them, so that they will say in that day, 'Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?' ¹⁸And I will surely hide my face in that day because of all the evil that they have done, because they have turned to other gods.

¹⁹"Now therefore write this song and teach it to the people of Israel. Put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the people of Israel. ²⁰For when I have brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey, which I swore to give to their fathers, and they have eaten and are full and grown fat, they will turn to other gods and serve them, and despise me and break my covenant.

Luke 8:14 (ESV)

And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature.

James 1:9-11 (ESV)

Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, ¹⁰and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. ¹¹For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.

Proverbs 11:28 (ESV)

Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like a green leaf.

1 Tim. 6:9-10 (ESV)

But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

Ephes. 5:5 (ESV)

For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Col. 3:1-4 (ESV)

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Ephes. 1:11-14 (ESV)

In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹²so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Psalms 24:1-2 (ESV)

The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, ²for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.

Psalms 50:10-12 (ESV)

For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. ¹¹I know all the birds of the hills, and all that moves in the field is mine. ¹²"If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are mine.

1 Tim. 6:17 (ESV)

As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

James 4:1-3 (ESV)

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? ²You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. ³You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

James 4:13-17 (ESV)

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit"— ¹⁴yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time

and then vanishes. ¹⁵Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." ¹⁶As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. ¹⁷So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

1 Chron. 29:10-13 (ESV)

Therefore David blessed the LORD in the presence of all the assembly. And David said: "Blessed are you, O LORD, the God of Israel our father, forever and ever. ¹¹Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all. ¹²Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. ¹³And now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name.

Jeremiah 9:23-24 (ESV)

Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, ²⁴but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD."

Hebrews 13:5 (ESV)

Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

Mark 12:41-44 (ESV)

And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. ⁴²And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. ⁴³And he called his disciples to him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. ⁴⁴For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."