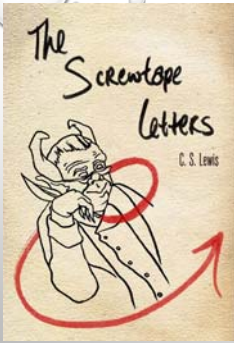


VICE
HABITS OF SIN
GREED

WEEK 5 FEBRUARY 18, 2018



“The sense of ownership is always to be encouraged...
At present the Enemy [God] says ‘Mine’ of everything on the pedantic, legalistic ground that He made it: Our Father [the Devil] hopes in the end to say ‘Mine’ of all things on the more realistic and dynamic ground of conquest,
Your affectionate uncle
Screwtape”

C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*, HarperCollins (1942), pp 113-115.

OPENING REMARKS

- Regarding my handouts...
- **God is gracious. Be gracious with yourself. We seek conviction & repentance, not shame and death (1 Cor 7:8-10).**
- Remember, **addressed are not those who are dead in their sins, but alive in Christ.**

WHAT IS GREED?

- **Greed:** to want more of something
- **Covet:** to want something another has
- **Envy:** to covet something (generally a quality, worth, standing, status or honor) at the cost of another having it
- **Jealousy:** feeling threatened that something you love or possess may be taken away

DeYoung RK, *Glittering Vices*

WHAT IS GREED?

Greed (or **Avarice**), according to Thomas Aquinas: “**excessive** love or **desire** for **money** and any **possession money can buy**” (DeYoung)

- **excessive** – relative term
- **desire** – want becomes “need” (**avarice**, from *avere*, “to crave”)
- **money** – object and agent of desire
- **possession** – implied ownership
- **buy** – power

WHAT IS GREED?

Greed (or **avarice**)

- **Greed**, according to Aquinas, is opposed by **liberality**, an open or free disposition to money and what money can purchase
- **Greed** says to God, “**It’s mine.**”
- **Liberality** says to God, “**It’s yours.**”
- **Liberality** also opposes **prodigality**, excessive or wasteful spending



GREED REVEALED

But **godliness with contentment is great gain**, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. 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**. For 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**. But as for you, O **man of God, flee these things**.

1 Timothy 6:6-11

GREED REVEALED

So why do we want riches? Why are we greedy?

(1) **We are possessive.**

- Aquinas: "The avaricious person takes pleasure in the consideration of himself as a possessor of riches." (DeYoung)
- "Avarice is not about just having more; it is about what is mine. Do we possess our possessions, or are we possessed by them?" (DeYoung)
- Possession of wealth creates the **illusion of control**.

GREED REVEALED

So why do we want riches? Why are we greedy?

(2) **We are fearful of want.**

- We want tomorrow's daily bread today. We want next year's daily bread now.
- In reality, we prefer treasure on earth to treasure in heaven, material abundance to God-dependence.
- Wealth creates the **illusion of security**.

GREED REVEALED

"Our greedy tendencies to trust in money for happiness and security undercut our trust in God... Greed expresses the **do-it-yourself method of finding happiness**, instead of the **contentedness of receiving the good that God has to give** and dependency on his provision." (DeYoung)

GREED ATTACKS JUSTICE

"But whom do I treat unjustly...by keeping what is my own? Tell me, what is your own? What did you bring into this life? From where did you receive it?..."

Is God unjust, when he distributes to us unequally the things that are necessary for life? Why then are you wealthy while another is poor? Why else, but so that you might receive the reward of benevolence and faithful stewardship, while the poor are honored for patient endurance in their struggles?

But you, stuffing everything into the bottomless pockets of your greed, assume that you wrong no one... Who are the greedy? Those who are not satisfied with what suffices for their own needs...

The things you received in trust as a stewardship, have you not appropriated them for yourself?... The bread you are holding back is for the hungry, the clothes you keep put away are for the naked...the silver you keep buried in the earth is for the needy. **You are thus guilty of injustice toward as many as you might have aided and did not.**

Basil the Great, "I Will Tear Down my Barns", 369 AD

Slide 12

SL1

Steven Langdon, 2/15/2018

GREED REVEALED IN US

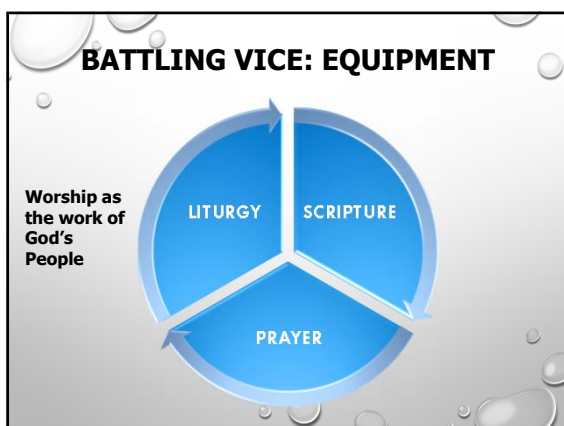
How might greed be leading us astray?

- **Selfishness**
- **Debt / Enslavement to our stuff**
- **Worry and anxiety about money**
- **Job dissatisfaction and stress**
- **Shopaholics**
- **Insatiable consumerism**
- **Rationalizing lifestyles**
- **Hard-heartedness**
- **Deceit / Lying / Stealing**
- **Dehumanization: use people for money / value people economically**

GREED LEADS ASTRAY

Following Jesus by loving God,
loving one another and serving the
world.

How might greed be compromising
the mission of God at ECC?



BATTLING GREED

FLEEING: What? How?

- Discern where to flee the people, places, situations, things, & media that prompt you to greed.
- Ask yourself the tough question...

BATTLING GREED

TALKING BACK: What to say to yourself?

- **Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like a green leaf. (Proverbs 11:28)**
- **For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:21)**

BATTLING GREED

REMEMBER YOUR DEATH

- **The Parable of the Rich (Greedy) Fool. "Fool! This night your soul will be required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?" (Luke 12:20)**
- **"Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you... Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. (James 5:1,4-5)**

BATTLING GREED

REMEMBER GOD'S PROMISES

- **"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters."** (Psalm 23:1-2)
- **"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.'"** (Hebrews 13:5)
- **The Rich Ruler.** **"How difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!... 'What is impossible with men is possible with God.'"** (Luke 18:18-27)

BATTLING GREED: CONFESSION

"Nothing is so deadly to sin as self-accusation and self-condemnation with repentance and tears. Have you condemned your sin? Put away the burden. Who says this? God Himself who judges us. 'Do you first confess your sins, that you may be justified.' Why are you ashamed, why do you blush, tell me, to admit your sins?"

You are not speaking to a human being, are you, who might reproach you? You are not confessing to your fellow servant, are you, who might expose you? No, rather to the Master, who protects and cherishes you, to the Physician you are showing your wound. He is not unaware, is He, even if you do not confess, since He understands everything, even before it is done? So why do you not confess?"

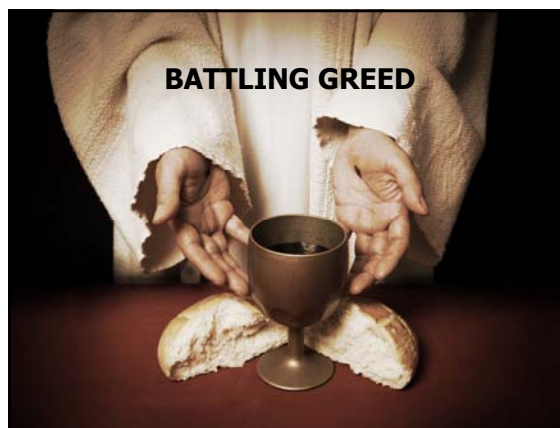
The sin does not become more burdensome because of your self-accusation, does it? Rather it becomes easier and lighter. For this reason He wishes you to confess, not in order to punish you, but in order to forgive you: not in order that He may learn your sin (how can that be, since He knows already?), but in order that you may learn how great a debt He forgives you. **If you do not confess the greatness of the debt, you do not discover the excess of grace.**"

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St John Chrysostom, "Fourth Sermon on Lazarus and the Rich Man" 388 AD

BATTLING GREED



BATTLING GREED: WORK

What can individuals do to battle greed?

- **Tithe.** Give to God your due.
- **Offering.** Give to God His due.
- **Generosity.** Give to others their due.
- **Keep track of your expenses.** God does.
- **Liberal frugality.** Simplify to live more freely.
- **Engage poverty.** People and systems. Up close and personal.
- **Seek spiritual direction.** Don't always trust your own decisions. Beware rationalization.
- **Be patient.** God's Spirit is at work in you.

BATTLING GREED: COMMUNITY

What can we do to battle greed together?

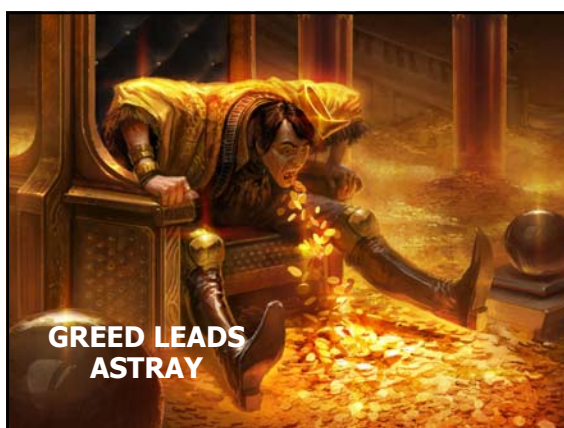
- **Grace.** Remember the poor widow's offering (Luke 21:1-4). Only God knows the heart.
- **Give.** God's heart is for the poor, the widow, the orphan and the alien. Is that ECC's heart?
- **Engage our community.** If ECC reflected the "community" how would that affect our struggle with greed?
- **Model stewardship.** Giving is private, spending is public.
- **Hospitality.** Would having more people into your home make you more or less greedy?
- **Share.** Money. Stuff. Life.
- **Grace.** This is hard. Embody grace to one another.

BATTLING GREED: REST

"If Christians could recover the practice of the Sabbath, it would help us turn away from the mad consumerism that is destroying people and the environment. Almost everything in our culture undermines what the fourth commandment wisely insists on preserving. If the spirit of the Sabbath would truly penetrate our minds and values, we would long to rest in the presence of our God—just 'wasting' the whole day on worship and leisure! We would treasure this holy leisure more than the opportunity to use Sunday to accomplish still one more important task, or build one more balcony on our Tower of Babel. And in the quiet times in the divine presence, the God of the poor would transform our materialistic hearts and make us more generous."

Ronald Sider, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*, p 202

MISSION: FOLLOWING JESUS



GENEROSITY CORRECTS

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. They are to **do good**, to be **rich in good works**, to be **generous and ready to share**, **thus storing up treasure** for themselves as a **good foundation for the future**, so that they may **take hold** of that which is **truly life**.

1 Timothy 6:17-19

GRACE TO HELP IN A TIME OF NEED

HEBREWS 4:14-16

Rich Lanning	Colleen Grogan
Michael Lyons	Erin Lyons
Rick Schatz	Sharon Schatz
Mark Verhagen	Becky Verhagen
Steve Langdon	Stephanie Langdon
	Sue Crosset

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