

**July 23, 2023**  
**Pretty, Ugly People: Week 3**

We're basing our teaching from an encounter that Jesus had with the religious leaders of His day.

Much of the early Gospel account is not that these teachers were wanting to walk into a learning debate session with Jesus, they wanted to take His teachings and twist them so they could have grounds to discredit Him, and ultimately have him banished, or even killed as a heretic!

Mark 7:14-15, 18-21 (NIV)

Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them..." "Don't you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them? For it doesn't go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body." He went on: "What comes out of a person is what defiles them. For it is from within, out of a person's heart..."

Mark 7:6-8 (NIV)

He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules. You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions."

I've heard for years that the church is FULL of Hypocrites. It's not Full, but we are Guilty!

Hypocrite: a person who pretends to have certain BELIEFS about what is right, but who BEHAVES in a way that disagrees with those Beliefs.

The Issue of GREED:

More isn't always better! We're going to talk about how Greed affects us, and how to overcome it by building the virtues of Generosity and Contentment.

What is GREED, and do I have a problem with it?

Webster definition: a Selfish and Excessive desire for MORE than is needed.

Maybe the reason we don't address it very often is because it can be hard to definitively define it?

What may be excess to one, isn't necessarily excess to another. There is some Subjectiveness on the issue!

Desire/Wants are not wrong; in fact, it is natural... until it becomes selfish and excessive.

But where is that line? And what is “more than is needed?”

I would advocate that the line is somewhere between where NEED and DESIRE begin to wear thin.

I have a motorcycle, are motorcycles a Need or a Desire? My bike is economical transportation, and it’s also a part of my mental health. But maybe not all of you agree with that?

Some of you may have a somewhat expensive...

- Boat
- Camper
- Cabin
- Sports Car
- Gun collection

Is it GREEDY to have all that stuff? Where do they fit on the line of Need and Desire?

As believers, we are called to draw the line between Desire and Need differently. It might start with us asking God, “Am I Greedy?”

I. Greed deals in the Temporary, we are called to the Eternal

With GREED, you’re never satisfied, or you never have enough, your enjoyment is limited to what’s next!

If you listen to Dave Ramsey, he’d tell you to sell your bright, shiny new car, and get a reliable beater and put that payment savings into your retirement.

A new car doesn’t really make financial sense unless you’re going to keep it for 7-10 years, which is hard to do when everyone else is riding in the latest and greatest!

Luke 12:15 (NIV)

Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of GREED; a life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.”

1 Timothy 6:9-10 (NIV)

Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.

II. Greed deals in Selfishness, not Selflessness!

1 John 3:17-18(NIV)

If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

We need to take care of our Planet, its resources, our waterways and oceans, not to an extreme, but with consciousness towards others!

### III. Greed will move you from Godly to Idolatry

Colossians 3:5 (NIV)

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and GREED, which is Idolatry.

How is Greed idolatry? Greed tries to satisfy our restless souls with things that were never meant to satisfy it.

It wants to put YOU First, and God Second or further down the line!

Luke 18:22-23 (NIV)

When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was very wealthy.

If you want a litmus test on your own Greed, when you get your paycheck, who gets the FIRST disbursement?

### IV. Focus on Generosity: Give Liberally!

Perhaps the best way to pry the fingers of greed off your heart is to Give.

Matthew 6:2-4 (NIV)

So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

One of the reasons Generosity is so effective in overcoming Greed is that it makes us aware of the needs of others!

### V. Learn to live in Contentment: to be satisfied with what you have.

Question: How many have heard the scripture: God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

How many know the context?

Hebrews 13:5 (NIV)

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be CONTENT with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

If GREED says More, Contentment says Enough!

I understand some of these battles are not just Spiritual, but they can be Psychologically and Emotionally driven.

A rich businessman was disturbed to find a fisherman sitting lazily beside his boat.

“Why aren’t you out there fishing?” he asked.

“Because I’ve caught enough fish for today,” said the fisherman.

“Why don’t you catch more fish than you need?” the rich man asked.

“What would I do with them?”

“You could earn more money,” said the businessman, “and buy a better boat so you could go deeper and catch more fish. You could purchase nylon nets, catch even more fish, and make more money. Soon you’d have a fleet of boats and be rich like me.”

The fisherman asked, “Then what would I do?”

“You could sit down and enjoy life,” said the businessman. “What do you think I’m doing now?” the fisherman replied!

#### Steps to Contentment:

1.) Sabbath Rest

2.) Simplicity

3.) 10 Day Rule: A need or a want?

Don’t be a Hypocrite! As a Believer we’re not called to Serve SELF!

Millard Fuller was a millionaire before he turned 30. His success fueled his greed, and he seldom stopped to enjoy what he earned. He hurled himself with increasing zeal into new ventures which promised more money and greater opportunities for investments. Then one day, unexpectedly, his wife, Linda, told him that she was leaving him. ALL HE THOUGHT ABOUT WAS HIMSELF, AND MORE! The news shook him to depths of his being and forced him to reevaluate his life and the things for which he had lived.

Millard Fuller discovered that only Jesus could satisfy his hunger, so he committed his life to Christ. Then he sold all his STUFF, and devoted himself to serve the NEEDY. You may not recognize his name, but you probably know the organization he founded in 1976: Habitat for Humanity.

Since then, Habitat volunteers have built over 300,000 houses around the world. Millard Fuller died even a richer man!