

# Sunday School Lesson

SEPT. 16, 1946  
By Dr. Paul Caudill

Topic: "The Peril of Covetousness" is all the more dangerous "because it is not one of the violent sins of men. It works in the recesses of the soul, and if allowed to go uncurbed undermines character, and will eventually lead to some overt action."

Scripture: Exodus 20:17; Proverbs 11:23-24; Luke 12:15-21.  
One of the most insidious sins in the catalogue of man's wrongdoing is that of covetousness. It



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Jesus warned his disciples against the sin of covetousness in no uncertain terms. In doing so, however, he was instituting no new code of morality but merely emphasizing and bringing to fullness one of the ten words of law given to Moses on Mount Sinai.

The Tenth Commandment "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's" (Ex. 20:17).

The word "covetousness" is variously used as to shade of meaning in the Bible. In some instances it signifies "gained dishonestly" as in Ezekiel 33:31. Again it stands for the inordinate wish to have more than one possesses (see Luke 16:14; 1 Thess. 2:5). Once again, it is used to indicate an inordinate love of money (see Luke 16:14; 2 Tim. 3:2).

A grave sin indeed is covetousness, so grievous that the Scriptures list it among the most heinous crimes: "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as becometh saints" (Ephes. 5:3). In Colossians 3:5 it is termed "idolatry," while in I Corinthians 6:10, it is listed as one of the sins that exclude men from the kingdom of God: "Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

According to the Bible the sin of covetousness is in a very real sense the root of many other forms of sin such as departure from the faith (1 Tim. 6:9-10, lying (2 Kings 5:22-25), theft (Josh. 7:21), domestic trouble (Prov. 15:27, murder (Ezek. 22:12), and "many foolish and hurtful lusts (1 Tim. 6:9). The sin of covetousness has had a woeful history in the life of the children of God. "It was one of the first sins that broke out after Israel had entered into the Promised Land (Achan, Josh. 7); and also in the early Christian church immediately after its founding (Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5)." In the light of his history of the sin there is little wonder that the Bible contains so many warnings against it. "A careful reading of the O. T. will reveal the fact that a very great part of the Jewish law—such as its enactments and regulations regarding duties toward the poor, towards servants, concerning gaining, usury, pledges, gold and silver taken during war—was introduced and intended to counteract the spirit of covetousness" (The Internat'l Std. Bible Encycl.).

Some of the outstanding examples of covetousness include: Saul (1 Sam. 15:9-19); Achan (Josh. 7); Judas (Matt. 26:14-15); Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11); Balaam (2 Pet. 2:15, Jude fl).

Less But More  
In the passage from Proverbs (11:23-24) we have a striking paradox: "There is that scattereth, and increaseth yet more;

and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth only to want."

"A man may grow rich by prudently spending what he has; may scatter in works of piety, charity, and generosity, and yet may increase, as the corn is increased, by being sown. By cheerfully using what we have, our spirits are exhilarated, and so fitted for the business we have to do; by minding which closely, what we have is increased; it gains a reputation which contributes to the increase" (Matthew Henry).

On the other hand, says Matthew Henry, "A man may grow poor by meanly sparing what he has, withholding more than is meet, nor paying just debts, nor relieving the poor, nor providing what is convenient for the family, nor allowing necessary expenses for the preservation of the goods; this tends to poverty; it cramps men's ingenuity and industry, weakens their interest, destroys their credit, and forfeits the blessings of God; and let men be ever so saving of what they have, if God blast it, and blow upon it, it comes to nothing; a fire not blown shall consume it (Hag. 1:6-9)."

All of which reminds us of the words of Jesus, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit" (John 12:24). Certainly, in whatever measure one's seed is multiplied by the sowing and to whatever extent there is an increase of the fruits of one's righteousness, it all comes from Him who is the source of supply (2 Cor. 9:10).

The Rich Fool  
In the closing passage of our lesson (Luke 12:13-21) we have a picture of what is commonly called "the rich fool." In the parable spoken by Jesus we see "a certain rich man" who because of his bounty decides to pull down his barns and build greater barns in which to deposit his gain in grain and goods so that he may eventually say to his soul, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry."

The scene changes however when God looks upon the covetous soul of the one who has been blessed by material fortune. God says to him, "Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

Jesus expressly declares that a man's life "consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Material bounty does not in itself assure one of happiness. Things alone do not make for joy. In fact things tend to pull one to a lower level in life. When Satan, following Jesus' temptation in the wilderness was seeking to frustrate the holy mission of our Lord, he came to him with the pull of things. "All these things will I give you," he said.

### Last Rites Held For J. B. South, Age 23

Funeral service was conducted at the family cemetery Sept. 5 for J. B. South, Rev. Quincy Yates conducted the last rites. J. B. South was born July 9, 1923; departed this life Sept. 2, 1946, being 23 years, 1 month and 25 days old. He was married to Miss Gladys Spears on January 28, 1944.

He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Gladys South, his father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. S. A. South, and the following brothers and sister, Ray South, Eugene South and Leslie Mae Miller all of Wilbar, N. C.

The pall bearers were Paul Owens, Eugene Taylor, Allen Yates, Silas Owens, Ambrose Spears and Jake Spears.

The beautiful flowers were carried by Miss Cavil Owens, Miss Ola Mae Spears, Miss Minnie Ray Johnson, Miss Georgia Spears, Mrs. Wonda Faw, Miss Collie Mae Johnson, Miss O'Dessie Pilkington, Miss Christine Spears, Mrs. Faye Dancy, Mrs. Bernil Miller, Mrs. Marie South, Miss Pearle Spears.

J. B. was a kind and loving husband, and leaves a host of friends to mourn his loss.—Contributed.

Generally speaking, October and November are the most dangerous months with guns, according to Red Cross surveys.

Ancient Methods of Skin Grafting. Plastic surgeons today, trying to improve their art, recently discovered that one of their newest methods is merely a refinement of skin grafting performed in India many years ago. Read this interesting scientific story in the September 29th issue of The American Weekly, Nation's Favorite Magazine With The Baltimore Sunday American. Order from Your Local Newsdealer.

Perhaps one of the gravest perils, if not the most serious, that America faces today, is the peril of covetousness. In all walks of life we face the danger of giving way to the pull of greed, of covetousness, of self. The only safeguard against covetousness is love expressed in generosity, brotherhood, and sacrifice.

These are the qualities of character that we find inherent in the life of our Lord at every turn of his journey among men. These qualities can come to sinful man only in proportion as he comes to know Jesus as Saviour, Redeemer, and Cleanser from sin.

### Support Y. M. C. A.

### Union Grove News

Mrs. Orlay Campbell and Mrs. Ray Orlay, of Greensboro, visited their father, Mr. Wessie Prevette, during the week-end.

Mr. Ralph Calloway, of Black Mountain, visited his relatives here Sunday.

Miss Ruby Gwyn Comer, who has been spending her vacation with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. C. L. Comer, has returned to Mary Hill College.

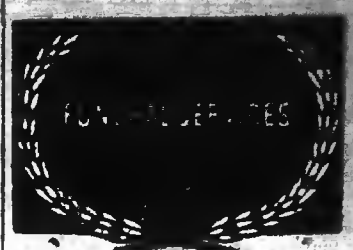
Misses Nora and Rosalene Lunsford, of Stateville, spent the week-end with their parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. I. Lunsford.

Mrs. Dannah Prevette, of Greensboro, who has been visiting her parents, Mr. and Mrs. R. G. Wright, returned to her home Sunday.

Mrs. Cora Felts, of North Wilkesboro, route 3, spent Saturday night with Mr. and Mrs. R. G. Wright and family.

Jack Lynn, former district agent of the State College Extension Service, writes from Greensboro that the U. S. Bureau of occupation needs is about 100 good county agents.

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