# 20 Days of Trouble

# Topic #16 - Greed

#### **Textbook Def:**

An excessive desire to acquire or possess more than what one needs or deserves, especially with respect to material wealth.\*

#### Real-Life Look:

Marlene was calling. "What does she want now?" Abigail wondered. Marlene only called when she needed to borrow something. Obviously she didn't want to spend her own money, so instead, she would just survey her friends to see who had what she wanted and subsequently borrow from the prime candidate. Abigail always displayed a giving heart, and she didn't want to change that and appear stingy, but she was tired of being taken advantage of.

One wife was plenty, except in the bedroom. After a dozen years of marriage, things just felt stale. Jamie had no desire to try anything new or different. Heck, she didn't even have an interest in the basics. Doug was entitled to be satisfied, wasn't he?

Alexis loved singing, had a blast touring with her band, and relished seeing her name in lights. She had finally 'made it' and she had no intention of letting it go. The auditions earlier in the day had rattled her. She was in need of a back-up singer and one of the girls was good. Really good. Alexis was memorized listening to her. She had a likeable personality, the talent to go far, and was incredibly marketable. No way was she was letting this chick near her band. For a moment, Alexis entertained the idea of facilitating a meet-n-greet between this gal and her own producer, but she quickly dismissed the notion. This was her time and she wasn't sharing.

Sure they were partners, but Luke would never know. Travis didn't believe Luke cut him in on every deal he scored anyway, so why should Travis extend the same courtesy back? They only had a verbal agreement, after all, and Travis was hurting for money. With his wife out of work on disability, things were tight. Scoring full tilt on a deal or two would make the difference between floating a while longer or sinking. A man's gotta do what a man's gotta do. "Luke would do the same for his family," Travis rationalized.

### **Sword of the Spirit:**

"For the wicked boasts of the desires of his soul, and the one greedy for gain curses and renounces the Lord." Psalm 10:3

"The greedy stir up conflict, but those who trust in the Lord will prosper." Proverbs 28:25

"I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who give me strength." Phil 4:11-13

### **Breaking It Down:**

The textbook definition of greed stopped me in my tracks. It said 'deserves'. "What one needs or deserves." It almost seems there isn't any need for further discussion, does there?

One of the basic precepts of our Christian faith is that **we** *deserve* **nothing**. Any blessings we are privileged to enjoy are a direct reflection of God's grace and love for us. Everything is a gift; *nothing* is *deserved*.

Unfortunately, we still operate with a sense of entitlement and are often consumed with worldly cravings. Our sinful nature causes us to make poor choices and participate in ungodly behavior.

Have you ever seen the show 'American Greed'? Greedy, despicable characters are portrayed and their wrongdoings exposed. I am forever appalled at the lengths people will go to get what they want; the trail of disaster left behind is incomprehensible. These lowlifes prey on the needy, weak, vulnerable, and trusting, often completely destroying their lives. And if they weren't caught, they would NEVER lose a second of sleep.

The majority of the time, money is the culprit, but not always. Some people are on a quest for power, prestige, control, respect, and authority and won't stop at anything until they get it. They'll step-on, chew-up, and spit-out anyone or anything in their path.

The obvious is pretty easy to spot. With mouths gaping open in disgust and shock, we can spot the classic greedy people a mile away. But what about the stealth offenders? Or those who aren't greedy in the traditional sense?

From the 'Real-Life Look' situations above, we can conclude the following:

**Marlene The User** – She has a greedy desire to use your money and save hers *even if* it's unfair and self-serving.

**Doug The Adulterer** – He has a greedy desire for self-gratification *even if* it means being unfaithful to his wife and destroying their marriage.

**Alexis The Selfish Singer** - She has a greedy desire to hijack all of the attention *even if* it's at the expense of other, deserving candidates.

**Travis The Cheater** – He has a greedy desire to acquire as much money as possible *even if* it is by dishonest means and to the detriment of his partner.

Even though difficult to recognize, greed is present in many forms. It's found in those seeking to obtain money, power, control, prestige, authority, respect, satisfaction, attention, and 'stuff'. They will lie, cheat, manipulate, use, beg, borrow, and steal to get what they want with no regard to who they hurt along the way.

Greed develops when selfish desires outweigh choices of character and integrity. Even something as simple as cutting in line at the grocery store is a display of greed. You're putting your own selfish desire to save time and get out of the store quicker ahead of the decision to be honorable and respectful to others.

We'll never experience true joy and contentment celebrating fleeting 'wins' born from greedy behavior. The temptations of this world will seek to disillusion us with lies, but decluttering greediness will allow the truth to shine through.

# The Benefit in Decluttering Trouble:

The opposite of greed is generosity. It's often easier and more fruitful to work towards a goal when we focus on what we're *striving to obtain* rather than what we must sacrifice.

"Good will come to those who are generous and lend freely, who conduct their affairs with justice." Psalm 112:5

Oh how I want 'good' to come. And I know I stand a far better chance of obtaining the truly 'good' stuff when it is from God's blessings rather than from my own selfish might.

Care for others as Jesus did and display the heart of a generous giver in all you do. Even at the grocery store...with a line that's long...when you're running late...and you have guests waiting for you at your home. Even then.

\*www.thefreedictionary.com

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