

THE DEADLY DANGERS OF MATERIALISM

(A Stewardship Message)

TEXT: Luke 12:15, 22-34

INTRODUCTION: Jesus had much to say in the four gospels about money and material possessions. One out of 10 verses in the gospels and 16 out of 36 parables deal with man's stewardship. The greatest hindrance to biblical stewardship is **materialism**. Therefore Jesus issued this sobering warning about "covetousness."

It is significant that Jesus issues two warnings in this chapter – against hypocritical religion (v. 1) and against greed (v. 15). The two are related, because materialism is a false religion. It dethrones God and fabricates an idol that cannot satisfy the heart. We must extricate this idol from our lives or we will suffer irreparable spiritual loss (Col. 3:5).

OUTLINE: Why is materialism so dangerous?

- I. **Materialism blinds us to the curses and limitations of wealth.**
 - A. It cannot buy happiness (Prov. 15:16, 17).
 - B. It will not last forever (Prov. 23:5; Lk. 16:9).
 - C. The soul usually fares inversely to the body (Mk. 10:23-25).
 - D. It blinds us to the truth that the best things in life are free.
 1. Sunshine, rain (Matt. 5:45)
 2. Salvation (Isa. 55:1; Rom. 6:23; Rev. 3:18)
- II. **Materialism fosters a spirit of sinful independence and self-sufficiency.**
 - A. "Financial independence is not scriptural; "financial freedom" is (Deut. 8:18; 1 Cor. 7:32).
 - B. Materialism leads to **pride** (1 Tim. 6:17).
 - C. Materialism poses the snare of **worry** (Mk. 4:19).
- III. **Materialism promotes immorality and vice.**
 - A. Marital infidelity and divorce
 - B. Crime
 - C. Social injustice and exploitation (James 5:1-6)

CONCLUSION: The cure for covetousness – for materialism – is **contentment** (1 Tim. 6:6,8). We must believe in our heart of hearts that "*no good thing will [God] withhold from them that walk uprightly*" (Ps. 84:11). Our prayer must be "*give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me*" (Prov. 30:8). We must labor to be "rich toward God" and not seek to impress men.

