

Prov. 30:7-9 (LD 44) “Feed Me with My Portion”

For the Children: Have you ever wanted to do something that you knew to be wrong? But you didn't go ahead and do it, you just wished you could. You wished you could steal something you wanted badly. Or you wished you could hurt someone who upset you. That is where sin starts, as with Eve in the Garden of Eden – wanting something forbidden or something God has not given to you yet. That is coveting. We break all of God's commandments by coveting. The only way to resist the sin of coveting – as with all sin – is to hate our own sins, look to the Lord Jesus for forgiveness and ask for the Holy Spirit's help to obey God's Word. **Questions:** How do the rich and the poor often covet? Can we prevent our coveting simply by avoiding being rich or poor? How can we learn to be content to obey God's commandments?

Introduction:

First Point: The Dangers of Poverty and Riches

- 1) The Danger of Poverty: Poverty may be the occasion for sinners stealing to gain what they lack. The poor may also become just as obsessed with material things as the rich. They may also blame God for their situation and reject Him. The previous verses (1-6) remind us that we know so little of God's purposes that we are not in a position to judge Him.
- 2) The Danger of Riches: The danger occasioned by wealth is that the rich man, in his self-satisfaction, may feel no need for God. Agur recognizes that both rich and poor are sinners who struggle with covetousness. Coveting is a sin with which we all wrestle, because it has to do with our desires for things the Lord has forbidden or withheld. How can anyone say he has not the slightest desire for such things, or that he only takes pleasure in what is right? Coveting comes into everything, in every area of life. The Lord exposed the Rich Young Ruler's coveting to show that he had failed with every commandment – at least of the level of what he desired.

Second Point: The Middle Course

- 1) Avoiding Temptation: Agur recognizes his own weaknesses. Part of his strategy is to ask the Lord to keep him from situations with which these weaknesses will not cope. So he asks urgently to have neither riches nor poverty. To resist the sin of coveting we may need to distance ourselves from situations that occasion temptations to disobey one commandment or another.
- 2) Not the Golden Mean: However, Agur is not arguing that a “middle course” – a modest income – will free him from temptation. He is asking for whatever portion the Lord will give that is suitable to his calling. That will vary from believer to believer. He also recognizes that the real problem is not money or its lack, but the sin of the heart. The self-deception and lies we tell ourselves – that “chasing after wind” will make me happy and I'm entitled to it; that it will do no harm. So he asks that the Lord will keep deception and lies from his heart – while removing those external circumstances with which he, in his weakness, would more likely give in to temptation.

Third Point: The Ultimate Solution

- 1) Recognition of Our Own Sin: A full-orbed approach to resisting the sin of coveting therefore requires an honest confession of our own sin – the inner problem. We need to pray for God's help to be honest about our failure to obey all His commandments. LD 44 makes this connection between the 10th commandment and all the others, both on the negative side – not even the slightest desire against any of the commandments; and the positive – our purpose to begin life according to all the commandments. This is why it is important to preach all the commandments pointedly (Q/A 115).
- 2) Recognition of God's Grace in Christ: It is impossible for sinners to resist the sin of coveting in their own strength. Therefore, we need the work of Christ to break the guilt and power of sin, so that we may be forgiven.
- 3) The Recognition of Our Call to Serve God: The Holy Spirit enables us to detect the self-deception and confess our sins. He sanctifies us, increasing our desire to resist sin and begin desiring to obey God. He teaches us to be contented, rather than to covet what we do not have.

Conclusion: