

3. BEWARE AND PUT TO DEATH THE SINS, PARTICULARLY SEXUAL IMMORALITY AND COVETOUSNESS.

Colossians 3:5, “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”

A. The first four sins in the list is related to various sexual sins:

- **Sexual immorality:** In Grk *porneia*
- **Impurity:** Filthiness and uncleanness – related to sexual sins
- **Passion:** Strong sexual passion
- **Evil desire:** Sexual lust in mind

More specifically:

- Sex before marriage (pre-marital sex)
 - Indira Jaising, a prominent human rights lawyer at the Indian Supreme Court: “It is quite normal for people to have sexual relations at 16 or 17 years of age . . . How can we make illegal what is normal?”
 - I knew a boy who was engaged into premarital sex many times while doing training in a Bible college.
- Strong passion for sex with a boy or a girl before marriage. (Youth & Teens)
- Pornography (watching the nudity and sexual intercourse of others)
 - According to India Times, INDIA IS THE THIRD MOST PORN WATCHING COUNTRY in the World. Many think only men watch porn, but according to the research, 30% of porn viewers in India are women.
- Glazing over sensual images in Newspapers, magazines, movies, TV....
- Extra-marital sex (sex with a partner who is not your spouse)
 - I know a good brother in the Lord, we once did training together at a seminar. He got married but later fell into extramarital affair with the church member who was also married.
- Emotional affair (desire for a man or a woman who is not your spouse)
 - TENTS brother shared about a married woman expressing her desire for him.
- Sexual fantasy (imagining sexual thoughts in mind)
- Child molestation
- Sensual chat

- Homosexuality. Forbes magazine, “The decriminalization of homosexuality is going to impact them (60% of India's population is under the age of 25) as they come of age, develop their increasingly individualistic identities and make choices about how they wish to live.”

What is the Scripture’s Remedial Exhortation to sexually immoral sins?

- ❖ **I Corinthians 6:13b**, “The body is not meant for sexual immorality [porn, premarital sex, extramarital sex, homosexuality, lust or sexual fantasy], but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.”
- ❖ **I Corinthians 7:2-5 [NLT]**, [2] But because there is so much sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman should have her own husband. [3] The husband should fulfill his wife’s sexual needs, and the wife should fulfill her husband’s needs. [4] The wife gives authority over her body to her husband, and the husband gives authority over his body to his wife. [5] Do not deprive each other of sexual relations, unless you both agree to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time so you can give yourselves more completely to prayer. Afterward, you should come together again [FOR SEXUAL RELATIONS] so that Satan won’t be able to tempt you [FOR SEXUAL IMMORALITY] because of your lack of self-control.
- ❖ **Proverbs 5:15-19**, “Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well. Should your springs be scattered abroad, streams of water in the streets? Let them be for yourself alone, and not for strangers with you. Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love.”

B. The fifth sin in the list is covetousness (Greed), which is the tenth commandment in the Ten Commandments:

Colossians 3:5, “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”

Covetousness: Uncontrollable and unsatisfied desire to possess more and more material things.

Kent Hughes: Materialism is the true religion of thousands of confessing Christians today. There is a sense in which covetousness is even more dangerous than sensuality, because it has so many respectable forms. So often it is the successful covetous person whom we honor. As the proverb goes: If a man is drunk with wine, we kick him out of the church; if he is drunk with money, we make him a deacon!

Covetousness can be most deceptive and painted with noble impression:

- Savings for future personal security

- Secure possessions for family (wife and children)
- Storing to help others or for ministry later

Tim Keller: We can't see our own greed—As a pastor I've had people come to me to confess that they struggle with almost every kind of sin. Almost. I cannot recall anyone ever coming to me and saying, "I spend too much money on myself. I think my greedy lust for money is harming my family, my soul, and people around me." Greed hides itself from the victim.

- Covetousness is even more justified when you earn more money in a right away. You may presume your gratification of greed as God's abundant blessings.

What is the Scripture's Remedial Exhortation to Covetousness?

a. Generosity

- ❖ **I Timothy 6:17-19**, "As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life."

Thomas Browne (1605-1682), exhorted, "Be charitable before wealth makes you covetous."

Comment: Unless you practice generous giving (not simply giving little), it is covetousness that drives you to possess more material things.

Note: These days Christians who have more money are unable to be generous because of their budget being tight due to investments and loans. God gives more wealth not to acquire more possessions for oneself but to be generous in sharing and in this way store more treasure in heaven.

b. Contentment

- ❖ **I Timothy 6:6-10**, "But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs."

The Puritan Jeremiah Burroughs wrote, "You worship God more by this [contentment] than when you come to hear a sermon, or spend half an hour, or an hour, in prayer, or when you come to receive a sacrament. These are the acts of God's worship, but

they are only external acts of worship, to hear and pray and receive sacraments. But this [contentment] is the soul's worship, to subject itself thus to God. You who often will worship God by hearing, and praying, and receiving sacraments, and yet afterwards will be froward [go astray] and discontented-know that God does not regard such worship, he will have the soul's worship, in this subjecting of the soul [contentment] unto God.”

Observe: Covetousness is named as idolatry:

- ❖ **Colossians 3:5**, “and covetousness, which is idolatry.”
- ❖ **Ephesians 5:5**, “For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.”

Idolatry? An idol takes the place of God.

For this reason, the Lord Jesus said, “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.” (**Matt. 6:24**)

Tim Keller: Jesus warns people far more often about greed than about sex, yet almost no one thinks they are guilty of it.

Comment: Churches today are filled with idolaters. They don't worship physical idols of pagan religions; they worship money and material possessions of the world.