

What Are the Dangers of Anxiety and Covetousness?

Luke 12:1-34

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And he said to them, "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." - Luke 12:15, ESV

And he said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. - Luke 12:22, ESV

In every age, the church has a tendency to select certain sins to emphasize while ignoring other serious sins. We all have these cultural blind spots, which keep us from seeing the beauty of the full wisdom of God's word. Thus, in our age, we hear much about sexual sins and profanity and abortion (which are all evil), and we hear much less about covetousness and anxiety.

So, why does Jesus warn us so strongly against covetousness and anxiety? What's the big deal?

Covetousness and anxiety are two sides of the same sin: materialism. Thus, when Jesus warns against covetousness, He says, "one's life does not consist of the abundance of his possessions," and when He warns against anxiety, it is anxiousness about "what you will eat . . . what you will put on."

Materialism is a huge core sin in our contemporary American culture. It is dangerous to us as Christians because what Jesus says is true and "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:21) We have no more sure sign that materialism has indeed gripped our hearts than the twin accompanying sins of covetousness and anxiety.

Covetousness is the restless grasping for more material goods. Anxiety is the restless concern that our needs or our deep desires will go unmet, unsatisfied. Both of these show not only an idolatrous attachment to material goods, but perhaps even more seriously, they reveal a profound lack of trust in the goodness of our Heavenly Father. It is impossible to be trusting in the goodness of God as your Father while coveting and being anxious.

So, what is the solution? Give thanks! When we express gratitude for what we have been given, we are rehearsing the goodness of God to our own souls. We are telling ourselves of the gracious provision of our Heavenly Father in meeting our every need. We are truth-telling and truth-telling is always lie-fighting and deception-defusing. So, when you feel the restlessness of covetousness and anxiety rising in your soul, stop, confess and give thanks!