

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

EXPOSED VI

The Trump Card
June 24, 2012



ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. For all Rock Church events, please visit <http://www.sdrock.com/events/>.
2. Let your friends know that they can always live stream the Rock Church Sunday worship experience by visiting <http://www.sdrock.com/live/>.
1. We are currently in the process of rolling out our new Area Leader and Coach leadership team for the Small Group ministry. If you are interested in joining this team, or could use the benefits of having a Small Group Coach, please contact john.darrow@sdrock.com.

MEMORY VERSE

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. (1 Timothy 6:9-10 ESV)

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

DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Use one or more of the following opening discussion starters)

1. Greed is defined as coveting (wanting) something you don't have. Envy is coveting what someone else has. Be honest, what are some things you have been coveting lately? How has this affected your priorities and your relationship with God?
2. Money is not the only thing we covet. Look at the two or three things you most desire to own or possess. Would you or God be glorified if you were to obtain these items? Does this influence your desires?



3. There are many ways to be blessed. Besides money what are the two or three ways that God has richly blessed you?
4. One way to break the grip of greed and envy in our hearts is to celebrate other people's success. Why do you think that is true? What are some successes of other people that you could begin to celebrate?

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS – EXPOSED

Sermon Review and Introduction

Pastor Miles continues in our new series entitled Exposed, a series designed to introduce us to the secret sins we engage in as they relate to pop culture, politics, and much more. This week Pastor Miles looked at the subject of covetousness; that is, a strong craving or desire for wealth, possession(s), or power. When we view the rich and famous we often imagine how much better our lives would be if we had that same wealth or influence. Whatever problems we may be facing, we think money can solve most, if not all, of them. So in our group this week let's further explore the topic of coveting from the perspective of Ecclesiastes 5:10-20.

1. If necessary briefly review the lesson plan from Sunday and any extra notes you may have taken with the group.

God has **unfairly** blessed you.

- We think **our** standard is **the** standard.

We do not realize the **value** of what we have.

- Half of the world lives on less than \$2 per day.
- If you earn minimum wage you are in the top 14.8% of income in the world.

We are only accountable for what we do with our **own** riches.

- Too often we focus on what we don't have versus what we do have.

Add'l Notes:

2. A few key things to consider before approaching this lesson:
 - The author, or preacher as he calls himself, of Ecclesiastes is generally assumed to be Solomon. He describes himself as, 'the son of David, king in Jerusalem' (1:1, 1:12). Despite some conflicting



assessments on the authorship we have reasonable certainty that Solomon (about 971–931 B.C.) is the preacher. At the very least the content shows Ecclesiastes is clearly written from Solomon’s perspective.

- While some question what place this book has in the Bible, much can be gained from the cynical viewpoint the preacher takes. As Gordon Fee notes it is “a brilliant, artful argument for the way one would look at life—if God did *not* play a direct, intervening role in life and *if* there were no life after death.”¹
- The key phrase repeated throughout the book is *vanity of vanities*.
 - The Hebrew translated as ‘vanity’ is *hebel*, which literally means ‘breeze, breath or vapor’.
 - ‘Vanity of vanities’ is an expression of the absolute. Nothing exceeds the vanity that the Preacher has discovered in his search for the meaning of a life without God.
- Two themes are presented in Ecclesiastes:
 - First, to “fear God.” (3:14, 5:6-7, 7:18, 8:12). To “fear God” means to respect, honor, and worship the Lord.
 - Secondly, the preacher teaches that the reader should “keep [God’s] commandments.” Solomon gives two reasons to keep God’s commands:
 - i. “For this is the whole duty of man” (12:13).
 - ii. “For God will bring every deed into judgment” (12:14).
- Scholars believe the book to have been written in the late 3rd century BC.

‘Money doesn’t talk, it swears’. So said Bob Dylan in the 1960s. Thousands of years earlier, Solomon warned of the corruption that is inherent in the pursuit of money and the power it brings.

3. Read and examine the context of this lesson (5:10-20) together as a group. A few things to consider before approaching the application.

- 5:10-20 parallels Solomon’s earlier warning on the futility of wealth in 2:1-11. What he did in this section was demolish several of the myths that people hold about wealth. Because they hold to these illusions, they rob themselves of the blessings God has for them.
- Solomon is perhaps the most qualified man in history to speak on the dangers of wealth as he was accredited with more wealth, honor, and possessions than all the kings before and after him (1 Kings 3:13, 2 Chronicles 1:12).
 - His annual salary of 640 talents of gold was equivalent to \$1.1 billion today.
- There is little doubt that, comparatively, Solomon was as wealthy as any multi billionaire of our generation. As Paul cautioned, “the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil” (1 Timothy 6:10). Solomon issued a similar warning to the wealthy—a continual close proximity to wealth may result in a passionate love affair with it (5:10).
- If one becomes corrupted by their lust for money several results can occur:
 - Dissatisfaction (5:11)
 - Sleeplessness (5:12)
 - Anxiety (5:13-14)
 - Futility (5:15-17)
- Solomon presents several misconceptions about money.
 - 5:10 – Wealth brings satisfaction
 - 5:11 – Money solves every problem
 - 5:12 – Wealth brings peace of mind
 - 5:13-17 – Wealth provides security
- Keep in mind that Solomon was advocating neither poverty nor riches, because both have their problems (Prov. 30:7–9). The Preacher was warning his listeners against the love of money and the delusions that

¹ Jim Winter, *Opening Up Ecclesiastes* (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2005), 11.



wealth can bring. In the closing verses of the chapter (vv. 18–20), he affirmed once again the importance of accepting our station in life and enjoying the blessings that God gives to us.

Application

With a better understanding of the text, discuss the following points.

1. What are the negative effects of the love of money (8–17; Matt. 19:23–24; Mark 4:19; 10:17–22)?
2. Check your own attitude to material possessions. Are you suffering any of the symptoms of corruption recorded in vv. 11–17 (dissatisfaction, sleeplessness, anxiety, or futility)?
3. What is the best antidote for corruption (vv. 18–20)? How can this be applied? What are some practical ways that we can focus on what we have versus what we don't have?
4. Can you think of a person who has gained considerable wealth, but now seems to have lost a spiritual appetite, and maybe even seems to have lost a living faith in God? How might that person have avoided the negative side effects of wealth?
5. Having wealth is not necessarily a bad thing. We must remember that if God chooses to bless us with wealth, it is for His glory. What are some of the blessings of wealth (1 Tim. 6:17–19; 2 Cor. 8:1–24; 9:1–15)?

Homework

1. Identify someone who you've viewed with envy recently. Identify the area in your life where you feel dissatisfied compared to what this person has and ask God to provide you with contentment. If possible, approach that person and confess your envy and apologize for your sin.
2. God doesn't need your money; he wants your heart. Greed and envy are really heart issues. It's when we align our hearts with God's heart and start giving that we become more like God, because God is a giver. This week, budget some extra money (a little or a lot) specifically to give away. Then give it away and note how it made you feel. Share the result with your group the next time you meet.
3. Find Scripture that discusses the sustaining power and sufficiency of God. Study this Scripture each morning and look for opportunities to apply this principle to your life. Discuss with your group next week.

