

- > **Great Day**.... We are so glad that you decided to join us today, for another message segment – brought to you by “**Discovery Crossroads Ministries**”.... Our ministry believes that: **with God**, “**Dead ends, become alive again!**”....  
With God acting in our lives, on our behalf, “**all things are possible for Him!**”
  
- > The message title today: “**Bad News Bears!**”... This is NOT a message about: “The 1976 Bad News Bears baseball team movie.” It is however a message about how: “**Coveting could turn out to be Bad News for us!**”....(just a side note: We are recording today’s message, from a beautiful spot in Juneau, Alaska).
  
- > So, Patti & I just returned from **Brooks Falls**, here in Alaska (*it’s in the Katmai National Park; King Salmon area*).  
At Brooks Falls, the annual salmon run brings lots of bears to the river to fish for salmon. The salmon gather there on their journey upstream to spawn. The bears know this and they also gather at these falls, to gorge on the plentiful fish.  
The bears get their fill, in a quest to fatten up for the long winter’s hibernation period. It’s amazing to watch these bears fish, they each have a technique all their own – so fun!

- **However**, there's a problem!... It seems that there are some "**covetous**" bears hanging around, that think another bear's salmon, should be theirs! Whether the "covetous" bear believes another bear's fish looks better, or might taste better, is unknown. All we know is, the "covetous" bear will fight tooth & nail, to steal another bear's salmon! It's such a powerful thing to behold - and yet, it is a thing that seems to happen in humanity too!
- The Bad News about being Bears that Covet is: there is a hard consequence that comes along with doing it!
- > **Ok**, so let me shift the heat off the bears, and onto humanity! God gave some pretty straight-forward instructions, to the people called by His Name. It's found in [Exodus 20:17](#), and also here in [Deuteronomy 5:21](#), "You shall **not covet** your neighbor's wife (*or your neighbor's husband either*). You shall **not set your desire on** your neighbor's house or land, his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or **anything** that belongs to your neighbor." NIV
- "**Covet**" in Hebrew means to: "**lust after, desire greatly, or be highly fond of**". We see that in the Deut. passage that I just used - for it said, "You shall **NOT SET YOUR DESIRE ON** another person's: wife (*husband*), house, land, servant, donkey's, or anything else that **BELONGS TO** your neighbor."

...**Ut Oh**, this presents us with some issues. Certainly, everyone listening in today, has had thoughts (*or, "Envied" about*) getting/having something that your neighbor has!

I watch the people, that **Jesus** called "**sheep**", chase their neighbors ("**The Jones's**") around, trying to "keep up" with what they have... the sheep totally "**Envy**" what their neighbors have! **Look around**, **How many people do you see "mimicking & obtaining", what their neighbors (friends or families) have?** I can look across the street and see one neighbor, buying a new, shiny, SUV - and then suddenly the neighbor next to them, comes home with the same SUV a week later! Tell me that "**YOU**" have never wanted (*strongly desired*) something, that someone close to you had. Seems harmless enough, but "**Coveting**" is really harmful to the one that is coveting something!

> **So**, **What is the problem with Coveting?**... Coveting is an intense, unwholesome, unhealthy, "**desire**" to **possess something that belongs to someone else**.....(*repeat Gary*) Coveting is an inward "**craving**" for: wealth, possessions, or status, that leads to discontentment. Coveting can literally corrupt good morals. It is inherently problematic, because it "**breeds**": deep discontentment, destroys interpersonal relationships, and acts as a "**root cause**" for destructive actions like: lying, deceitfulness, thief, and even violence.

Coveting is a big problem for human beings... so, God made it "**the 10<sup>th</sup> Commandment**", of the Ten Commandments!

-- **So**, Let's talk about: "**4 Problems** that **Coveting causes us**":

**1) It robs you of your present joy.** Constantly desiring what others have is an insatiable trap - it traps you in **a cycle of "if onlys"**...(*iow: "I'll be happy when I get that: new car, boat, house – like my neighbors have... or when I get that: magical-vacation – like my neighbor just got... or when I get the: fashion or physical appearance – that my neighbor has... or even, I'll be happy when I get my neighbor's spouse....."*).

- Coveting causes you to "**overlook & devalue**" your own **current** blessings. **Listen**, We find JOY in the blessings that God freely gives us, but that Joy can be bumped to side when we lust, crave, covet for someone else's blessing!

Joy shouldn't be "**disposable**".... Yet, we make it such, when we "**toss it aside**" for what **WE THINK** is a greener pasture (*a better deal... a better Joy*)! Jesus called people "**sheep**", because He knew that we: seek after the Joys of others, versus enjoying "**the good things**" that God had already given us! **Have you ever found yourself chasing after something that a: friend, neighbor, co-worker, or family member, has?** If so, you're "**undermining**" your own Joy, by "desiring" what you might Not be able to have!

- Enjoy the blessings that The Lord gives you **NOW**, and do not worry about what you do not have.... Enjoy God's Blessings **NOW**, because what He gives us is "**heavenly & eternal**" (*Good things that "come down to us, from the Father of Heavenly Lights"*)... everything else is worldly & corruptible ("**temporary**"), passing away when all time ends on earth! Bank on the things that are "Eternal", folks!

> **The 2<sup>nd</sup> Problem that Coveting causes us:**

- 2) **It is a root cause of other sins.** Coveting is often what happens in our soul, long before it becomes noticeable to people! Every flower, weed or tree, starts with roots that grow underground. Likewise, Coveting is one of the soul-roots, that is responsible for setting our mind & heart on evil thoughts & actions. Out of the "**Roots of Coveting**", grow terrible sinful thoughts & actions!
- People will **lie** out of pride, to save their reputation – they will **steal** to gain more "**Material**" possessions – and they will **act out of malice**, since they have to use greater means to get what they want. Coveting always "**craves**" MORE!
  - I said that Coveting people will act out of "**Malice**".  
"**Malice**" means: Having a deep-seated Desire to do evil, cause harm, or seek revenge. Malice speaks to an **ill heart**, that is "poisoned" with wrongful, unhealthy, desires!

Malice causes moral decay; just as a cavity destroys a tooth!

- **Think of it like this**: a cavity left unchecked – leads to the destruction of the tooth's root – which leads to the need of a root canal. If that doesn't stop the decay, infection sets in – and if it's too bad, the tooth will have to be pulled out! **Now**, that exactly describes how: Coveting leads to "moral-decay" – which in turn leads to committing other sins... others sins that move out from the "epicenter of malice", and build outward to things like: **lying** to all those around you, to cover your sins - **cheating** your dearest friends or family – **stealing** from whoever has what you want – and becoming **violent** as a last way to get what you want! **All of this** goes AGAINST the **good** values of how Jesus taught us to live by... we are to Love others, more than we love ourselves... we are to give everyone a fair deal... we are to be honest with them, just as we want them to be with us... we are to practice truthfulness & grace with others... we should be giving to others, more than we expect to receive from them... etc., etc.
- The Apostle **Peter** wrote this to us, in **1 Peter 2:1-3**,  
"Therefore, **rid yourselves of all malice** and all deceit, hypocrisy, **envy**, and slander of every kind. 2 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, 3 now that you have tasted that the Lord is good." NIV

Peter just told us to, “**RID YOURSELVES** of envy (*coveting*) & malice (*using sinful ways to get what you want*).” When was the last time that “YOU” intentionally “Rid Yourself”, of these evil-inclinations & actions?

Getting Rid of these things means: You intentionally set out to take the focus off of “**YOUR**” selfish desires, so that you can see & meet the needs of “**OTHERS**” around you – *that’s what Christ’s Love in us, compels us to do!* To remain selfish in our worldly desires, only feeds the lust of the flesh that stirs sin up to arise in & thru us, all the more!

We’ve Got To purposely “**Kill the selfishness**” in us!

Will someone go out and tell those “Covetous” bears, that they have Got To “Rid themselves” of their Envious & fish-stealing ways?

> The **3<sup>rd</sup> Problem** that Coveting causes us:

- 3) It fosters division & resentment.** Instead of “celebrating” the joys & successes of others, Coveting flips your neighbor's blessings, into “**hostility & envy**”, in **Your own** heart.
- In other words, Coveting “**builds a wall**” around YOUR heart, that keeps you pinned inside of it, while keeping all others locked outside. Coveting literally places “**a barrier**” between you and your neighbors! Seriously, I can see the “**division**” that Coveting brings to the bears... they literally separate

themselves, at the falls, to avoid trouble! **Look**, just because a squirrel CAN jump up on a birdfeeder and eat the bird's food, does NOT mean that it should do it.... *it could get hurt doing that: if you know what I mean!* Resentment, Division & Hatred, spawn from Coveting. Jesus never told us to live separated from others like that! The Apostle Paul wrote to the churches in Rome about, "*living at peace with everyone; especially their neighbor!*" **Romans 12:18**, says, "If it is possible, as far as it depends on YOU – live at peace with everyone!" NIV.... (*how: QUIT stealing fish, that Belong to others!*)

\* **Listen**, You cannot live at peace with your neighbor, when **YOU** are: jealous, envying, coveting & stealing from them! **James 4:1**, "What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don't they come from the evil desires, at war within you?" NLT..... **Yeah they do!**

- The Romans passage said, "As far as it depends on **YOU**" – that means: Peace is not contingent on you "waiting around" for your neighbor to be peaceful. It means: "Peace depends on **YOU** being peaceful with others, first!" **So, Are you? Are you peaceful with everyone? The call is to live peacefully with EVERYONE, without contention or coveting!** Having "**unhealthy desires**" for something of your neighbors, will only cause "**chaos**" - Not "**calmness**"!

> The **4<sup>th</sup> Problem** that Coveting causes us:

4) **It is deeply tied to idolatry.** Coveting is actually a form of “**worship**”. That means: When you Covet something or someone, you are bowing down & giving it/them your admiration & devotion! **Yet**, God is to be “**The One**” to Whom we worship, ALONE. We are NOT to worship “**things made of this world**”, for they are only “temporary” things that will dissolve, when the elements of earth are set ablaze, on the last day! **Therefore**, We are to worship **God alone** - (*God, The Eternal – God, The Creator of all*).

...With **Coveting & Idolatry**, the “**Tenth Commandment**”, “**circles back**” to the “**First Commandment**” - which says in **Deuteronomy 5:7**, “**You shall have NO OTHER gods before Me!**”...(*Not even Coveting*). NIV **Seriously**, Coveting something or someone “**OVER God**”, leads us away from loving, admiring & being devoted to Him! **Imagine**, God has a Kingdom (*heaven*) prepared for all those who “**love HIM**”, and you will miss out on heaven - because you chose to love something or someone else OVER Him! Idol worship is a big deal with God, and He despises it! Coveting turns out to be: loving something that your neighbor has, more than loving God! **Why?** Because coveting & idolatry, are at the core of envy & self-love – *how*: you love something or someone (*for yourself*), more than you love God (*for yourself*).

Come on, **Do you think that God is NOT a jealous God?**

Well, He is; **Exodus 34:14** says so!

**So, High School**.... In High School people purposely dated people that they didn't really like, just to make another person jealous... **Come on, Am I telling the truth?**

**So**, imagine you doing that to God! **What if YOU chose to love something or someone else, and all the while you end up making God jealous... Shouldn't He be jealous, and have an issue with that? Listen, Don't mess with God's jealousy**, for He will do whatever He has to, to break your Coveting away from you... He loves you too much, to let you stay in that condition. His fire consumes Coveting!

- > **Awesome people**.... Don't lose your joy in Coveting. Don't let Coveting **degrade** you into deeper sins, possibly causing you to miss out on heaven. **Rid yourselves** of all Coveting, so that you do not have any "**divisions or resentments**" between you & others. And truly realize that Coveting, is "**Idolatry** against God"... **Kill it**, and know the salvation that comes from The Lord.
- > If we will just "**follow & obey**" The Word of God, we can **combat & succeed** against the struggles of Coveting everything in our life. Follow & obey God's Word in **Matthew 22:37-39**

which says, "37 Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with **all** your heart and with **all** your soul and with **all** your mind.'

38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" NIV

...( *This is saying*, "*Love God ABOVE anything or anyone else, with **ALL** of your desires; not just part of them*")

...( *It also says*, "*Love your neighbor with Genuine Love, **INSTEAD OF Coveting, Stealing & Hurting them!***").

> **Consumed By Fire** lyrics.... "All the things that I have held dear, the vanities that whispered in my ear. What would I do if they all disappeared, riches and fame and all that they could buy. I've come to find they never satisfy; what would I gain if my soul's the price? I don't wanna love what the world loves - I don't wanna chase what the world does - I only want you! First thing's first - I seek Your will, not my own - I **surrender all my wants** to you!"

-- **Folks**, **What kinds of things, or people, might you be Coveting & Worshipping OVER God, right now?**

**Is it possible** that you are Coveting something or someone, and don't even realize that you are doing it?

- **May this message** stir your soul, to make you question if you "ARE" in a right standing with God (***Your Creator***), or if you are "NOT"?.....

Coveting comes to us with a lifetime **battle**, but **with God** in our battle – we can crush it! Choose of your own freewill, to **Dump (*Surrender*) Coveting & Rediscover** your lost Joy!

- At the start of this message I said, “**With God, all things are possible**” - Therefore, He can help us overcome Coveting! ...**But, will you seek His Help? It's really up to you!**

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### **Discovery questions:**

- 1)** As I watched the bears in Alaska fight each other over a simple little fish; I wonder if people can be bears too, brutally attempting to take away what other people have? Maybe it has happened to you? Is acting “entitled”, really Coveting?
- 2)** Reread the 10<sup>th</sup> Commandment found in [Deuteronomy 5:21](#); What is that saying (*meaning*) to YOU?
- 3)** The definition of “Coveting” says that it is: “an unwholesome, intense, unhealthy, “desire”, to possess something that **belongs to someone else**”.... So, can you HONESTLY say that you have no desire to have something or someone, that **belongs to someone else**? I mean: that YOU really are “considering” (*strongly desiring*) to have it - even if it's only in your mind? Come on, has YOUR mind ever set its quest on obtaining something or someone that belongs to another person? (*be honest with yourself*).

- 4)** Jesus often called human beings “**sheep**”; So, why do you think that He did that? *I mean*: What are sheep famous for doing? Seriously, don’t people think & act like sheep? Don’t they follow each other, even into bad pastures or where the wolves are? Sheep too easily get themselves into many troubles!
- 5)** Give some examples of people (*neighbors*), where you have seen them coveting & acting like sheep – when they copy or steal what their neighbors have. Doesn’t “mimicking” what your neighbors have (*to the point that you go and get what they have*), really not Envy & Coveting? Think deeply here!
- 6)** Just asking for a friend... Is “adultery” Coveting; even if it is only in someone’s thoughts? *I mean*, is just “thinking about” having someone else’s husband or wife, really Coveting?
- 7)** Have you ever watched those TV shows that highlighted a person going to jail for thief & murder, because they took something or someone that belonged to someone else? How did it make you feel about the person that went to jail? Have you ever thought that maybe YOU could be that person, that Coveted your neighbor’s property so much that you acted outside of the law? *I mean*, is it possible; even if remotely?
- 8)** I said that Coveting: robs you of your Joy – So, how is that possible? *I mean*, How does Coveting steal Joy?

- 9)** I said that Coveting: is the root, that leads to other sins – Explain how you see the root of Coveting growing, and what all it can grow & blossom?
- 10)** I said that Coveting: creates divisions & resentments between you and your neighbors – So, have you ever witnessed this happen between family members, dear friends, or close neighbors? How deep might the wounds of Coveting go between two people?
- 11)** I said that Coveting: can lead to Idolatry – But what does Idolatry really mean? If you've ever strongly Coveted something or someone that belongs to someone else, did you know that this was Idolatry? How seriously do you think God takes Idolatry in us? Does He hate Idolatry? Do we ever Covet other things or people, to the exclusion of Him? What does that look like? In [Deuteronomy 5:7](#), try to find the depth/power of God's seriousness of His Words (*look to the "exclamation point" at the end of the statement!*)
- 12)** So, the apostle Peter gave us the cure on Coveting, which is found in [1 Peter 2:1-3](#). He told us to "**Rid yourselves of Envy, Coveting & Malice**" - But just **HOW** do you **Rid yourself** of these things? (*Look at the key words, "**crave pure spiritual milk (things)**", and decide if that's **HOW** you will do it!*)

**13)** Please tell me (*or yourself*), how [Romans 12:18](#) is a call to all human beings to: “**seek Peace**” with other people, rather than to cause chaos? What does the author of that passage mean when he wrote, “**As far as it depends on YOU, live at peace with everyone**”?

**14)** Speak to **HOW** you see yourself, fulfilling the mandates of [Matthew 22:37-39](#) – Loving God with **ALL** of your being (*not just a **PART** of it*), and Loving your neighbor AS (*or, as much as*) YOURSELF? Again, **HOW** will you make your whole life conform to God’s High Word on: Loving Him, and all other people?

**15)** Lastly then, Will **YOU** “make any attempt” at controlling the impulses of your mind & heart; as it relates to Coveting? Did this message make you want to get a grip on Coveting, or did it do nothing to move your spirit to act?