



**Money Matters-Part 5**  
**Marriage as a Monetary Test Case**  
**Pastor Mike Fabarez**

While I need you to grab your Bibles this morning or pull up your electronic Bible put your eyeballs in just a second here to Luke Chapter 16.

If you've seen the bulletin or you downloaded the worksheet you'll notice that we're just dealing with one verse this morning which at this pace will take a long time for us to work through the book of Luke obviously at this pace but we have to slow down and get just one verse this morning if you glance through the passage if you've been with us in this series because we clearly have something very interesting taking place in verse 18. It seems out of place. It's a difficult passage not only as you glance at it there in verse number 18 about marriage about divorce about remarriage and about this dreaded word adultery. Now if you look at your worship packet or your title there on the worksheet you'll see we're still in a series called money matters and maybe we should quickly just have a sermon about marriage matters. But that's not what this is really about. It is a passage you can see clearly in the first 17 verses about money and as you start in verse number 19 is about a rich man. It's a story that's going to be about money and our relationship to money. So you've got somebody very seemingly out of place which reminds me of Mr. Miyagi. Who when Daniel wanted to learn how to defeat the dreaded Cobra Kai's want to come to Mr. Miyagi.

His new sensei here and learn how to do his karate way the right way and become this great master at karate the wise old Mr. Miyagi handed him two waxing mitts and sponges and said go wax the car.

And then it was wax on, wax off, right hand, left hand, breath, wax on, wax on, wax off. If you're lost at this point in the sermon you've missed some classic 80s cinema and you should go Hulu this afternoon.

Karate Kid this movie clearly gave us the impression that the wise old Mr. Miyagi though was unconventional was trying to do something with the muscle memory of young Daniel so that he could go out there and defeat the old was it Johnny Lawrence the Cobra Kai that was his romantic rival and his opponent in the ring and so we realized that Miyagi though Daniel didn't have any idea what he was doing or why he was doing it. Not to mention that it was very hard in the hot sun to go out there and wax this old car that was oxidizing out in the backyard of Mr. Miyagi.

It was exactly what he needed. And Miyagi knew exactly what he was doing.

Well in a passage where we have something thrown in the middle of a series of lessons about money and you get immediately this entry of marriage into the discussion and then we immediately get out of it. Some Bible students think that Mr. Miyagi is a lot wiser than Jesus apparently or somehow this is some kind of editor's error or that maybe Luke just kind of got mixed up or maybe who knows how this concept of marriage got stuck in the middle of a whole series of lessons about money. Well you need to be very confident that the Lord Jesus Christ knows exactly what he's doing and under the inspiration of Holy Spirit Luke of course did exactly what you was supposed to do and what we're left with here is the sequence of events that we should have.

And what we have to do is to deal with this very unpleasant verse in verse number 18 and recognize that the lesson on the table has to do with you and me and our relationship to material things. It's about our heart. It's about greed it's about covetousness it's about generosity it's about giving. It's about the



kind of relationship God would have us have with money. And he is going to say let's talk about relationship with your spouse.

He gets in he gets out it's quick let's read it verse 18.

Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery.

I mean we didn't need that verse between verse 17 and 19 apparently in our thinking because we're talking about money we're talking about the fact that we have the word of God telling us that's unalterable in verse number 17. Heaven on earth can pass away and it's clear his concept for us regarding money his parameters his directive his commands is that we do not have covetous hearts about stuff, money, greed, being rich, craving it, the love of money, and yet now we have this very unpleasant verse particularly for you if you sit here this morning having been divorced or having married a divorced person you say I picked the wrong week to start going back to church.

This is a guilt inducing passage and you may say well you know what I may have been divorced and married again and I may have married a divorced person but this doesn't apply to me and you may be right. This label adultery that these little phrases here end with these qualifying phrases if you divorce your wife and marry another you're an adulterer if you marry a woman who's divorced then you committed adultery you may say well it didn't apply to me and you might be right because there are two exceptions in scripture found in Matthew Chapter 19 and First Corinthians Chapter 7 that give you a clear exception to the concept of you saying, "I have a wife. I don't like her. I'd like to kind of marry up and move up and trade this one in for a better one." And that is what's in view here and there are exceptions to some very catastrophic situations that take place in marriage. And God says yes it may happen that you are divorce and marry another and you're not labeled with this in the Bible so I understand that. Or in the case of the second one that you meet someone as a single man in this case speaking from a man's perspective and here's this person and you want to marry her. But she's been divorced and she's just divorced because you know irreconcilable differences don't really like this guy he didn't make me all that happy but I want to marry her.

So you marry her and here in this text says if you do that, not because of Matthew Chapter 19 or First Corinthians Chapter 7 then you engaging in that relationship. You've just now committed adultery.

So what does this have to do with money. Well maybe as we make our first simple observation about this passage it would be cleared up in our minds if we just go back to a verse we've quoted a few times in the series and that is Exodus Chapter 20 verse 17 Exodus Chapter 20:17 you don't need to turn there I know you know what you probably know it by heart.

It's the first thing God ever wrote to his people I know we think in the beginning God created heaven and earth is the first thing God wrote the first thing God wrote directly or even indirectly to mankind were the words of Exodus 20 which were the Ten Commandments given by Moses on Mount Sinai. He would then come off of Mt. Sinai and during that period he would start to write through the inspiration of God's Spirit the Pentateuch Genesis through Deuteronomy.

So the first things that came from God are these Ten Commandments and the tenth one as you know in verse 17 says "You shall not covet" Covet: to yearn for longed for to crave something that's not mine. And it starts with examples. The first one you shall not covet your neighbor's (Bible students you know) House.



Well that's easy to do especially if my house is kind of a cracker box and I don't really like it it's broken down it's old and there's this guy I went over to his house for this little dinner party or whatever man what a great house he has. I want that house I should be in that house that guy is not even that smart or you know he's not even that great of a worker I bet this inherited money I don't know why he has it I don't have it I work hard. I just have this he's got that I want that I crave that.

I'd like to move. I'd like to have that. You shall not covet. You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's (do you know it?) wife.

We go immediately from coveting things to coveting a relationship that I don't have and it seems like an odd and almost an unmatched juxtaposition of two concepts because craving my neighbor's wife. It seems to be on a whole different level than craving my neighbor's house. I think to crave his house is one thing. I've

got my house here and there's some level of commitment there but I've got my wife assuming I'm married and it's more than just I signed a mortgage. This is like I walk the aisle and I put a ring on her finger in our culture at least and I committed myself as it has been every culture to say you and me now based on the reflection of the common book of prayer from 400 years ago we usually say something like this.

I take it to be my lawfully wedded wife for better for worse for richer for poorer in sickness and in health till death do us part. You're going to be my partner.

Now I didn't have that kind of ceremony when I bought my house or my car or anything else so I can understand just to kind of take it down through that list that goes on to say don't covet his ox don't covet his donkey you don't covet anything else your neighbor has.

So when I think about those parallels into our day I can be at a stoplight in my car and have this beautiful pearl blue 911 Porsche Carrera low profile Perrelli tires. I can see that thing that beautiful thing pull up right next to me as I'm looking at my car which is all right but that's a whole lot nicer and I can say look at that guy and I can look what can I get. That guy had that car looks like a dork. I mean I don't understand.

How does he get that car and I get this car and I'd like to have that car and if I only had enough money that would be nice.

I should be in that car and I want that car I deserve that car. I want to drive that car and my car has no emotional response to that. I could even say it out loud. I love that car more than this car. I crave that car and my car would just sit there and you may say well what's wrong with that? You haven't made some sacred covenant with your car. You're right I haven't. But God is trying to raise the level of concern that I have about my relationship with stuff and things and money as I would start to think about the way I think about my relationship with my spouse. Not that he wants me to make any covenants to my stuff but he wants me to realize if I don't learn contentment with my stuff I need to realize is going to lead to something God sees as a very serious problem just like he sees the severity of the problem.

When I make a covenant with this person and then I look through the lattice of my window and go man that wife sure seems like a lot better than my wife.



I wish I had her instead of her. When I start doing that you go "not good" because I'll bet you can sit in your small group this week your home fellowship group and have someone say yeah I just don't like my house.

It's not that I don't like... there's no view. My roof was leaking with all this rain this week and really been thinking about selling it. You know there's a really cool set of houses. I just really want you'd to sit there and say cool what about it.

A walk in closet what is it like to have a good view?

But if you had someone in that small group say "Yeah my wife you know I just really craving a new wife." Or some lady who says "I saw this guy and I'm telling you a husband of one of the gals at my office and he's so kind and my husband such a doofus in such a rude man. I just wish I would. I'm just craving her husband." That will stop all the music in your small group discussion right. That's not good. Even when God pairs in the Ten Commandments don't crave your neighbor's house and then says Let me tell you how serious I am about it.

What is the subject are you going to go on to talk about ox and donkey or any other thing he puts right in the middle of it and don't crave his wife either. What's he doing? I feel naturally in my conscience guilt about ever wanting anyone else's wife.

I don't feel that way about their house or their car. What's the point. God was trying to say to you see what I want in you I want you to stop craving what you don't have. Number one on your outline let's just start with that observation. Stop craving what you don't have. Now immediately flags on the play people throw on their arms. This is not right. This is wrong. Is that what it's all about. It's all about that. In part because you're a product of American 20th and 21st century culture. You need to understand part of the drive you have as an ambitious American wanting to climb the ladder is because you've been conditioned that way to think that way.

Not to mention that we have with that philosophy amassed all these things that we have you know in the last 25 years the average American has doubled their possessions in 25 years. In other words the average person 25 let's say the average 50 year old 25 years ago had half as much stuff as the average 50 year old today. So we are all about putting all this stuff in our lives and becoming wealthy or at least owning a lot more stuff. And that is the culture we live in. And if you're thinking Well that means I'm just going to be some slug I guess they just a non ambitious person. Then you haven't heard the preaching of God's word either from this platform or any other because the Bible has no place for lazy lethargic half hearted efforts from any Christian and anything they do. Whatever you do whatever you put your hand to. You do it heartily as to the paycheck.

No. As to your ego. No. As to the applause. As to the accolades. No. As to the Lord. See the problem with you and me.

When God looks at us it's not that we're out there being industrious working hard being creative so I can be the best architect out there and it's not about the ambition to be good or skillful at what we do.

It's that we're chasing the product which in our minds the best product is not sitting back at the end of the day saying it was a job well done. I please the Lord I glorified him. I fully exercised the endowment of God's Spirit and the gifts and talents that I have. It's wanting the stuff that goes with it



and all I'm telling you is this God's concern is the craving for the stuff. And what we've got to come and realize is that real Christians with a Christian work ethic are always going to be industrious in good works. I want you to go to me the best businessman you can be, to be the best plumber you can, be best framer where you can be.

I want you to be the best whatever you are the maker of widgets be the best you can. Not for ego not for applause not even as the text says there in Colossians and for your boss but for your boss's boss the ultimate boss the King of Kings.

Be a worker skillful in your work for Christ. I've taught on that a lot. But what we have to do is sort through in our hearts that we are not chasing something so I can get that car so I can get that house. Does that mean I'm never going to buy a new house?

Does that mean I'm never going to buy a new set of clothes? I said last week clearly a \$50 meal is going to probably be a better experience than a \$5 bill. Does that mean I never want to have an opportunity to take the \$50 meal?

No, it doesn't mean that at all. And we dealt with that last week and had some questions on the patio after the services this week because people didn't hear my sermon last week. We have to recognize where the concept of riches comes from in the valuation of God. And though the things of this world can be in God's mind the abomination that we elevate it's not the things themselves. It's the pursuit of those things and the craving for those things. So what's the issue on the table throughout this passage. Where's your heart in relation to those things. Do you crave them stop craving things you don't have.

That doesn't mean you won't be ambitious industrious wise skillful hardworking. Any of that. The money may come the money may not come. You're there to please the Lord and do the very best that you can.

Now, maybe I can illustrate this way when we had a child dedications this morning when those little kids are kind of pushed up as babies to the edge of the table in their high chairs at the restaurant and mom there at least in our day puts that little you know don't get poisoned off the table mat thing that they have now.

I don't know how our kids survived as children but.

They put those out.

And let's just say you're after church you've got a bunch of friends you're going to dinner somewhere and so you're all kind of you know crowded in there and you push up little Junior and you know how little Junior is when he sits there and he's got his mat mom puts out the Cheerios or maybe the chopped up.

You know I don't know pears or whatever he gets and all he wants to do is grab everyone else's everything. Right? He wants to reach out and grab the refried beans over there in the tamale over there you can see where my mind is this morning. Put his hand in the guacamole. And of course he wants to put it all hands and everything so he can put it up and shove it all in his face. And mom says you know what you need right now is not that enchilada with a hot sauce on it. What you need are these Cheerios. Now Junior says I think that looks better than what I've got. And he starts grabbing for stuff. Now that's what our passage has been about grabbing for stuff and then immediately he slides in the





middle of that paradigm.

Marriage. And marriage in this case is I don't like my spouse. I want that spouse. I've got a spouse but I don't like that spouse. I want that spouse or I'm available for a spouse. I want that spouse that really rightfully in God's mind belongs to that person. But I want it anyway. Grabbing for the romantic or the erotic connection outside of the parameters of my marriage that now he throws in there and says that's adultery he's just elevated this kind of grabby attitude of I want better.

And he says stop wanting the upgrades stop craving the upgrades that mean I'm never get an upgrade? I said no we may get upgrades and we may make very good reasons for getting an upgrade a better car and a better house maybe. But the real concern God has is how did those material things play in your heart. Those become your master? Those are your god that what you're craving? Don't crave what you don't have. I understand that what's in front of someone else may look a lot better than what's in front of you as it relates to money or mates. Right. But you've got to say God I need to recognize the craving is the problem and I should say this put an asterisk next to it I suppose and make sure you understand I'm talking about between now and the kingdom. Matter of fact this might be helpful. Hebrews Chapter 11. Real quickly Hebrews Chapter 11 speaks of craving and said just get your craving in the right place. This is worth putting down because of your new particularly to the concept of what the Christian life wants for us and to say it that way kind of dispassionately and non-personally what the Christian life is supposed to be as a template for us.

It's not to trash your ambitions it's to put your ambitions in the right place. It's not to say you need to live without take vows of poverty and chastity and all. No. It's putting all those desires and passions in the right place have the right target for them and Jesus says it often and we've quoted in this series it's about putting your treasure in heaven. And the point means you're going to have riches and there'll be real and it'll be satisfaction and pleasure. All of that's going to come but it's about you being an investor in a place where the rust can't corrode it and the moths can't eat it up and the thieves can't come in and break in and steal it. And as an example of that he holds up to us the Spirit does in Hebrews Chapter 11 the example of Abraham. Dropped down to verse number 15 I'm sorry verse number nine. Let's start there. Hebrews 11:9 by faith.

He that is Abraham went to live in the land of promise. Now understand this the land of promise that means it wasn't the land of having it realized it was the land of promise.

It wasn't yet his. It was promised to him and in God's mind it was his. But he wasn't now the owner of it as a matter of fact he didn't own any of this property even when he had to bury his wife he had to buy a little patch of property to bury his wife and he was not the owner.

He was as it says next to a foreigner in that land as in a foreign land. Living out in mansions not with big lots and acres that he was plowing. No.

He was living in tents with Isaac his son and Jacob heirs with him of the same promise not realized it wasn't the land that was realized it wasn't the land that was given wasn't the land that was granted it was the land that was promised for he was. Now we start to see that really the good thing about Abraham was trusting God so much so that even when he was called to go sacrifice his son as it says in this text he had a sense of eternity not the temporal. And when it came to the place where he's living thing well I'm not very happy here living in tents. The real attitude of his heart according to the Bible verse 10 is that he was looking forward to the city that has foundations whose designer and builder are the best architects of Canaan. No, whose designer and builder is God.



I want your stuff and I want that to drive my heart and I want my craving to be in that place drop down to verse 13.

All of these patriarchs Abraham Isaac Jacob they all died not having received the things promised that was promised to you but you're not going to realize it now. But having seen them and greeted them from afar and having acknowledged that they were strangers in exiles on Earth. Now go back to the toddler sitting there in his high chair at the table saying I see them I can't have them. I see what the peers have that own all this land and Canaan in this fertile land flowing with milk and honey. I see it all it's not mine right now. I may even say there's satisfaction in that mansion is a lot better than my existence in this tent but I realize that I'm an exile and stranger here.

My ultimate satisfaction and pleasures aren't in this life. Now people not just Abraham Isaac and Jacob could be you who speak like this that say this world is not my home. Yeah I'm going to get married yeah I'm going to own a car. I'm going to have a house but you know my ultimate satisfaction in relationships or possessions is not in these things. They make it clear that they're seeking a homeland put a capital H on that.

If they had been thinking of the land from which they've gone out I guess they could have reached across and grabbed a handful of refried beans.

They could have they could have dabbled in that they could have gone outside the allotted provision of the sovereign God to say here is your wife. Here is your stuff. Here is your house. There it is. They could have gone back they could have said I could have better land in the county. I could have a bigger mansion in my land that I left but they didn't. As it is they stayed and said I'm an alien stranger. I can't have all that my heart desires in this life in this culture because I desire a better country better than that plate of guacamole better than that tostada. Better than all that. Matter of fact I know you got your Cheerios in your chopped up fruit but when you look across you say he has a better life. She's got a better husband. They've got a better house.

I want to crave that. No I don't crave them. Crave the things that you crave in that desire which is fulfillment satisfaction joy. And even now you have to put some of that on hold because God's going to give you all of that.

It says they desire a better country one that is heavenly. That doesn't mean it's see through doesn't mean it's cotton ball clouds does that mean it's translucent bodies. Doesn't mean you're going to sit there with a golden harp singing the hymn book from top to bottom and getting bored all day.

This is a real place with real food real relationships real hugs real experience and when you think about that saying I'm really holding out here finding contentment in what God has given me because I know God is going to fulfill every desire of my life he's going to blow my mind with satisfaction and joy and pleasure in the kingdom. God says there is one of mine therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God for He has prepared a cloud for them. No he's prepared for them a city. If you have this immature ridiculous satanic perspective of the heaven. If I can put it that way. Or you think it's cotton ball clouds and see through bodies and harps and all of that. You need to understand it is just like Earth only without all the sin and way better and every desire of your heart at the right hand of God. There will be pleasures for ever more. That's the reality of eternity. I hate to say it but the false religionists and the cultist have a clearer view of what they are aiming at which is a lie, than Christians have about what we're aiming at which is the truth of eternity. God says I've gone to prepare a place



for you.

I'm building you a place. There is a city you're going to have a reality here. Put your heart there. So when I say don't crave what you don't have. I'm talking about between now and your death in this world. The cars you pull up next to, the spouses you hear about that are better than yours. The neighborhoods you could live in that you don't live in and can't afford to live in. I'm just saying stop craving all of that. What you should do is what Colossians 3 says set your heart on things above things that are eternal. As Jesus said Put your heart there seek first the Kingdom of God. Speaking of Colossians 3 in verse number 5 after telling us to put our hearts and our minds on things above it says this all the earthly things all the things that are around us on the lateral.

Sitting there at the table as a toddler and all those plates around to stop grabbing for all of that put to death whatever is earthly in you when you want to reach out romantically and erotically into a relationship that is not yours. You put that desire to death when you have an allotted lifestyle and this is your lot in life and you are craving a lot that you don't have. Stop craving those things put to death whatever's earthly in you and it starts with on the list this sexual immorality it starts right where we find the second installment example in the coveting commandment. Stop wanting erotic and romantic and relational things in a marriage that you don't have. Stop that put to death those things that grab you.

I gotta have something better. Then the last one on the list is the very short list is covetousness. Now think this through with me. Put to death, now I'm quoting Colossians 3:5, put to death whatever's earthly in you.

Your focus isn't on eternity. Your focus is I got to be happy satisfied right now fully satisfied. I got to have a better relationship and I got to have better stuff.

The first one sexual immorality rings a bell and sends a shiver up our spine. Oh that's bad. I don't want anyone in my small group confessing to being involved in sexual immorality this week that would stop the whole conversation.

But when someone says they're covetous they don't use that old fashioned word but they say I want stuff I don't have. I crave stuff I don't have. I really want that raise I really want that job I desire that I want a better life. We can go ho hum. That's why Paul. I wonder if you might have had the principle and the story of Luke 16 in mind he says which is, speaking of covetousness, he says which is idolatry. In other words that's the genius of what we have going on in Luke 16. He says you know that sexual morality is adultery and that's a "da, da, duh" word. Now he says if you're covetous that is idolatry you see that as any first century Jew "da, da, duh." Idolater. Oh I don't want to be an idolater. You don't want someone saying that they are actively involved in craving someone else's spouse and engaging in grabbing something else that they don't have a right to in terms of erotic and romantic relationships because you'd say that's adultery. You don't want someone having the same attitude towards stuff because the Bible says that is idolatry. They are now serving money and not God as our context says. Now follow this. God wants you to elevate not just the contentment that you need to be content with what you have.

He's trying to elevate the sin when you're not. That's why he says everyone who divorces his wife marries another. That's adultery and you hear it "da, da, duh" adultery.

Well this is a passage about greed and idolatry. That's you know that's a sin down here. Adultery is a





sin up here. Paul says you know whatever's earthly and you put it to death sexual immorality and you know what covetous is which is "da, da, duh" idolatry. How does God respond to idolaters and adulterers.

What did he tell the children of Israel in the theocracy as they left Egypt. And he said here's what you do with verifiable testified idolaters or testified adulterers.

Capital offense in both cases. Idolaters are to be put to death adulterers put to death a capital offense. Now think about that. That's one reason the deterrence of that kind of punishment that was supposed to help people say I'm not going to do that. Number two on your outline let's just get that from our text. We certainly in the context of making our hearts be content and not covetous we should recognize that when we are we're breaking God's rules and just like with adultery we should fear God's response to that Number Two fear God's response to breaking his rules. Number two fear God's response to breaking his rules. I hope you fear committing adultery and I think maybe if you know your Bible you might think of how God would respond to an adulterer and you say that's one reason I'm trying to keep my heart in check.

I find myself lusting or wanting or reaching and grabbing in some kind of way in my life to get a relationship that is not my wife my marriage my husband. Then you should feel the oh I don't want to do that because

God would respond badly to that. Do you feel the same way about greed, covetousness? Here's a passage for you First Thessalonians 4 versus one through six. It says when it comes to sexual immorality God looks at that and says I've given you my Will you're breaking my will. And if you do here's the punch line. If you transgress in this matter he says you better not because the Lord is an avenger and all these things. And we told you beforehand and we solemnly warned you about that God is going to punish the adulterer. Now that should keep us I hope at least send this chill up our spine and the fear. I don't want to commit adultery. The passage by the way in verse number one is directed to brothers. So we know this is talking about Christians.

No wait a minute, God's my pro champion life coach he's for me. Blessings poured out from heaven. All he sees is Christ when he looks at me.

No I understand that's about a relationship a covenant relationship but when it comes to how he feels about you today what is really based on the things you're doing. I know that's heresy for the hyper Grace movement today but that is the Biblical truth. How can I be a brother and have God become my Avenger. Well it's when he's disciplining me when he sees my behavior and he doesn't like it. You may say I'm in a covenant relationship with God. I am not going to be cast out of his family. And in that sense doctrinally you'll be right. But you know what. If you think that means that all God does is look at you and smile every day you are wrong. Because when we sin and sin big with things like idolatry and adultery he becomes your Avenger. And that's why Paul when he preached a very odd thing for the modern pulpit he solemnly warned the people they were constantly warned you don't want to turn God against you. Hebrews Chapter 12 would be another passage to jot down. Matter of fact let's turn to this one I know you know that discipline part that's the first part.

He says you should (verse 7) he says for the sake of discipline you ought to endure, enduring by the way that word goes back up to the first part of that passage where he says we're going to fight against sin fight against sin. You haven't resisted to the point of shedding blood you should fight harder against temptation. And he says it's for the sake of discipline you ought to fear God's response to



breaking his rules and that ought to be in your mind. That's why you should endure all this trouble when you want so badly to put your hand out there and grab that enchilada. You've got Cheerios. You don't think that's as good as that enchilada.

You've got to be content with what you got because you ought to fear what's going to happen if mom just told you eat those diced pieces of fruit and you're reaching out for guacamole and chips. That's not for you right now. You ought to fear what's going to happen because you may not believe in spanking as a parent but God does. That's what verse 11 is all about.

He'll bring painful circumstances in your life now that you know I turn to this passage to start in verse 12 Hebrews 12:12 therefore And that's what I need. If that's the case that I'm supposed to fear God's response to breaking his rules even as a beloved precious adopted child of God then here's what the Bible says. You better lift those drooping hands. Right. If you're not enduring if you're not fighting temptation if you're weak you got to strengthen your weak knees. You're like I can't stand it anymore I can't do it anymore I can't be faithful anymore I can't be content anymore. You better start making straight paths for your feet. You better not be deviating from that path.

So that what is lame those knocking knees may not be put out of joint because you may have a tendency and a proclivity to want to compromise but you compromise enough the Lord is going to respond with discipline that's what the first 11 verses were all about. And if he does he may have to like a shepherd break a few legs so that you don't wander away any more.

That's a painful act of discipline and we don't want that. I'd rather you be healed.

So you start strengthening the weak knees you start lifting the drooping hands you start making your path straight so that you don't have to incur that discipline. You got to strive for peace with everyone because a lot of these sins affect a lot more people than ourselves. And you better be concerned about the holiness without which no one will see the Lord which is a great statement.

I have no time to discuss any further. But the point of that clearly is that every Christian is going to have a faith that produces works in different degrees some 30 some 60 some hundred fold but you do understand that though we believe that we are not saved by works we're saved by faith we understand the agency by which God utilizes his work in our hearts to trigger that faith to give us the forgiveness of heaven. We understand that that faith that we're saved without works is never coming to us without producing works.

It's inevitable.

Verse 15 to it that no one fails to attain the grace of God we ought to look out for each other in our small groups that no root of bitterness now he quoting an Old Testament allusion here you can look at your cross reference in the margin. Take you back to that Old Testament passage that springs up and causes trouble because we know your sin is never in a vacuum and many will become defiled.

And then here it is here's the reason I took you here. I ought to think OK I've got to work to keep these rules I need God's help I need strength I need to start strengthening the weak knees the drooping hands see to it that no one is sexually immoral like Esau who was bedding down every girl he saw. No, he's not known for that. No it's not and the unholy Esau it's or unholy like Esau, follow me now. He brings up in terms of temptation in fighting sin here sexual immorality and then Esau. Esau is unholy why because he was willing to sell his birthright for a crock stew for a single meal.



Now here's a great picture again of the combining the conflation or at least the combining of two examples of you need to not be grabbing groping for things that are not yours here yet a meal was not his. He should have waited for his meal he should have gotten the sustenance he needed later. But instead he was willing to trash the principles of God's word including the birthright that was given to him to get a meal he had to have it. And he says listen you should have lived without. You should have been deprived for a while you should have done whatever it takes. But instead no you sold birthright for a single meal now afterwards you saw how bad that was. Verse 17 you desire to inherit the blessing but he was rejected he didn't get the blessing for he found no chance to repent and that doesn't necessarily mean the work in his own heart of getting right with God that meant you couldn't turn that situation around because it says that though he sought it with tears those tears may have been genuine tears of repentance.

It may have been just you know that he was sad that he didn't get what he wanted but I know this in the end much like in Numbers Chapter 14 when the people in front of Kadesh Barnea there send in the spies they came back and they said oh we're not going to go in we're to scare the armies are too big.

And they said we're sorry we're sorry after God said listen you're all gonna die in the desert. They sought repentance with tears. That didn't mean their hearts weren't repentant but that means they want a god to turn the situation around and let us go into Canaan will do it now. We'll assemble the army. They even did it that day and they went and sent an army in to try and take Canaan, God already said no you're not going to take it.

Gods said you can't reverse the consequences of this. That's part of discipline by the way.

You can think well I can understand if I'm an adulterer there's going to be consequences of the discipline of God there's probably consequences in my marriage that probably can never be fully fixed. I understand that though God is a God of grace and repair and maybe he'll do it maybe he won't. But I know that it's a big deal to be an adulterer you ought to think the same way about idolatry which is nothing more than covetousness.

The Bible says.

Fear God's response to breaking his rules whether it's idolatry or adultery whether it's greed in your heart or lust in your heart for some other person that you're not married to. Your God's response to breaking his rules. Why? Because the passage right in front of our says is easier for heaven and earth pass away than for one dot of the law to become void. God serious about the rules he gave us.

Whether it's our relationship with our spouse or a relationship with our money.

Well that was a great Sunday to come to Church. That was awesome. No.

I'll do my best here to leave on a more heartening note.

Is all of this because God wants us to be deprived. No. "Eat your Cheerios. We're going to sit here and eat our guacamole right in front of you kids. Suffer. Yeah this guacamole so good. Your stupid little kid food there. Suffer." Is that what mom's trying to do. No she's got good plans. She knows what she's doing. Mr. Miyagi knew what he was doing. Christ knows what he's doing. You need to realize that God in His sovereignty giving you a less than perfect marriage and a less than perfect house and a less



than perfect whatever it is the income and job is a God that isn't trying to make you say just sit and suffer in a corner and you'll get it in the kingdom but just wait. He wants you between now and the kingdom to have a level of contentment. That's the opposite of covetousness and that's going to come when you stop putting your attention and your heart and your passion on things you don't have and turn your attention to the things you do have. There's nothing wrong with that. Matter of fact let's work it this way then I'll prove it to you from scripture. Number three we need to enjoy the marriage and the money we do have.

Now if you're single here, your gonna say, No, I don't have either of those. That may be the case. I don't have time to address all that. First Corinthians 7 to be a good homework assignment for you because you can find contentment even in that.

But if you're sitting here today and you're saying I'm not real keen on my marriage and not real keen on my income not real keen on my stuff. I'm just saying this turn your attention to enjoying the things that God has given you and that'll do a lot for you to stop craving what your neighbor has whether it is a relationship or whether it's his portfolio.

Let me turn to two quick passages if I have time here. Proverbs Chapter 5 let's just talk about your marriage for a quick second. I know that if you were honest then you wouldn't be right now with your spouse sitting next to you probably you have those moments of saying yes that person's spouse is better than mine. Kind of nice to have that. I'll bet it's better there.

Well part of your fantasy is probably just absurd because the best marriages you think are the best marriages may not be as great as you expect. And I would likely argue that but I don't really want to focus on that I just want to say listen just stop with all your cravings for what you don't have. Can you turn your attention to what you do have. Proverbs Chapter 5 Look at verse number 15. Speaking of your marriage for instance can you just drink water from your own cistern. "Well, my mind cistern is bitter. I don't like my own cistern. His cistern is so much better than mine. I could just see him when he drinks from his cistern and he seems so happy and satisfied."

Just drink from your own cistern put your mind there put your focus there this is the cistern you have. Drink some flowing water from your own well should your springs be scattered abroad streams of water in the streets. No "your" is the key word there in verse 16 and he says let them be for yourself alone.

Not for strangers with you. You and your spouse should not be trying to find fulfillment outside of the marriage ultimate fulfillment is in the kingdom I get that but there's some enjoyment to be had now. Let your fountain be blessed. May it be bless may there be some satisfaction and joy there and rejoice and I love the way there's so much counsel "in the wife of your youth."

That's a good way especially for these old middle married couples that are so tired of one another. It's a great place to start whenever they come in complaining about their spouse. I always remind them unless it's an arranged marriage. You chose this creep right?

I mean at one point you wouldn't have called him a creep. You called him dreamy you thought he was the sweetest most charming... "yeah but he's changed." Can you go back. Much like when Jesus says to the Ephesians can you go back to the beginning. Remember the height from which you've fallen? Return to that first love. Do the things you did at first. Let your fountain be blessed.



Rejoice in the wife of your youth. There was a time when you didn't have this bitter and frustrated discontented attitude. Can you return to that in your mind a lovely dear and a graceful doe. I bet you said some things there that you haven't said for a long time. That doesn't always translate to modern days I don't think I should be calling your spouse a game animal but if it works for you I don't know. And look at this. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight. I mean so much I could say right now about that.

Because you can go back to verse number 15 "yeah, you know, I just can't..." Hey it says enjoy what you have. Be led astray. Usually used in the negative context here it is used in a positive context. Be led astray be intoxicated the way the ESV translators translate it, be lost. Always in our love. Put your focus there. Enjoy this. Why should you go and try to get led astray.

My son with a forbidden woman. Which is exactly what he's dealing with throughout the book of Proverbs at least the first ten chapters. It's easy to be led astray and be groping for some other kind of relationship romantic or erotic or otherwise. But you need to be lost in the relationship. You have be focused on that and find some delight in that.

May God bless that. Why should you be intoxicated my son with forbidden woman or embrace the bosom of an adulteress. And then we get back to the second point for a man's ways are always before the eyes of the Lord he ponders all of his paths don't think God's not seeing it or thinking about it. Iniquities of a man, a wicked man will ensnare him.

He is held fast in the cords of his sin you're going to get yourself tangled up here. You'd better start being content with what you have. He will die for lack of discipline because of the great folly his great follies led astray.

Enjoy the marriage and the money you do have. Same goes for your money.

I don't have time to turn you to these two. But first Timothy Chapter Four, First Timothy 6. I've quoted both of these passages before if you want to be specific First Timothy four verses three through five and First Timothy six verse 17. Both of these remind us if you didn't hear last week's you got to hear last week's message you have to understand God gives you things.

And it may be better or not better than this guy or that guy. But those things God gives you not to be enslaved to them conscripted to them but to enjoy them now enjoy them give you a marriage enjoy it. Well I can enjoy that one more enjoy the one you've got.

And same goes for your stuff. God gives you what he gives you enjoy those things don't become intoxicated with those things like you can be in a relationship but you should at least recognize God has called you to enjoy those. The passage we want to end with this one Ecclesiastes Chapter 5.

Ecclesiastes Chapter 5 sounds like a book that may not even be in your Bible but it is if you haven't been Ecclesiastes these lately go to the book of Psalms. The easiest book in the Old Testament to find right in the middle of your Bible turn right two books and you'll find Ecclesiastes Chapter 5 or better yet if you're on your phone just spell it and it will magically pop up.

Come down to verse ten. When it comes to your stuff. If you just want more.

If all you want is just a little more. Which by the way the average person in America wants 10 percent





more than they have and that's one of the reasons they rationalize and excuse why they're not money-grubbing idolaters because they don't want to.

"You know I don't need a million dollars only \$10 million I don't need I don't need to be filthy rich I'm not trying praying to win the lottery" but most people are discontent with what they have.

They just want 10 percent more it's funny that God saying can you learn to live with 10 percent less. Can you be content with that.

Learn to give away some of what I give you so that you can recognize the value of what I do give you focus on and enjoy it. But if you love it you've got to have more you'll never be satisfied with more. He who loves his wealth and his income will never be satisfied with it. All of this is vanity it's greed is coveting it's addictive. Rethink what you're craving. Verse 11. You know even the stuff that you think you want so badly. When goods increase they increase who eat them. It's interesting how that often happens. You get a bigger house all the stuff that goes with that. There are all the other expenses that go with that. And what advantage has their owner then just see them with his eyes. Now that is I think misunderstood the word in Hebrew is a very strong word to fix his gaze on them and I think that has to do with protecting them. And in this case that's true right. If I did have that 911 cobalt blue Porsche, right, and parked it in the parking lot I'd be concerned about you giving me a door ding. As it is now I don't care a whole lot and if I had a lesser car than the one I have I'd care none at all. And if you have that great house you better get a security system for it and if you get a lot of cool stuff. Better make sure you take care of that and I have some video monitors up.

All Solomon is trying to say here is just think about it. I mean sometimes you don't even think about what this will be even when you're fantasizing about to use the topic of our passage a better marriage will that better person comes with a lot of liabilities you haven't even thought of.

All the people who are married three or four times in the auditorium could have set amen at that point I suppose but they wouldn't dare because that would be very uncomfortable.

And they have limited power. Think about it verse 12 sweet is the sleep of the labor whether it's little or much. Right he's working hard and even money can't buy sleep. Matter of fact maybe the more you have the less you'll sleep the full stomach of the rich will not let him sleep. There is a grievous evil that I have seen under the sun riches that were kept by their owner to his own hurt. Verse 14 and those riches by the way they can easily be lost or uncertain. He's the father of a son has nothing in his hand. Often it may be you may die penniless You never know.

Verse 15 and when you do die by the definition of death you're not going to take anything with you so you will be penniless you'll have nothing. As he came into his mother's womb and so he shall go naked he came naked he's going to leave for taking nothing of his toil with him to carry in his hand.

Verse 16 is also a grievous evil just as he came so shall he go. And what gain is there to him who toils after the wind will in this life. Nothing. Nothing. You're going to get scooted back from the table. Everything you left on the table everything it's gone. Moreover all this these days he eats in darkness at least the one we're talking about here that's craving more and more in much vexation and sickness and anger. Now here's where we're going to wrap it up and tie all these points together behold what I have seen to be good and fitting is to eat and drink and find enjoyment in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the few days of life that God has given him. For this is his lot. What's your lot? It's not all the things you crave it's the things you do presently have. That's what you got. Go home and



enjoy it.

Also verse 19, everyone to whom God has given wealth and possessions let's say you got a lot you got more than the next guy great. If God's giving you the power to enjoy them because your heart is not conscripted as a slave to those things. That's great and to accept your lot whether it's a little or a lot and rejoice in your toil.

This is the gift of God. That's my prayer for this congregation. I want you to go home with you of a little or a lot and have this gift from God. Enjoy your marriage enjoy your stuff even if you're single enjoy the freedom that comes even with that. For you will not much remember verse 20 the days of his life because God, here's a gift.

Keeps him occupied with joy in his heart. I've read that passage so many times and that's my prayer. If I can get my mind in that text. That is what I want.

I want God to keep me in whatever tent I might be as a stranger and an alien in this world. I don't care if it's a great tent a small tent a little tent a mansion a big house just to be occupied with joy because as Paul said whether I have a little or a lot I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me and that means that I am one who can live contentedly I can be joyful in the work he's given me to do. That's my lot in life. Uncomfortable text because it tries to get us to see that the problem of greed that has a label much like the problem of lust and marital transgression has adulterer or in our case the idolater.

And even if this topic has been very painful for you to listen to the last hour because you think well that's me I've divorced my wife because I was tired of her I didn't like her irreconcilable differences I married another. I sat here in the sermon and bear the label I am now an adulterer. Well you may be sitting here looking I moved to Southern California and wanted the good life, the reason I have all this stuff, bought this house I can't afford, I got this job because I was chasing the American dream ... then you're an idolater.

But the good news of the gospel of course is those labels can be taken off and chucked into the trash.

God says in Isaiah One come and let's just reason together. Let's talk about the problem though your sins be as scarlet. Can you just see the problem. They can be white as snow. Or to put it New Testament terms First John 1:9. Just confess your sins agree it is what God says it is idolatry and adultery they are wrong and he is faithful and just to forgive your sins and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness. Do you believe that the cross of Jesus Christ can purchase a complete and full pardon for your sin. "Yeah but I'm married to wife number five here."

Well OK "yeah I got all this stuff and I chased it because I had a greedy heart" yeah, ok. Pick up where you're at and glorify God with what you have.

If you're on marriage number five let's make this a marriage where you find contentment where you serve the Lord and you say now taking the label of adulterer and throwing it in the trash I'm going to live in this marriage for the glory of God.

If you here you've got the job you've got the stuff you've got it great. Let's take what you have. Let's make an assessment and say God now I want to live for your glory which is First Timothy Six as you probably a lot more generous rich and good deeds ready to share. But it'll stop being your king and your boss adultery idolatry they're both really bad God's trying to raise the level of our concern about



our hearts.

When you see greed adultery same stuff at least parallel things. God wants you to be joyful in your life with a little or a lot enjoying the marriage and the money that you have picking up where you've left off without the label of adulterer or idolater. God can make that a reality for you this morning. Put your trust in the finished work of Christ. Let's pray.

God I do pray for those here that might have had pangs of guilt. But the primary topic of this series and that is they know that they're not excelling at work because they're trying to be good Christians reflecting a biblical work ethic but because they're trying to climb the ladder have more money drive this car or live in that house move to this neighborhood. And they recognize that kind of service to things is the idolatry that was spoken of when Jesus said you can't serve God and money, you're going to serve one or the other. May they be willing to repent this morning and to remove that label that says idolater and toss it into the trash covered with the blood of Christ forgiven completely pardoned fully because of what Christ has done. And then picking up where we are and living for the glory of God with a heart of contentment. And God if the guilt has come this morning it was even hard to listen to any application about generosity or covetousness because they couldn't help but think this is me and this passage I have violated a covenant and I went into a relationship with no biblical grounds it wasn't Matthew 19 it wasn't First Corinthians 7. I just wanted an upgrade. Couldn't stand the old one I got a new one. May they hear the stinging indictment of adultery and recognize that you can take that with a reasonable reaction to sin which is confession and repentance. And you can take their crimson stain and make it as white as snow. All we need is an agreement with you about the problem of sin.

And then a willingness to confess it and to turn and to move forward in the opposite direction.

So God I pray to be very very few people that would not heed the exploitation of this text or the grace that's available in Christ who would leave this building today with you seeing them as adulterers or idolaters. Let us as Paul said to the Corinthians let the truth be such were some of you and that's fine. Long as it's covered long as has been confessed and as long as we've repented. So God as former idolaters and adulterers in this room let us leave today living for you with contented hearts occupied with the joy that you grant as we stop grabbing and clutching for things that are not ours make us content today.

I pray in Jesus name Amen.