

# Greed

## Listed Scriptures

Gen 13:5-18, 18:20, 19:23-26; 2 Kgs 5:5-27; Mt 26:14-16; Acts 1: 18-20, 5:1-11; Prov 30:7-9

## Lesson Aim

- 1) To enable our students to understand that greed breeds sin.
- 2) To help our students become people of integrity.

## Memory Verse

"For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness." (1 Tim 6:10)

## Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

*Proverbs 31-Ecclesiastes 2*

## B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



Biblical history is replete with people who have lost their lives or God's grace because of greed for wealth or other earthly things. Lot is one such example. When Abraham told him he could choose any piece of land for himself, he chose the land by Jordan, which was well watered and he thought he could make a good living there with his herds and sheep. He failed to consider the fact that the land he had chosen was close to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, which were sinful and evil cities. Wealth was the key factor of consideration for him (Gen 13:10-13). In the end, we know that he lost all his possessions and even his wife.

In the New Testament, we know the story of Judas Iscariot. He was so blinded by his greed that he did not see how small a sum of money thirty pieces of silver was. For that, he betrayed the Lord Jesus, died a terrible death and lost his own salvation (Mt 27:2-4, Acts 1:16-18).

The Bible teaches us “godliness with contentment is great gain” (1 Tim 6:6). And there is a good reason for that. Greed can lead one to lose rationality. One can risk many things just to get more of what one wants. As children of God, we have to learn to rely on God and to be content with what He has provided for us. We work for a better living with our capabilities give by God, and with God’s blessings, we will not lack anything.

## W A R M U P



We have heard and read about people who bring tragedy upon themselves as a result of their greed. There are some who invest in stocks without self-control so that when their stocks lose value or when markets crash, they go completely broke. Many of them end up with psychological problems or even committing suicide.

There are also those who commit crimes as a result of their greed, bringing harm to many people and even to themselves. To desire a better standard of living is not wrong, but greed is often insatiable, and if we do not make an effort to control the greed in us, we may fall into the traps of the devil and commit sin.

## B I B L E S T U D Y



### Part 1

### *Bible Characters Who Fell Due to Greed*

In the history of mankind, we have heard many stories of people who lost their lives or paid a high price as a result of greed. The Bible also has many examples of such people. We'll take a look at some of them.

#### **A. Lot (Gen 13:5-18, 18:20, 19:23-26)**

- Do you think Lot was greedy and selfish when he chose the lands for himself? (He was probably worried too much about himself. When we do not entrust our whole life and everything to God, we become possessive and defensive

and will try to fight and gain things for our self.)

- What were some factors he neglected to consider as he tried to satisfy his greed and ambition for better lands? (Whether the lands he chose allowed him to continue to worship God, whether the people who occupied the lands were evil people who would affect his faith in God.)
- What reasons were there for Lot to regret his choice? (The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were depraved and sinful. Lot lost everything he had, including his wife.)

#### **B. Gehazi (2 Kgs 5:5-27)**

- Why do you think Elisha turned down the offer of gifts from Naaman? (He performed the miracle for Naaman out of compassion and to glorify God, not for his own gain. Moreover, he wanted Naaman to understand that it was God he had to thank for the healing.)
- What was Gehazi’s rationale for wanting to have those gifts? Do you think those reasons are valid? (Gehazi felt that Elisha deserved some kind of reward for healing Naaman. But, by taking the gifts, it defeated the purpose of bringing glory to God through the healing.)
- What was the result of Gehazi’s lie and greed? (He was punished with leprosy.)

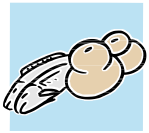
#### **C. Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11)**

- What did Ananias and Sapphira do? (They lied that they were offering everything to the church.)
- Did the apostles make it compulsory for the believers to offer all they had? (No.)
- Why do you think Ananias and Sapphira lied? Was there a need to? (Perhaps they felt pressured to lie since most people contributed all they had. Perhaps they wanted to have glory, so others would think highly of them. In

fact, there really wasn't a need to lie, since God did not require them to offer all they had.)

## **D. Judas Iscariot (Mt 26:14-16, Acts 1:18-20)**

- a. For how much did Judas sell the Lord Jesus?  
(30 pieces of silver)
- b. Was that a large sum of money, worthy of such a great sin?  
(Not at all)
- c. What do you think prompted Judas to do such a foolish act?  
(Greed at first, and then a moment of folly.)
- d. How did Judas spend the money?  
(Bought a field.)
- e. What was the end of Judas like?  
(He hung himself and died when he fell, with his entrails gushing out.)



### Part 2

### *Biblical Advice Against Greed*

#### **a. Proverbs 1:10-19**

- i. What are some of the things a greedy person might do?  
(Become an accomplice with robbers/burglars and even commit murder.)
- ii. What is his end likely to be?  
(He may lose his own life.)

#### **b. Proverbs 15:27**

- i. What troubles do you think a greedy person will bring to his household?  
(If he gets into trouble, his family will be implicated. Their source of income may be affected too.)
- ii. In what ways is greed related to bribes?  
(People who take bribes are greedy; that's why they fall prey to those who want to bribe them for their own gain.)

#### **c. Proverbs 21:25, 26**

- i. Is a lazy man often a greedy man?  
(Not necessarily – but if one is lazy to work for an honest living, one may be tempted to accept easy money.)
- ii. What happens when a person is both lazy and greedy?  
(He will not have enough for himself since he's too lazy to work for his needs. He will always be craving for things he wants but refuses to work towards.)
- iii. Can a greedy person also be a giving and generous person? Why or why not?  
(No, to be generous, a person has to be willing to make himself suffer some disadvantage, so to speak. If someone is greedy, he always wants to keep things for himself.)

#### **d. Isaiah 56:11**

- i. Greed can lead to a cold and selfish society. Why?  
(Greedy people think only of themselves. The society will be cold if each one cares only for himself.)

#### **e. 1 Timothy 3:1-3**

- i. Why is it important for a person who desires to work for God to be free from greed?  
(If he's greedy, he may compromise on important things of God for the sake of money. Worse, he may even betray the church or God for money.)
- ii. What are some problems a worker of God can get into if he is greedy?  
(He may be easily tempted to go astray. See also previous question.)

#### **f. 1 Timothy 6:6-10**

- i. In what ways do you think greed can cause one to stray from faith?  
(If one is not satisfied with what one has, he may go and pursue things he desires at the expense of his faith.)
- ii. How can one guard against greed?  
(One has to learn to be content, and to seek things above and not things of this transient world.)
- iii. Why is contentment the best way to guard against greed?  
(One who is content is satisfied with what he has, and will not do sinful things to increase his possessions.)

## C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1

What did Lot choose for himself, and why were his choices not wise?

2

What was wrong with Gehazi's attitudes?

3

What happened to Ananias and Sapphira for lying to the Holy Spirit?

4

Why would you say Judas is indeed a tragic figure?

5

What does the Bible say about greed and faith and/or service to God?

6

Why is contentment the best way to guard against greed?

## L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



### Part A- The Tragedy of Greed

There is a story about a foolish man who lost his life trying to satisfy his greed. This tragic story reveals much about human nature. Read the story and discuss the questions that follow:

*Many years ago, there was a sparsely populated country with vast lands suitable for farming that adjoined a heavily populated country with very little land to cultivate. The king of the large country made a declaration offering parts of his land to anyone who wished to farm in his country as long as they met his stipulated conditions. The farmers were required to leave from a specified location at sunrise, stake out the land and return to the same location by sunset and not a minute later. If one were late returning, then the land was forfeited.*

*There was a man who left at sunrise to stake out his desired land. He walked a distance staking out his posts and continued to do so in pursuit of acquiring more land for his use. As the sun began to set in the western sky, he realized that he had strayed too far from the destination.*

*In order to return by sunset, the man ran all the way back to the destination but in the process, died at the finish from exhaustion. The king ordered his subordinates to bury the man, and despite his effort to meet the deadline no property was granted to him.*

### Questions to think about:

1. *In the story, the man was greedy for land/property. What other things do you think people covet and crave after? (Think of some of the tragic life-stories you know of where greed is the cause of a person's downfall.) (Fame, ambitions of different sorts, money)*
2. *In the story, the greedy man exhausted himself because he didn't think to come back earlier. What are some of the things people do to get what they want?*
3. *Do you think going to such lengths to achieve what we want befits a Christian? What are some things we should never do? Where and when do we draw the line?*
4. *How do you think one can control greed?*

### Part B- How Do We Fight Greed?

We know that greed is something we have to fight against. As children of God, we rely on the Holy Spirit to help us. It helps also to be able to look at our own weaknesses and pre-empt the temptations that we are likely to be exposed to as a result. Greed is something innate in almost every one of us. It does not mean that one has to be a robber or burglar to be considered a greedy man. Greed manifests itself even in small ways.

There is a story about a very indulgent mother who always condoned her son whenever he stole something from a neighbor as a child. One day, it would be a bowl of food, another it would be a little gold pin. She never stopped him. As the son grew up, he became more and more bold and soon, he became a robber. He robbed all kinds of people. From small items as a child, he upgraded to huge amounts of money. Finally, he was caught and about to be hanged. In the last visitation, he asked his mother to come close to him by the bars of his prison cell. The mother thought he had come up with a good plan of escape. Little did

she expect what was going to happen to her. The son bit off his mother's ears! He said he did it as revenge because he blamed his mother for not teaching him right as he was growing up. If he had been taught to curb his little acts of stealing when he was young, he would not have become a criminal.

One of the messages of this story is that greed, if left to develop, can lead to grave mistakes in life.

In this exercise, each one of us will think of one or two areas where we know we are the weakest and likely to succumb to greed. Then we will write a short explanatory note about the area we are likely to fall into temptation and what those temptations to sin are. After that we will put that note, anonymously, into a box. The teacher will then pick out each slip of paper and write those areas identified on the board. As a class, we will brainstorm how we can guard against those temptations.

### Teaching Tips

*If time permits, perhaps the teacher can break the students into groups and have them do a skit or role-play on people who are under temptations of greed. Then, as a class, brainstorm ideas how to help that person. That way, the students may not feel they have to write down what they think their weaknesses are, but can instead bring it up indirectly through the skit*

### REFLECTION & PRAYER



*Let's read Proverbs 30:7-9. This is a very wise prayer request made of God. A Christian should always aspire to lead a simple life. God has promised to take care of our lives. If we spend too much of our time and energy on things of the world, we will definitely compromise in our faith and zeal towards God. Worse, we may even make foolish decisions like some of the biblical characters we studied today. If we resolve to lead a simple life, we can be spared from the snares of greed.*

## Lesson 12

# Anger

### Listed Scriptures

Num 20; Jdgs 12; Dan 6; Jn 8:1-7

### Lesson Aim

- 1) To help our students learn from the examples of biblical characters who had anger issues.
- 2) To help our students take specific steps to control and diffuse anger.

### Memory Verse

“Be angry, and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil.” (Eph 4:26, 27)

### Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Ecclesiastes 3-5

### BIBLE BACKGROUND



Anger can be likened to a flame that can set a whole forest ablaze. In the Bible, we can find examples of tragedies that happened when anger was not brought under control.

In Judges 12, we see a very sad case of how brothers killed one another because two parties did not know how to handle their anger. The Ephraimites were upset that they were not enlisted by Jephthah, the judge, to fight the Ammonites. Jephthah's reply showed anger and folly, causing the Ephraimites to be more upset. In the end, the Gileadites (Jephthah's brothers) killed forty thousand Ephraimites when a fight broke out between them. We can see that anger can lead one to say provocative words that hurt and cause trouble.