

## Common Sins The Deadly Sins

Today we'll look at a network of sins that are distinguished by the reference to "The Seven Deadly Sins"

The list is centuries old, found as frequently in literature and pop culture as in manuals of theology and devotion. Dante surveyed these sins in his tours through [hell](#) and purgatory in *The Divine Comedy*, Chaucer moralized about them in "The Parson's Tale,"

You may be familiar with that expression in terms of religious study, the Brad Pitt movie entitled SE7EN, or an Anime series of some sort.



Pride- Lust- Greed -Envy- Sloth- Wrath -Gluttony

These fleshly tendencies are dangerous 1 Pet 2:11

**11 Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.**

The flesh is NOT OUR FRIEND. It is at war with our souls. If we don't understand that we are at war, we will probably lose.

Scripture displays the reality of the true nature of sin so that we would hate it, not snuggle up to it.

All sin is deadly in that it deserves death. No sin is deadly in that it can't kill God's grace in the soul. We won't look at all seven this morning, but we'll start with the one that finds its way on any list of sins or things God hates.

### Pride

**CS Lewis described it as the great sin, and that Pride is essentially competitive.**

Augustine called pride the first of all sins. It is the sin that caused Satan to rebel in eternity past and to be kicked out of heaven, taking with him his fellow prideful angelic beings.

One of the deadly things about Pride is that it can be so subtle. Pride can be used to beat down simpler vices. EX: parents or teachers appealing to a child's "pride" i.e. "self-respect" or 'self-image" to make her/him behave decently.

Lewis... **many a man has overcome cowardice, or lust, or ill-temper, by learning to think that they are beneath his dignity—that is, by Pride. The devil laughs. He is perfectly content to see you becoming chaste and brave and self-controlled provided, all the time, he is setting up in you the Dictatorship of Pride... Pride is a spiritual cancer: it eats up the very possibility of love, or contentment, or even common sense.**

**The Judaizer Prayer...( the bass note of pride in this prayer)**

**Lord, please restore to us the comfort of merit and demerit. Show us that there is at least something we can do, that we can even in a small way keep some small earning power in our own hands. Tell us that in spite of all our nights of losing there will be at least one redeeming card of our own. Lord, let your servants depart in the peace of their proper responsibility. If it is not too much to ask, Lord, send us to bed with a few shreds of self-respect upon which we can congratulate ourselves. But whatever you do, do not tell us about grace. Give us something to do, anything, but spare us the indignity of this**

indiscriminate acceptance. Robert Farrar Capon, *Between Noon and Three*

## Envy

Pride- Lust- Greed -Envy- Sloth- Wrath -Gluttony

Look at the list and number from one to seven in what you would say is their order of badness. Did you put envy toward the end of the list? Does it seem “less bad” to you than lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, wrath, and pride? If so, elevate it immediately. It has you fooled, which makes it so deadly.

It probably marketed itself to you as something good (a form of admiration), or something partially good (a synonym for jealousy), instead of something thoroughly bad (frustrated self-exaltation fueled by animosity, resentment, and defensiveness). So, let’s unmask this deadly deceiver so we can help one another grow in Christlikeness and glorify God.

Envy is the daughter of Pride and is a trademark of the wicked. Mk 7; Rom 1:29 ; 1 Sam 18; 2 Sam 15-19; Gal 5 – deeds of the flesh (Mark Jones – Knowing Sin)

## WHY WE ENVY

It is related to the 10<sup>th</sup> commandment that deals with coveting.

Primarily, it is an attack on God and His sovereign wisdom and control. It wants to take the wheel from God.

We mistakenly believe that we have a better perspective on the world and our own lives than God does. Envy is the silent, or not so silent, scream of “God, You got it wrong. If you really knew what you were doing things would have worked out in a different way, MY way. ”

Envy is a lack of trust in and love for God, His character, and His heart.

Envy is so often foolish and short-sighted.

EX: It would be easy to envy the rich and famous, but do we really want their lives?

Ex: The Royal Family – “Live Like a King or Queen” – NO THANK YOU.

Pride and envy work together to see to it that we come out on top in the comparison game i.e. Lewis on Pride – it is comparison.

Rachel – Gen 30:1 – Envy doesn’t work well as a guideline in relationships. It puts unfair demands on God and others.

Envy often leads to harm as we see in scripture: Saul envied David and tried to kill him. Joseph’s brothers envied him and sought to destroy him.

Envy often rejoices when someone else suffers loss; envy is anti-love – Schadenfreude.

Envy is drinking a poison while hoping the other person dies. Prov 14:30 rottenness to the bones.

## WHO DO WE ENVY?

We tend to envy those like us or who have the same area of interests.

EX: Musicians are more likely to envy other musicians than to envy athletes or salesmen.

As we head toward the events of the arrest, death, and resurrection of Christ it is notable that Pilate knew that it was because of envy that the Jewish leaders delivered Jesus up to him (Matt 27:18).

They sensed that Jesus was true spiritual leader who had God’s blessing, and their envy led them to seek to harm Jesus.

It is common to envy those in our own field who seem to have greater gifts or abilities.

This can happen in ANY field of endeavor, even in ministry.

EX: Is it likely that social media would magnify the temptation to envy?

Imagine if the Pharisees had social media and could see all the followers that Jesus’ disciples had on Social Media.

Harvey Newcomb 19<sup>th</sup> Cen preacher and writer notes four points about envy:

1. **Envious people lack self-respect :** If we respect ourselves, we shall NOT desire the hollow importance arising from wealth or whatever someone else possesses. We will not grieve that others have more, nor will we suspect that they look down on us because we have less.
2. **An envious person lacks a generous spirit or goodwill toward others that rejoices in their success.** This is a form of pride that will not rejoice in the happiness of others.
3. **One lacking an altruistic spirit is usually beset by envy.** The envious person cannot bear to see any other one elevated about him/herself. EX: An envious spirit brought Haman to the gallows in the book of Esther.
4. **An envious person is, at bottom, a selfish person – God commands us to love one another, but the envious person will hate his neighbor.**

Envy is ultimately aimed at the throne of God; and the envious person can never be happy while God reigns. – Newcomb.

Carol Ruvolo...

*Envy is acquisitive, resentful, and selfish; it is always bad. It wants what others have simply because they have it, bears grudges against those who have what it doesn't, and accuses God of being unfair. Envy is on a par with the other six deadly sins because it destroys what Jesus said would be the distinguishing mark of His church in this world – love for one another.*

We can't love our neighbor and be envious of him/her at the same time.

The anti-dote to Envy is

- to trust the sovereign wisdom of God so that we might gain the RARE JEWEL OF Christian Contentment.. The book by that name, by Jeremiah Burroughs is one of the most significant books of my life.
- AND PUT ON LOVE...for love does not envy, but it rejoices at the success of others.

These approaches to learning contentment will also serve us well as we deal with another of the 'deadly sins' - Greed

### GREED

Where did you have Greed on the list? Toward the lesser sins?

If so, elevate it immediately because it has you fooled, which makes it perhaps the deadliest sin in the bunch.

**The tricky thing about greed is that we rarely recognize it in ourselves, BUT we think we can spot it in others.**

Ex: PASTOR SINCE 1986 and no one has come to confess greed.

EX: It's not like murder or adultery, which are so obvious.

In Luke 12:15, Jesus warned us to be wary of every form of greed. "Then He [Jesus] said to them, 'Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.'"

Jesus continues to illustrate the point with the parable

**"The land of a rich man was very productive. 17 And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?' 18 Then he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.' ' 20 But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' 21 So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.... ...34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."**

Jesus describes greed as ‘storing up treasure for oneself and not being rich toward God.’ He then drives home the point that our treasure and our hearts are intertwined.

The warning of Jesus must mean that greed can come in a variety of flavors. We think of it in terms of money, but it can include possessions, food, time, conversation, etc.

The Greek for this word Jesus used is *pleonexia* (Strong’s 4124), meaning covetousness, aggression, or desire for advantage.

We can desire an advantage or covet just about anything!

As with envy, we can be greedy of someone’s talents, friends, or family. Maybe we covet the way someone just seems to have that golden touch of success when we work hard but seem to get little fruit.

Ex: work or school or sports

Greed comes into play as we consider how we spend our time, talent, and treasure.

This greed or covetousness is so dangerous to our souls because it is described as “idolatry” – Eph 5:5 Col 3:5

In biblical terms, such idolatry is spiritual adultery. We don’t like to think of it in those terms, but that’s what it is. James 4:4

“You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Idolatry is when our hearts are in bed with the world, or some aspect of the worldly created order. It may be tangible like money or things, or it may be relational like power, fame or approval, or it may be ideological – the right political, social, or theological beliefs.

What do we do when we recognize these ‘deadly sins’ in our lives? Typically there are **three responses**:

1. Be a sin denier – i.e. you convince yourself that you’re Okay.
2. You can make excuses and be your own defense attorney to argue the cause of your righteousness or at least the mitigating circumstances.
3. Wallow in guilt and shame or scold yourself for not doing a better job of hiding your failure.

OR

You can admit the truth of the gospel – I’m a bigger sinner than I dare admit, but I have a real Savior for real sin. Run TOWARD God, not away from Him.

James 4: 6 But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, “God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” 7 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

We can draw near through Repentance.

THE TABLE is an opportunity to do just that. God had to give us this sacrament because we never would have conceived of it on our own. No one, not even the angels, would have come up with a plan of such amazing grace.

To Consider as we go to the Table:

O Holy Spirit, Take the things of Christ and show them to my soul. –

Come, work repentance in my soul;

Melt my heart by the majesty and mercy of God.

Help me not only to believe and receive Jesus but to

Walk in Him, depend upon Him, be conformed to Him, follow Him, imperfect but still pressing forward;

May I find in Christ wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

Spirit's Work p. 57  
VoV  
Convicting Spirit p. 66

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