

Wednesday, January 20, 2016 - It's Never Enough...

Last week, millions of people in this country waited for the six winning numbers to be announced in the powerball lottery. In fact, over 635 million tickets were sold as people tried to win part of the 1.6 billion dollar fund. I have never and will never participate in this form of gambling, which is sin, but I did "participate" in a manner of speaking for the purpose of this article. Now there are many which will argue that gambling is a sin but can we say that we are bringing glory to God when play the slot machine, poker, or lottery? If we can, I sure would like someone to explain to me how in the world that brings glory to God. As Christians, we are to abstain from the appearance of all evil (1 Thes. 5:22) and we are to cling to that which is good (Rom 12:9).

At the risk of you thinking I have nothing better to do, Thursday morning I woke up pretending that I was one of the three winners of the 1.6 billion dollars. Knowing that there were three winning tickets, I assumed we split the cash payout of 9.75 million dollars and based how my life would "change" on taking my portion, which was 3.25 million dollars. Immediately I already began to feel the frustration, annoyance, and greed of having to give the government a portion of "my money" and having to share it with those "other" people. The change in me had begun.

Initial thoughts were the following:

- 1) I began by wondering how much longer I was going to have to work and how nice it would be to sleep in any morning I wanted. I could do all those things I wanted to do and see all the places I wanted to see. Prior to "winning," my thoughts were that I would spend my retirement years writing, and preaching. Oh, maybe I can still "fit that in."
- 2) I could finally pay off those nagging bills that I had and not have to worry about any late charges because I forgot one. Of course with all that money I began a list of all those things I "needed" that I have been "deprived" of all these years.
- 3) There are family and friends I would want to give a portion of "my money" to so their lives could also be made "easier." Of course my minds hearkens back to my greed that, if I didn't have to share the money with others, I could "do so much more."
- 4) I would want to give a large portion to the church and other works that I have supported through the years. Again, I could do more if I didn't have to share with those "other people."

These are just a few thoughts but with each one you see that "good intentions" are closely associated with some degree of greed and anger.

The Bible speaks clearly on these things. Greed is covetousness, look at greed in the light of the scriptures. Does Romans 1:28-32 classify covetousness as a "little sin?" It is mentioned here along with "haters of God". Ephesians 4:17-24 instructs us to no longer walk as those that are given over to greediness. 1 Timothy 6:10, to pursue "greediness" is to "stray from the faith".

The Bible clearly warns us about the pitfalls of wanting, loving and chasing after worldly wealth. In Matthew 6:24, Jesus presents money as a "rival" to God: "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and Mammon." In Mark 8:36-37, He taught: "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or, what would a man give in exchange for his soul?" Jesus reminds us that money and possessions do not contain the value that we place upon them. They can pose a serious threat to our relationship to God

When a person desires to win the lottery they silently, but surely, proclaim: I have needs that God cannot meet (Matthew 6:25-34). They want their treasures now on earth and not in Heaven (Matthew 6:19-21). They don't trust God (1 Timothy 6:17).

As Christians, we must avoid the wickedness and immorality of this world, which Satan uses to destroy us, but putting aside those things, we long and strive for that beautiful, eternal home which God has promised.

"For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."
(2 Corinthians 5:1 ESV)