

13.01.2018 'I SEE, I WANT, I TAKE'

“Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful” Matthew 13:22

“I see, I want, I take” are not principles of the Kingdom of God. They are the principles of a heart governed by self and was first manifested in the universe by Satan. He saw the exalted position of the God, the Most High, and desired to exalt himself to the same status (Isaiah 14:13, 14). What he desired he then tried to take by force, leading to war in heaven, but was thwarted by Michael and his angels (Revelation 12:7, 8).

When he was cast out of heaven, Satan came to the Garden of Eden and tempted Eve using the same principles. She saw, she desired and she took the fruit that God had forbidden.

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. Genesis 3:6

By that first act of disobedience to God, Satan became the prince of this earth and the god of this world. Since then, he has led man to see and to want (desire) the things of this world. It is then but a short step to lead men and women to take that which they desire – this may be by force, since force is the power by which Satan prevails, or more subtly, by leading them to seek after wealth and power as the means by which they may get what they desire.

... all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. 1 John 2:16

Satan tempted Eve by appealing to the desire of her eyes...*it was pleasant to the eyes...to the desire of the flesh...it was good for food...and the pride of life...a tree desirable to make one wise.*

Today, Satan though a defeated foe, still tempts mankind by appealing to their lusts and then tempting them to live by his principles of self-centredness and self-glory.

The Self-Giving Son of God

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich. 2 Corinthians 8:9

What a contrast we see in the life of Christ our Saviour and Example. Not for Him a life of ease and wealth and the pride of life. For love of mankind, He humbled Himself even to the humiliation of death by crucifixion.

Knowing Christ's example we should be mistrustful of any gospel that exalts self such as the prosperity gospel that is so prevalent in Christendom today. And before we condemn others because we do not preach a prosperity gospel, let us ask ourselves whether we are quietly satisfied that the blessings we receive are because of our faithfulness to God, instead of acknowledging humbly that all that we receive is because of His great faithfulness to us?

Before He began His ministry, Christ was victorious over Satan where our first parents had failed. In the wilderness, He refused Satan's attempts to tempt over the desires of the flesh, the desire of the eyes and the pride of life.

Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’” Matthew 4:10

In the above verse we find the answer to how to avoid falling into Satan's temptations to materialism. If we worship God and give Him the first place in our lives, then we shall serve Him. In serving Him, we shall follow His will for our lives.

'I See...I Want'

The above statement is in itself not inherently sinful, *'who gave the eyes but God?'* And desiring something is itself not inherently sinful, unless we know it is specifically forbidden by God. There is nothing inherently wrong in eating and drinking, in marriage, in business, in building and in agriculture (Luke 17:26-29).

But as Christians, we are called to worship God and serve Him as Christ did. This means that whatever we see and desire is subject to God's will. Is it God's desire for me to have this thing?

"I always do those things that please Him" (John 8:29) is what Jesus said of His relationship to His Father. Is that our relationship to our Heavenly Father?

If all our desires were subject to God's will, we shall be delivered from the sin of coveting and from proceeding to have the spirit of Satan...*'that which I want I shall take'*. Instead of coveting, we shall be content.

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"But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life and that Day come on you unexpectedly. Luke 21:34

It is only as we are controlled by the Spirit of God that we shall be kept from the lust of the world. This is what the New Testament calls temperance or self-control. It is a fruit of the Spirit manifest in the lives of all, who like Christ, worship and serve God with all their hearts.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Galatians 5:22, 23

And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. 1 John 2:17

May the prayer of David the Psalmist be our prayer too - that God alone will be the true Desire of our hearts; that He alone fulfils all our needs.

"Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee. My flesh and my heart fail; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." Psalm 73:25, 26
