

# I See, I Want, I Take



## SABBATH—JANUARY 6

**READ FOR THIS WEEK’S LESSON:** 2 Corinthians 8:1–7; Matthew 13:3–7, 22; Genesis 3:1–6; Isaiah 56:11.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “ ‘And what about the seed that fell among the thorny weeds? That [seed] is like [the same as] the people who hear the teaching but let worries about this life and love for money stop it from growing. So it does not produce a crop in their lives’ ” (Matthew 13:22, ERV).

**A LOVE FOR MONEY** and the things on this earth will try to take control of us in any way possible. Ellen G. White describes how Satan orders his evil angels to take control of us: “ ‘Go. Make landowners and the rich feel heavy with the worries of this life. Make this life seem very beautiful to them so that they will save up their treasure here. Then they will set their love on the things of this earth. We must do our best to stop those who do God’s work from getting money to use against us. Make sure the money stays on our side. The other side must not get more riches, because they will have more power to hurt our kingdom. Then they will take from us the people who serve us. So, let us make the people who are against us care more for money than for building up Jesus’ kingdom and spreading the truths we hate. Then we will not need to fear their power. We know that every selfish person will come under our power and finally be separated from God’s people.’ ”—*Counsels [Advice] on Stewardship [Managing wisely the gifts God gives us]*, pages 154, 155, adapted.

The devil’s clever trick seems to be working well. Let us learn what the Bible says about the dangers of loving riches.



**Satan orders his evil angels to make sure that the love of money controls us in every way possible.**

## GIVING TO GET (2 Corinthians 8:1–7)

A popular TV preacher spreads this simple message: God wants to bless us. The proof of His blessing can be seen in the amount of things we own.

This idea is called the “prosperity gospel.” Prosperity is another word for success. The word gospel means Good News. So then, the prosperity gospel is the good news that obeying God will make you rich in this life. But this gospel is false. It is a way to use religion as an excuse to chase after riches. What the prosperity gospel is really saying to us is: “Hey, do you want to desire riches and the goods of this life and feel great about it? Well then, we have the ‘gospel’ for you!”

We must not connect the Good News with the hope of getting riches. The problem with this idea is the problem behind all sin. That problem is self and the desire to please self first before God and helping other people.

The prosperity gospel teaches that we give to get something. But this idea makes God the same as a vending machine. A vending machine is a machine with food, drinks, and other things. You put money into this machine to buy them. What is worse, this teaching makes our connection with God just a business deal. It is the same as saying to God: “I do something for You. And You promise to do something for me.” Followers of the prosperity gospel do not give because it is the right thing to do. They give because of the things they expect to get from God.



The prosperity gospel is a lie. And at the heart of this lie is self and the desire to please self above everything else.

**What important rules do we find in 2 Corinthians 8:1–7 that go against the idea of giving to get? What does Paul mean by “this gift of giving” (2 Corinthians 8:7, ICB)?**

The people Paul talks about “are very poor” (2 Corinthians 8:2, ICB). But they are unselfish. They give more than they have. These verses help to prove that the teachings of the prosperity gospel are false. This false gospel teaches a wrong idea. It teaches that those living right with God will have lots of riches and belongings.

**What examples in the Bible or from history can you find of people who are both loyal to God and poor? What examples can you find of people who are not loyal to God and are rich? What should these examples tell us about not pointing to money as proof that God blesses us?**

**FUZZY SPIRITUAL EYESIGHT (Matthew 13:3–7, 22)**

Our worries about this life and our riches last a short time. Christians become nearsighted when they worry about the problems of this life. Instead, Christians should set their thoughts on the path to heaven. But the desire for riches can blind their spiritual eyesight to that path. Helen Keller said, “A person who can see but who has no understanding is someone we should feel sorry for more than anyone else on earth.”—Adapted. Helen Keller was deaf and blind. But her mind could “see” better than most people who were not blind. The Bible is full of stories of people who could see with their eyes but not with their minds.

“Some people love this life so much that it destroys their love for the truth. Their treasures here grow larger. At the same time, their interest in heaven becomes less. They save up more and more of this earth’s things. The more they get, then the more they hug this life to them. They want these belongings so badly. They seem to be afraid that the things they want will be taken from them. They get more and more. But they have less to give to others. Oh! Riches and their false promises: people who love riches will not see and feel the needs of Christians who do God’s work.”—Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, volume 2, page 267, adapted.

Having “fuzzy” spiritual eyesight puts our everlasting life in danger. It is not enough to have Jesus in our view. We must be able to see Him clearly too.

**Read Matthew 13:3–7, 22. What danger does Jesus warn us about here? Why is this trap so easy to fall into?**

Jesus warns against “the worries about this life and love of [for] money” (Matthew 13:22, ICB). Jesus knows we all have worries. We worry about money. The poor worry that they do not have enough. The rich worry about how much more money they can get. We must not let these worries push God’s truth out of our lives (Matthew 13:22).

Jesus also warns us against “the false promises of [riches]” (Matthew 13:22, NIV). Riches are not evil. But they have the power to lead us to complete ruin.

**How have your worries about this life and your love for money led to problems in your own life? What choices can you make each day to protect yourself from these traps?**



**“The more they get, the more they hug this life to them.”**

**WANTING WHAT YOU DO NOT HAVE (Genesis 3:1–6)**

All sins begin in the heart. The same is true with the sins of greed and coveting. Greed is the sin of wanting too much. Coveting is the sin of wanting things you do not have. Coveting is also wanting something that belongs to someone else. Adam and Eve wanted too much in the Garden of Eden. Coveting the fruit led to their fall into sin.

**Read Genesis 3:1–6. What did Satan do to lead Eve into sin? How has Satan used this trick to lead us into sin too?**



**Eve saw something she should not have. She wanted it badly. She took it. Each one of us who sins makes these choices too.**

“The woman saw that the tree was beautiful. She saw that its fruit was good to eat and that it would make her wise. So she took some of its fruit and ate it. She also gave some of the fruit to her husband” (Genesis 3:6, ICB).

It is easy to believe that many businesses use the Eden story as an example of how to sell their things! First, Satan showed the fruit from the forbidden tree to Eve. Then Satan led Eve to want more than she already had. Satan made Eve think she needed something she did not need. What a sneaky trick! Eve’s fall into sin shows that she made three wrong choices. Each of us who wants too much also makes these wrong choices: (1) We see something we should not have. (2) We want it badly. (3) We take it.

Wanting things that do not belong to us is a very sneaky sin. Covetousness often makes us behave the same way that sins dealing with sex do. How? Both sins can be kept secret. But both sins ruin us in the end. They damage our connection to people. They hurt our loved ones. Hiding these sins “beats us up” with guilt too.

The sin of wanting things that do not belong to us can cause us to ignore important rules. Just look at what happened when King Ahab saw Naboth’s grape garden. Ahab wanted it badly. He refused to be happy until he owned it. Ahab’s evil queen ordered the murder of Naboth so Ahab could take Naboth’s grape garden (1 Kings 21). Another example is the story about Achan (Joshua 7:20–22). Wanting what does not belong to us is a sin.

**Why is it so important to check to see if there is any selfishness in our hearts? What should we do if we find it?**

**WANTING TO HAVE THINGS YOUR WAY**  
**(Matthew 26:14–16)**

**What sin does Isaiah 56:11 warn about?**

Yesterday, we learned that greed is the selfish desire to have more of something than we need. Greed is easy for us to feel because we are sinners. Greed stops us from showing God’s love. “You know of the loving-favor shown by our Lord Jesus Christ. He was rich, but He became poor for your good. In that way, because He became poor, you might become rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9, NLV).

God alone knows how much pain greed has caused in the past. Greed has led to wars. Greed has caused people to break God’s law. Later, their crimes brought ruin on them and their families. Greed often acts in the same way as a disease that causes death. This type of disease “eats up” a body until all that is left is sickness. In the same way, greed eats up everything that is good and holy in a person until only greed is left. Greed is a sickness. It makes a person want everything from power to riches.

**Read the story found in Matthew 26:14–16. What can we learn from this story about the power of greed?**

Notice what Judas says: “I will give Jesus to you. What will you pay me for doing this?” (ICB). This verse shows us a powerful example of greed taking control of a person’s life. God showed Judas His loving-favor in a big way. Judas lived with Jesus after Jesus came to this earth in a human body. Judas saw all the miracles Jesus did. Judas heard Jesus preach the words of life. But what did Judas do? Judas loved money too much. So, he gave Jesus to people who hated Him and who put Him to death.

“Look at how loving and gentle the Savior is to Judas! Jesus showed Judas it was evil to want more than you need. Jesus taught that it was important to be kind and to care for other people. Caring for people and showing them kindness helps us not to be selfish. Many times, Judas understood that Jesus showed him the evil inside his heart. But Judas would not tell Jesus His sin or stop what he was doing.” —Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 295, adapted.

**How can God’s loving-favor stop greed from taking control of our lives?**



**Greed acts the same as a disease that “eats away” at a body and causes death.**

## HAVING CONTROL OVER ONE'S SELF (2 Peter 1:5–9)

Christians must guard against the love of money and wanting to own the things on this earth. Christians also must protect their minds from wanting things that do not belong to them. They must reject the sin of wanting too much. How do the verses below help us understand how we can protect ourselves from the dangers of wanting too much?

Acts 24:24–26 \_\_\_\_\_

Galatians 5:22–25 \_\_\_\_\_

2 Peter 1:5–9 \_\_\_\_\_



Christians must guard against the love of money and wanting too much.

These Bible verses are full of deep meaning. They are filled with many commands from God about how we are to live. But one important idea connects them all together: the power to control self. It can be very hard to control self when we want so badly to own many nice things. But we must control what we think and do. Then God will protect us from the dangers of wanting too much and wanting things that do not belong to us.

But we must give ourselves to the Lord and His power. He will give us control over what we think and do. We need His help to win the battle over the sins of wanting too much and the love for money. Many of us love money and give in to the sins of wanting too much and taking things that do not belong to us. It is not easy to give up these sins. That is why we need the Holy Spirit's power in our lives. He alone will free us from the devil's powerful lies that make us forget God. The Bible promises us: "You have never been tempted [led to feel the desire to give in] to sin in any different way than other people. God is faithful [dependable and able to be trusted]. He will not allow you to be tempted [feel the desire to do wrong] more than you can take [are able to accept]. But when you are tempted, He will make a way for you to keep from falling into sin" (1 Corinthians 10:13, NLV).

**We fight greed. Greed is the selfish desire for more and more. We also fight covetousness. Covetousness is the sin of wanting things we do not have or things that belong to someone else. What does Peter point to in 2 Peter 1:5–9 to help us fight greed and covetousness?**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** The biggest desire that most people have is to be happy and satisfied. But trying to be satisfied by money and power will not bring happiness. People in their hearts know that this fact is true. But what do they do? They continue to want more and more anyway.

Seventh-day Adventists also must fight this desire for more and more. Satan tries to lead us to love money and power more than we love God. But owning more and more things will not make us happy or satisfied. Instead, the love for riches and power causes problems. Just look at the rich young ruler. He turned away from Jesus. He was unhappy because he thought his life was fine. But Jesus did not tell the rich young ruler the things he wanted to hear or give him what he wanted. “Wanting too much and a desire for riches more than spiritual things causes illness. In fact, selfishness can cause a person to feel very sad and worried. It even can cause health problems. Headaches are one example. The love for riches even can cause someone not to want to be with other people. It can cause him to believe he is greater than others.”—Tim Kasser, *The High [Expensive] Price of Materialism [a desire for money and power more than spiritual things]* (Cambridge, MA: the MIT Press, 2002), page 22, adapted.

Christians who love money more than they love spiritual things are drinking from the “well of riches.” Their hearts stay “thirsty.” But we never will thirst for more when we drink from the water Jesus gives (John 4:14).

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1 In Sunday’s lesson study, we learned about people who give to get. What verses might be used by people who believe this idea? What stories can you find in the Bible that show how false this teaching is?
- 2 The father of a young child said, “I learned two important Bible truths from my child. First, we are born sinners. Second, we are born wanting more than we should.” How does this story show our need for God’s power to protect us against selfish desire?
- 3 Why is the selfish desire for more than we need very harmful to us and those around us? What stories can you think of that show how one person’s selfish desire hurt and harmed others?



**We will never thirst after drinking from the water Christ gives.**