

“But I Want It Now!”

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. James 4:1-10 - Selfishness
- B. Reasons why this world is obsessed with gain: 1) Materialism, 2) Covetousness, 3) Selfishness.
- C. James knew:
 - 1. That conflicts and fights come from our own selfish desires.
 - 2. That many vain prayers are uttered because of selfishness.
 - 3. That friendship with the world facilitated selfishness.
 - 4. That in order to combat selfishness we need humility and godliness.
- D. Our world is consumed by consumerism.
 - 1. Society satisfies itself with selfishness.
 - 2. People who want what is theirs, they want what is yours, they want it any way they can get it, and they want it now.
 - 3. “Selfishness is one of the more common faces of pride.’How everything affects me’ is the center of all that matters -- self-conceit, self-pity, worldly self-fulfillment, self-gratification and self-seeking” (Ezra Benson)
 - 4. “Selfishness is not living as one wishes to live; it is asking others to live as one wishes to live.” (Oscar Wilde).
 - 5. Veruca Salt in Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory...
 - “I want the world,
I want the whole world.
I want to lock it all up in my pocket
It's my bar of chocolate
Give it to me now!
Don't care how; I want it now!”
 - 6. Not funny, because when the Veruca Salts of this world become adults they abandon moral choices in favor of whatever gets them what they want when they want it.
 - 7. The major sins of our society, abortion, euthanasia, fornication, adultery, murder, theft, etc. have their beginnings in selfishness.
 - 8. “Abortion and racism are both symptoms of a fundamental human error. The error is thinking that when someone stands in the way of our wants, we can justify getting that person out of our lives. Abortion and racism stem from the same poisonous root, selfishness” (Alveda King).

I. “GIVE US A KING”

- A. Materialism and worldliness - 1Sam. 8:4-20
 - 1. Their desire wasn't merely to rid themselves of evil judges, but to be like the world around them. They failed to realize that they already had a Great King. Dissatisfied with what God gave them - Hosea 13:10-11
- B. Materialism and worldliness today.
 - 1. We are incessantly pressured to be like the world; TV ads, Internet, and mail advertisements all promote worldliness and materialism.

2. "Gimme" prettier skin; "gimme" a sexier body; "gimme" a more amusing personality; "gimme" the attention of the masses. "I want it now!"
 3. "The world says: 'You have needs -- satisfy them. You have as much right as the rich and the mighty. Don't hesitate to satisfy your needs; indeed, expand your needs and demand more.' This is the worldly doctrine of today. And they believe that this is freedom. The result for the rich is isolation and suicide, for the poor, envy and murder" (Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, 1879).
- C. The Bible regarding materialism: 1John 2:15-17; Rom. 12:1-2; Col. 3:1-2
1. Our home is in heaven, not in this world.

II. "GIVE ME YOUR VINEYARD"

- A. Covetousness - 1Kings 21:1-6
1. Through Jezebel's treachery and Ahab's complicity, he acquired the object of his desire.
- B. Covetousness today
1. If we don't have the latest and greatest, we must do whatever it takes to get it, even if the means harm ourselves or others.
 2. "Gimme" that new car; "gimme" that new sound system; "gimme" that new house; "gimme" that new furniture. "Gimme, gimme!"
 3. Do we really intend to define ourselves in terms of our neighbor's possessions?
- C. The Bible regarding covetousness:
1. Luke 12:15; 1Tim. 6:6-8; Heb. 13:5
 2. Marshall Keeble: "It's all gonna be burned up."
 3. "You can't take it with you; and, if you could, it would burn up the first night."
 4. Our lives are not about the physical quantity of our possessions, but about the spiritual quality of our souls.

III. "GIVE ME MY PORTION"

- A. Selfishness - Luke 15:12
1. The youngest prodigal son was tired of being in his brother's shadow. He wanted to have an unrestricted life of his own.
 2. He asked his father for his inheritance (money he had not earned and therefore did not appreciate what it took to get it) and used that money to indulge in selfish pleasures.
- B. Selfishness today:
1. It is the drive to satisfy personal desires; to be free from problems that come from relationships and responsibilities to other persons.
 2. "Gimme" my freedom; "gimme" personal time; "gimme" my space to do my own thing my own way "Gimme, gimme."
 3. "Self-absorption in all its forms kills empathy, let alone compassion. When we focus on ourselves, our world contracts as our problems and preoccupations loom large. But when we focus on others, our world expands. Our own problems drift to the periphery of the mind and so

seem smaller, and we increase our capacity for connection - or compassionate action” (Daniel Goleman, Social Intelligence).

C. Has God ever instructed us to seek “me first”?

1. Matt. 6:33, 22:37-40

D. Where does the self enter? - Phil. 2:3-4

1. Seeking self makes us lonely. Seeking others makes us fulfilled. Seeking God makes us faithful.

2. Selfishness leads to self-destruction.

3. “Every man must decide whether he will walk in the light of creative altruism or in the darkness of destructive selfishness” (Martin Luther King, Jr.).

Conclusion:

A. John 4:13-15

B. It is not selfishness, or greed, or covetousness to seek salvation for one’s self, because...

1. Salvation requires sacrifice in the present and gives satisfaction in the hereafter.

2. It is the pursuit of long term worthy goals, rather than short term self-appeasement.

3. It is about humbling the self and glorifying God, not the other way around.