

A Comprehensive Contemplation Upon the Colossal Contradictions of the Contagious Covetousnesses

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Abstract:- “Nothing is sufficient for the person who finds sufficiency too little” -Epicurus.

This amazing story happened to the Phrygian king Midas. One day a wealthy ruler was seized by a feeling of greed. The more gold he had in his treasury, the more often he was sad looking at him: “I have a lot of gold. But how much gold still remains on the earth! Now, if I could collect all this gold here... then I would definitely be happy!” The god of vegetation and winemaking, Dionysus, learned about the sufferings of the king. He decided to grant Midas’ wish and gave him a golden touch. The happiness of the greedy ruler knew no bounds: he turned everything that surrounded him into precious metal. But, when he took up food and drink, they, to his horror, also turned gold. Not surprisingly, the king’s magical gift soon became a curse and turned his life into a hungry and miserable existence. The story of King Midas is one of the most striking examples of human greed, which can be both a vice and rational frugality.

Greed or Covetousness is an excessive craving to satisfy one’s desire, a negative trait of a person’s character that contributes to the emergence of conflicts between him and others. As we know, greed is the desire to appropriate as many earthly goods as possible. By greed, we mean not only a character trait but also a reluctance to share, familiar to us from early childhood. After all, it is not in vain that people have such a saying as “take away candy from a child.” The main signs of a greedy person are not just the desire for money, things, food, pleasure, thrills, power, and information. All these are natural human desires. It is worth thinking about when these aspirations become pathological when possession becomes an end in itself, a person is carried away by the very process of accumulation and already enjoys not the objects of desire themselves, but his power over them. We encounter greed every day: the seller in the store strives to cheat, thieves climb into our pockets in broad daylight, and officials demand bribes. And all because of what? With improper upbringing and lack of attention,

such a vice as greed develops in a child. Parents need to be extremely careful in dealing with this issue. History repeats itself over and over again: greed tempts people to take advantage of their position, fraudulently enrich themselves, and use others for their own benefit. Greed seems boundless - and often boundlessly stupid. This article is about the display of Greed. Through this, we will find out why one is greedy and what dire moments this entails.

Index Terms: Greed, Avarice, Selfishness, Covetousness, Mercenary, Rapacity.

INTRODUCTION

Thinking to get at once all the gold the goose could give, he killed it and opened it only to find nothing. - Aesop, "The Goose with the Golden Eggs", *Aesop's Fables*, as translated by Joseph Jacobs (1894)

Greed is one of the seven deadly sins and is seen as the main reason for all financial and economic crises, numerous wars and the destruction of the environment or the extinction of many species. It is the greed for ivory that kills thousands of elephants every year. It is the greed for money that has driven numerous banks to ruin. And it is the lust for power that has historically brought so much war and suffering to the world. Greed is probably one of the worst human character traits. The seven “deadly sins”, also “major sins”, was coined as a term by the Catholic Church. In addition to envy, anger, lust, gluttony, pride and laziness, this also includes greed (stinginess, greed). Whether you are a Catholic and believe in sin or not, greed has brought much suffering to the world over time. We dare say here that greed is inherent in every human being, even in many animals. Why else have there been fights over territory, food, or domination since the beginning of life?

Such a feeling of greed is inherent in all people without exception. We inherited greed from our distant ancestors - primitive people: Two million years ago, in conditions of scarcity of resources, our predecessors had to capture more food, raw materials, and tools at the first opportunity in order to survive. They were also very reluctant to share their things with their relatives. When money appeared into the scene, the nature of selfish feelings changed: a person began to “fight for the metal.” After all, money can buy almost everything in the world and the level of human greed began to be determined by the upbringing and influence of society. Greed has become not only innate but acquired. A pathologically greedy person begins to save everything to the detriment of his health, comfort, happiness, and love. He wants to accumulate as much money, expensive things, precious metals and stones as possible, while he does not want to share with anyone. In fact, all people are greedy people, but only a few have such an obsessive desire, which, for example, Midas had. Psychologists believe that vicious greed has several causes. We will talk about them further.

WHAT CONSTITUTES GREED?

“Extreme self-lovers will set a man's house on fire, though it were but to roast their eggs.” -Francis Bacon, *Ornamenta Rationalia*

Greed can be observed in a wide variety of situations. Top managers try to use tricks to enrich themselves despite the almost unimaginable salary, companies never miss an opportunity to maximize their own profits, even if customers or suppliers suffer as a result, and people's greed is often noticeable even on a small scale. It's easy to point fingers and think, how can you be so greedy? But greed can seduce anyone, which is why you should sometimes question yourself critically as to whether you are always acting free of greed. By definition, greed is an intense, immoderate craving directed towards pleasure and gratification, possession and fulfilment of desires. It is an excessive desire, the unbridled and uninhibited desire for more and more, which at some point no longer stops even at moral and legal boundaries. Greedy people are willing to enrich themselves at the expense of others and to prioritize self-interest over everything else.

WHERE DOES GREED COME FROM?

“Covet. I am Covetousness, begotten of an old churl in a leather bag: and might I now obtain my wish, this house, you and all, should turn to gold, that I might lock you safe into my chest. O my sweet gold!” - Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593), *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, Act II, Sc II, ln. 127-130 (1616 edition).

Excess of wealth is cause of covetousness. - Christopher Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta* (c. 1592), Act I.

Greed often arises from early negative experiences, such as lack of parental love, feelings of deprivation, or vice versa, over-protection. In the future, feelings of anxiety and vulnerability, often combined with low self-esteem, contribute to the fact that a person is looking for mechanisms to replace the satisfaction of his needs, to fixate on the object of his greed. Accumulation, economy, gathering, etc. become a way of life, fills time and is experienced as something very necessary, because a person has no other important goals. Inseparable companion of greed is fear, stress, and depression. Greed not only worsens the psychosomatic state of a person but causes conflicts, rupture of interpersonal relationships, jealousy, envy, financial problems, as well as maladaptive forms of behaviour such as gambling, deceit, and theft. Finally, a greedy person is never happy, he is always missing something. Despite the acquisition of the desired benefits, a person does not achieve the expected satisfaction. Many modern psychologists suggest that healthy people have several needs, and these needs are arranged in a hierarchical structure. His “hierarchy of needs” is presented as a five-level pyramid, with basic needs at the bottom and higher needs at the top. The problem with greed is that it stops a person at the lower levels of the pyramid, and thus prevents them from rising to the level of growth and self-realization. Greed is not just selfishness. There is nothing fundamentally wrong with satisfying your own needs and desires, but greed is a state of excessive selfishness. It is more multifaceted and multilayered.

“Whoever loves money never has enough.” - Ecclesiastes 5:10 NIV

Greed is not only a personality trait but also a socio-cultural phenomenon. Greed can be for anything: food, money, values, power. This is a pathological desire for accumulation, this is dissatisfaction with what is, and this is a desire to have more. It is a futile attempt to fill

a spiritual and emotional void. Greed sometimes equals envy. A person sees that his friend or relative has succeeded in business much better than he does. The lack of power and money leads to the desire to fill the void in the soul with the help of any resources. A person begins to work more and earn money, while not spending money for pleasure, but accumulating it, for example, in a bank account. This is how it starts to develop. Another reason for greed, according to experts, is the replacement of attention. Imagine a small child who needs only parental care and attention. But they are busy with work or other “more important” things. Gradually, children begin to replace love with toys and sweets and growing up, they compensate for the lack of warmth with material goods. All this, ultimately, leads to the realization that there are certain limitations: suddenly there are not enough toys, parental love, food or attention. Therefore, all this must be taken first, so that others do not get it. So, there is an irresistible desire to acquire as much as possible of something at the expense of quality. This feeling is not always negative. So, many people confuse the concepts of “greed”, “thrift”, “stinginess”, “and prudence”. And there is a difference between these terms. For example, the term “greed” combines two concepts: “greed”, when it covers the desire to get as much as possible, and “stinginess”, when one wants to spend as little as possible. And such seemingly commendable character traits as prudence, frugality and thrift can go into the category of stinginess if you cross the line of reason. One thing is dangerous: to go against conscience for the sake of profit. After all, obeying the passion of greed, people make marriages of convenience, abandon their children and parents, and spoil relationships with best friends.

As with many conspicuous and above all negative character traits, a lot of thought is also given to the possible causes of the behaviour in the case of greed. It is not a single trigger that leads to greed. Rather, different causes can promote a person’s greed. These for example:

The desire for recognition: Greed can be a way to satisfy one’s desire for approval. A large, material possession should help to strengthen one’s ego and to rise in the standing of others.

Materialistic thinking: How greedy someone is depending on their environment. In a very materialistic society, people tend to be greedier. When

a person’s possessions are considered less important, they are less likely to engage in greedy behaviour.

Sense of injustice: When someone feels they have been treated unfairly, greed can arise. In particular, the belief that one has not received something when one is rightfully entitled to it can lead to excessive desire.

Evolutionary Genesis: Human greed can also be justified from an evolutionary point of view. For a long time, there was a simple law: if you have more than others, you have a better chance of surviving. Even today, every human being carries this predisposition. In addition, the following applies: Opportunity makes you greedy. Those who see the chance of getting away with their greed are more likely to engage in insatiable behaviour and are willing to seek their advantage against the interests of others.

BEING GREEDY: THE PRINCIPLE OF LEARNED CARELESSNESS

Behind greed is often the principle of learned carelessness, as Dieter Frey, Professor of Social Psychology at the Ludwig-Maximilians University in Munich, calls it. First, someone steals a couple of ballpoint pens, then he takes batteries with him, and finally, he takes the printer or even the whole Personal Computer. According to Frey’s findings, the desire to enrich oneself increases in four small steps - which shows how quickly greed can result in theft and fraud at work. You can read these as typical phases on the way to unethical behaviour - or as a small self-test, when you may have already thought so yourself or are even thinking so...

Everyone does that!: Of course, those affected do not know whether everyone really does it. But it sounds like a good justification. However, they can’t ask anyone about it either, because deep down their conscience gnaws that what they’re doing isn’t right after all.

I deserve it!: One of them took care of the project intensively for two months, worked hard, and only saw his wife and children on weekends and now, with the conclusion, the company has made millions in sales. What’s a silly printer cartridge that you take with you? In addition, you also worked from home. It’s correct. But why don’t these people ask the boss for the three-gift right away? Maybe he’ll give you a second cartridge as a gift. Or maybe not.

They don't even know what they have in me!: Anyone who thinks this way is most likely suffering from chronic overconfidence—or, as psychologists call it, cognitive dissonance. If you work hard and achieve a lot, you can treat yourself. That there are always short breaks during the day, but a chat with colleagues over coffee, may still be normal. It becomes worrying when such conversations degenerate into a flight from work and they begin to go shopping during working hours or sell promotional gifts and office supplies on Amazon, eBay and Flipkart.

The honest is the stupid!: Many think: Nothing is given to you in the store. You're just a slave here. So it's only fair to provide a little compensation to thwart systematic exploitation. A virtuoso explanation - not a trace of wrongdoing. And a sure way to the abyss.

GREED IS HOT? THE BENEFITS OF GREED

“If you wish to remove avarice you must remove its mother, luxury.” -Cicero, *De Oratore*, II, 40.

Greed is an unpopular and negative trait. There are probably no two opinions about this. If only because greedy behaviour is selfish and accepts the disadvantage of others. Accordingly, positive sides are rarely spoken of - but they actually exist. Thus, greed can be a great drive to achieve a goal. Greedy people often have high goals and want to achieve them. Being greedy can therefore definitely contribute to success. The question remains as to which path greed will take. If this is converted into motivation, there is nothing to be said against it. If, on the other hand, she looks for other, illegal or at least morally questionable methods, possible advantages are immediately lost.

DANGERS: HOW GREED HURTS

“This avarice Strikes deeper, grows with more pernicious root.” -William Shakespeare, *Macbeth* (1605), Act IV, scene 3, line 84.

Despite possible advantages, one thing is clear: greed has far more negative sides and dangers. And it's certainly not a trivial offence. In any case, greedy behaviour is highly selfish, shows little empathy and strongly materialistic thinking. Not exactly likeable. To make matters worse, greed often pushes boundaries. Not being able to distinguish between mine and yours, cheating on expense reports, accepting advantageous gifts – the list could go on for

a long time. This puts your head and your career at risk.

But with greed come other dangers:

Exaggerated willingness to take risks: Studies have shown that greedy people take much greater risks – which often goes wrong. In a simple experiment, the participants were asked to inflate balloons: the bigger the balloons, the higher the promised prize. If the balloon burst, however, there was nothing. The result: test persons who were identified as particularly greedy in a previous test took significantly more risks and regularly burst the balloon. They just didn't want to settle for less and fell prey to their own greed.

Missing learning effect: A second danger stems from the same experiment: greedy people don't learn from their mistakes. Even after the balloon had burst a few times before, the greedy participants kept pumping it up and not lowering the risk. Instead of learning from previous experiences and changing strategy, the greedy subjects stuck to their course of action.

Social isolation: Greed makes you lonely. Seeking only self-interest, taking advantage of others, and putting material goods ahead of human relationships—none of these will help you make friends, socialize, or build trust. In the worst case, and if greed persists, this can lead to social isolation, in which those affected are avoided by others and excluded from the group.

Growing Dissatisfaction: If you succumb to greed, you start a cycle of dissatisfaction. You always want more, only to find that it's not making you happy. So, it has to be more again, the greed keeps increasing – but you never achieve satisfaction. Greedy people are under the illusion that having material goods will bring long-term happiness. A fallacy that can lead to great frustration.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM GREED

“We are not here to sell a parcel of boilers and vats, but the potentiality of growing rich beyond the dreams of avarice.” -Samuel Johnson, remarking on the sale of Thrale's Brewery (1781)

Greed can be a persistent trait, but it also occurs in the short term and only in certain situations. In any case, so that you don't become a victim of your own greed,

you should do something and protect yourself from it. The good news: There are several ways to renounce greed. The following tips will help:

Learn frugality: The best and most effective antidote to greed is frugality. Be aware that it doesn't always have to be more. Those who can be happy with what they have become immune to the excessive desires of greed. An important factor in this is gratitude. Learn to appreciate what you have and be happy about it. So, greed has no chance.

Reflect on your behaviour: Greedy behaviour is often not recognized as such. It happens unconsciously or is first justified to oneself. Only critical questioning of one's own actions helps. Reflect on the motives that influence your behaviour and be quite self-critical in doing so.

Talk to those around you: Another possibility is: Take yourself to the curb and confide in good friends. They can hold a mirror up to you and give honest feedback on your behaviour. The candid comments of such confidants raise awareness of what works and what doesn't. Listen to these friends, especially when your own conscience is not the best advice.

CAUSES, BENEFITS, HARMFULNESS AND DEALINGS

Greed caused by fear

In this case, fear encourages a person to hold on to everything that he has, and because of his insecurity in his own abilities, he is afraid of losing even what he does not really need. In fact, aggressive greed is also basically a product of fear, since aggression itself is the reverse side of fear. More precisely, fear is always behind greed, only it manifests itself in different ways – in one case, a person is very afraid of losing something, afraid to part with something, and in another, he tries to drown out his fear by striving for more. After all, if you think so, then a simple and obvious question arises – why should we have more than that, What do we already have at the moment and what do we objectively need? Well, if a person has only a little, if he lives on the verge of survival – his greed can still be understood, he is really scared. But when a person has a lot of everything, but he still can't calm down and fiercely strives for more, then this can cause bewilderment in some people. Such greed is

hard to understand. But probably. After all, the best way to get rid of the fear of losing the benefits you have is to increase them. In addition, do not forget about the pleasures that we all also strive for in our lives. After all, whatever you say, greed contributes to a person receiving great pleasure when, with its help, he acquires the desired benefits.

Pain and pleasure are what drive us. Greed allows us to avoid pain and helps us to enjoy, depending on what we want more at one time or another in our lives. Usually, the fear of losing something is stronger than the desire to gain something. Therefore, for the vast majority of people, greed is a means of getting rid of fear, when, as mentioned above, not wanting to lose what they have, they strive to get more. Fear makes many people greedy. But greed does not always help to improve life, most often it worsens it. And all because a greedy person does not control himself, he is not aware of his actions when he is given a feeling of greed.

Yet greed is needed, both aggressive and fear-driven. Our life is arranged in such a way that there must always be some changes in it, it cannot, because it should not, always be stable and unchanged. And if not one, then another will cause these changes. Greed is one of those incentives that force a person to change his life. Well, when a person is aware of his greed, then he can make the necessary changes in his life more deliberately. Well, if there is no awareness, if a feeling of greed blinds a person and forces him to act thoughtlessly, then it is quite difficult to calculate the consequences of his actions. Often, they lead a person to extremely negative consequences. About what harm greed can cause a person, I will tell below. But first, let's talk in more detail about what benefit it brings us. Still, we must clearly understand what greed gives us to benefit from it.

The benefits of greed

"I am rich beyond the dreams of avarice." -Edward Moore, *The Gamester*, Act II, scene 2

So, the benefit of greed lies in the fact that a person driven by it, as we found out, always strives for more, he does not stop there and is constantly aimed at a greater result. This allows greedy people, whose greed is based primarily on aggression rather than fear, not only to keep the benefits they have but also to gain new ones. As for the greed that is caused by fear, it is useful in that it allows people to hold on to the vital goods

that they have when they are not sure of their capabilities. Although it often does not look very beautiful, sometimes even disgusting, but greedy people often turn out to be more resistant to all sorts of shocks that can seriously harm their well-being. A greedy person is always very serious about the resources he has, as well as those resources that do not yet belong to him. The slight frenzy that he falls into, being possessed by a sense of greed, contributes to the fact that he persistently pursues his goals, trying at all costs to keep what he has and/or get even more. It must be admitted that if we were not all a little greedy, we would be less tenacious. It's my personal opinion. And then, if not for greed, life itself would be less dynamic. After all, some people are on fire because of greed, others achieve impressive results, and still, others survive. All this makes life less predictable, more intense and of course very interesting. Greed gives every person a chance to improve their lives. Indeed, on the one hand, a person can take advantage of the greed of other people when they lose their heads because of it, and on the other hand, he can achieve impressive success in life due to a burning desire to have more of what he already has. So while some people lose everything they have because of greed, others gain it. And life does not stand still – something changes all the time in it.

I have long been convinced that for a person in this life the most important role is played by motivation. Not knowledge, not the ability to use them, not something else, but motivation – which makes a person active, which pushes him to study something new and to work. You can be talented, but lazy, you can be very smart and know a lot, be able to do a lot, but do nothing, strive for nothing, or want nothing. Without motivation, without an incentive, no matter what society you live in, even if it is at least saturated with the most useful information, you will not achieve anything. And it doesn't matter what pushes a person forward – fear, greed, aggression, sexual desire, curiosity – the main thing is that a person is “alive”, and that he strives for something. Otherwise, it's not human. Our life takes on additional meaning when we do something, strive for something, want something, we are charged with something when our eyes are burning and we are interested in living. And even if greed is not the best source of internal energy, not the most ethical stimulus, not the most beautiful motivation – if the person driven by its “lives”, if he is

full of plans and ideas, if he is active and purposeful, then it is definitely useful for him.

The harm of greed

The harm of greed is also obvious – it is, first of all, the lack of a sense of proportion in everything. If a person goes to extremes because of greed, he can lose everything, absolutely everything. Greed blinds people, it forces them to make mistakes, prevents them from making more balanced and thoughtful decisions, and does not allow them to establish normal relationships with other people. If a person is greedy, he can either be afraid of losing everything for no reason and then he will inevitably lose everything, or overly aggressively strive to get that “nut” that is too tough for him. Greed destroys many – we all know that very well. But it also destroys those who are not able to curb their feelings and emotions when necessary. A person can be greedy, but at the same time reasonable enough when the mind helps him to stop, if necessary. But reckless greed which most often overcomes many people – definitely harms them. Sometimes, of course, people obsessed with greed, as they say, get away with it when, despite the great risk, they achieve something. But at the same time, one should always remember that people blinded by greed walk on a razor's edge and anything can happen in their life, both good and bad. Often the risk that very greedy people expose themselves to is absolutely not justified. Also, greed prevents a person from competently and properly managing his resources. If, say, he saves every penny, being afraid to spend money once again, then it is quite possible that in this way he causes serious harm to himself and his family, depriving them of the necessary resources. Because of greed, by the way, some families break up. A person is sometimes unbearably greedy, so it is simply impossible to live with him. And at the same time, it doesn't matter how much or how little money he has, because everyone can be greedy – both rich and poor. In general, greed caused by fear is sometimes so reckless that a person is ready, as they say, to hang himself for some trifle that he does not need at all. Having millions and even billions, people can deny themselves the necessary things, sparing money on them to their own detriment. Such cases are known. That kind of greed is definitely not good for a person. But he does a lot of harm.

How to deal with greed

To cope with greed, it must be realized. It's the best thing you can do with her. You just have to know that you are a greedy person – this is the most important thing. Then you need to understand whether your greed is caused by aggression or fear. If aggression, then in this case you need to think about the consequences to which your greed can lead you. That is, you need to correctly assess the risk that you are taking when striving for more. You don't need to give up the desire itself – you just need to competently implement it. Perhaps it is not so much the desire to receive more benefits that is a problem for you, but the way in which you want to receive them. Therefore, while in a calm state, think carefully about everything that your greed calls you to. You don't have to fight it, you don't have to resist it you do not need to suppress it in yourself - you just need to competently manage it. Do you want more? Excellent! This is fine. Wanting more is a completely normal and natural desire for any healthy person. But wanting and being able to are two different things. It's not worth it because of greed to climb on the rampage, wanting to get what you want, it's not smart. It is better to think about different ways of getting what you want to get and choose the most suitable ones for yourself. So, analyze your behaviour and identify signs of greed in it, they must be there. And then decide how you can best satisfy your greed-driven desires.

If your greed is caused by fear, then you definitely need to work on your self-esteem and self-confidence. If you are afraid of losing something, then you doubt that in the future you will be able to acquire it when you need it. Think about what and how much you need for life and how you can get it. Suppose your greed manifests itself in your unwillingness to spend the money you need to spend on the things you need. And what, you doubt that you will be able to earn them in the future? Why do you doubt it? What's stopping you? What are your problems? Can they be solved? Of course, they can be solved! Any problems can be solved. Do you agree? If you agree, then solve your problems. You have nothing to fear – you can always earn the amount of money you need, so don't get greedy – don't save every penny if you have to spend it. Don't deprive yourself of what you need. In this life, resources must be used, not collected and then protected. It's pointless. You will always be able to get the resources you need, do not doubt it, do not doubt your abilities. When you doubt yourself and your

abilities, it causes you to feel fear, which in turn makes you greedy. So don't doubt yourself. And if in doubt, then work on those of your weaknesses, because of which you are not confident in your capabilities. Any weaknesses can be strengthened.

Thus, friends, I believe that greed is not evil, not a sin, and not even a problem, but you need to be able to work with this feeling. And for this it must be understood, realized. You can see for yourself that greed is inherent in all people by nature, because everyone is afraid of losing something and everyone wants to get as much as possible. But at the same time, we call far from all people greedy, because far from everyone has greed manifested in an obvious negative way. Someone knows how to manage it because they are aware of the detrimental effect of greed on their lives and therefore control it or skillfully hide it from other people, and someone behaves like a capricious child who was taken away from the candy, demanding more and more, or like a real miser, from whom you can't interrogate snow in winter and thus showing everyone his greed in the obscenest form. The only difference is this. I am sure, my friends, you will be able to cope with your greed if it overcomes you, because now you know a lot about it. Greed is an insidious thing, and you can't do without it at all, it motivates and it can be difficult to cope with it. So don't let her control you.

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