

Managing for the Master—Till He Comes

Beware of Covetousness

Lesson #9 for March 4, 2023

Scriptures: Isaiah 14:12-14; Ephesians 5:5; Joshua 7; John 12:1-8; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Luke 12:15.

1. **What is covetousness?**

[From the Bible Study Guide=BSG:] Covetousness has been defined as an inordinate desire for wealth or possessions that really don't belong to you. Covetousness is a big deal, big enough, in fact, to be right up there with not [sic] lying, stealing, or murder. It's so damaging that God chose to warn against it in His great moral law [the Ten Commandments].—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sabbath Afternoon, February 25.‡

2. Remember the words of the tenth commandment.

Exodus 20:17: “Do not desire another man's house; do not desire his wife, his slaves, his cattle, his donkeys, or anything else that he owns.”—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., Exodus 20:17). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].‡

3. **Covetousness is closely associated with selfishness in many ways; selfishness is the very essence of Satan's kingdom.** Clearly, covetousness belongs alongside murder, adultery, stealing, and lying. God must consider covetousness a very serious sin.

4. ***What do you think would happen if God admitted covetous people into heaven where the streets are paved with gold, houses are decorated with jewels, and crowns are covered with jewels? Would such a person be jealous of some other person's crown because it had more jewels?***

1 Corinthians 6:9-10: ⁹Surely you know that the wicked will not possess God's Kingdom. Do not fool yourselves; people who are immoral or who worship idols or are adulterers or homosexual perverts ¹⁰or who steal or are greedy or are drunkards or who slander others or are thieves—none of these will possess God's Kingdom.—*Good News Bible*.*

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] God does not regard all sins as of equal magnitude; there are degrees of guilt in His estimation, as well as in that of man; but however trifling this or that wrong act may seem in the eyes of men, no sin is small in the sight of God. Man's judgment is partial, imperfect; but God estimates all things as they really are. **The drunkard is despised and is told that his sin will exclude him from heaven; while pride, selfishness, and covetousness too often go unrebuked. But these are sins that are especially offensive to God; for they are contrary to the benevolence of His character, to that unselfish love which is the very atmosphere of the unfallen universe.** He who falls into some of the grosser sins may feel a sense of his shame and poverty and his need of the grace of Christ; but pride feels no need, and so it closes the heart against Christ and the infinite blessings He came to give.—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ** 30.1 [1892].‡

5. **Would it be good to be guilty of the worst kind of sins—sins that are offensive to God—as we try to prepare for heaven?**
6. In our day when people commit sins and people comment about them, it is often stated, “The Devil made me do it!” But, how did the first sin begin? Lucifer/Satan developed a covetous and selfish attitude right in the presence of God, in the most holy place in heaven, with no one to tempt him.

Isaiah 14:12-14: ¹² “King of Babylonia, bright morning star [Latin: *Lucifer*], you have fallen from heaven! In the past you conquered nations, but now you have been thrown to the ground. ¹³You were determined to climb up to heaven and to place your throne above the highest stars. You thought you would sit like a king on **that mountain in the north where the gods assemble**. ¹⁴You said you would climb to the tops of the clouds and be like the Almighty.”—*Good News Bible*.*†† [In Hebrew, the phrase in bold type is *har mo’ed*. When that phrase is transliterated into Greek, it is *Armageddon*. See Revelation 16:16. Lucifer/Satan has always wanted to take the place of Christ!]*‡

[EGW:] **Little by little Lucifer came to indulge the desire for self-exaltation. [See Ezekiel 28:7 and Isaiah 14:13-14.] Though all his glory was from God, this mighty angel came to regard it as pertaining to himself. Not content with his position, though honored above the heavenly host, he ventured to covet homage due alone to the Creator. Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of all created beings, it was his endeavor to secure their service and loyalty to himself. And coveting the glory with which the infinite Father had invested His Son, this prince of angels aspired to power that was the prerogative of Christ alone.—**Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets** 35.2 [1890].††

Ephesians 5:5: You may be sure that no one who is immoral, indecent, or greedy (for greed is a form of idolatry) will ever receive a share in the Kingdom of Christ and of God.—*Good News Bible*.*

Colossians 3:5-6: ⁵You must put to death, then, the earthly desires at work in you, such as sexual immorality, indecency, lust, evil passions, and greed (for **greed is a form of idolatry**). ⁶Because of such things **God’s anger** will come upon those who do not obey him.—*Good News Bible*.*†

7. **We must never forget that the terms God’s “anger,” God’s “wrath,” God’s “vengeance,” even God’s “fury” mean that God does not leave or abandon the person or group but rather allows them the freedom to do what they persistently insist on doing—leaving God. God allows those who do not want Him anyway the freedom to leave. They suffer the inevitable and awful consequences of their own rebellious choices, but God is always there, waiting to accept them back if they are willing to change. Remember that God hates the sin but loves the sinner!**
8. In Ephesians 5:5 and Colossians 3:5, Paul associated covetousness with idolatry. What does that mean? People who are covetous have chosen to place something else in a position of higher priority in their thinking than God Himself.
9. Is it really possible that we could desire something here on this earth and that desire could remove God from the top position in our thinking?

10. The tenth commandment, the commandment against covetousness, is the only commandment that deals with a sin that happens only in one's thoughts. But, covetousness can lead one to commit a whole variety of other sins. Some suggest that the breaking of every other commandment begins with covetousness.
11. ***The commandment against covetousness is the only command in the Ten Commandments that is not directly associated with a death decree in the books of Moses. That is because it is impossible for an observer to tell when another person is coveting. Therefore, it would be impossible to take a coveting person to trial and prove in a human court that s/he was coveting. That is not true of the judgment of God who can easily read our thoughts and motives.***
12. There are various things that lead to covetousness. Think of the story of King David recorded in 2 Samuel 11. David already had many wives; but, when he saw Bathsheba bathing in her back yard, he wanted her so much that he took her to himself and committed adultery with her. Then, he arranged to have her husband killed in battle. Why do you think David decided to do that? Did Bathsheba object? Why didn't Bathsheba already have children?
13. Let us look briefly at the story of Joshua and Achan. Try to imagine yourself as one of the Israelites, having wandered in the wilderness for 40 years and now you have crossed the Jordan River during flood stage. God has given instructions as to how you are to conquer the city of Jericho. (Look at Joshua 3:14-15 and Joshua 5:1.)
14. Our story focuses on the events of Joshua 7: Achan had seen and coveted a goodly Babylonian garment and some gold and silver which he took for himself and instead of taking it to the temple to be surrendered to God, hid it in his tent. All the Canaanites had heard of the Israelites' miraculous crossing of the Jordan River in flood season on dry ground. They were trembling with fear. But, when they heard that Ai, a small city not far from Jericho, had rebuffed the Israelites, killing 36 of them, God's reputation was in jeopardy. Notice Joshua's comments to God. God's reputation was the most important thing of all.

Joshua 7:9: "The Canaanites and everyone else in the country will hear about it. They will surround us and kill every one of us! And then **what will you do to protect your honour?**"—*Good News Bible*.*†

15. Joshua, like Moses, was very concerned about God's reputation. Are we? Do we ever discredit God by our actions? The book of Joshua describes God's reaction to Achan's sin in these words:

Joshua 7:12: "This is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies. They retreat from them because they themselves have now been condemned to destruction! **I will not stay with you any longer unless you destroy the things you were ordered not to take!**"—*Good News Bible*.*†

After that conversation between God and Joshua and after the destruction of Achan and his family (They were stoned and burned.), we can see what God said and how He responded.

Joshua 7:26: Then the LORD was no longer furious.—*Good News Bible*.*

[BSG:] In other words, the Lord wanted to use these great victories as part of letting the surrounding nations know of His power and His work among His own people. Their conquests were to be (in a different sort of way) a witness to the nations of Yahweh's [*sic*] power. Of course, after the fiasco at Ai, besides the

loss of human life, that witness had been compromised.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Monday, February 27.‡

[EGW:] Of the millions of Israel there was but one man who, in that solemn hour of triumph and of judgment, had dared to transgress the command of God. Achan's covetousness was excited by the sight of that costly robe of Shinar; even when it had brought him face to face with death he called it "a *goodly* Babylonish garment." One sin had led to another, and he appropriated the gold and silver devoted to the treasury of the Lord—he robbed God of the first fruits of the land of Canaan.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets** 496.1.‡§

16. Achan had taken something that belonged to the Lord. If we fail to pay our tithes and offerings, aren't we essentially doing what Achan did? Remember what we learned earlier about God's anger/wrath/fury. He allows such people to reap the results of their own choices.
17. ***The core of the great controversy is telling the truth about God, His character, and how He runs His government in contrast to the way Satan runs his government. If we are to be part of winning the great controversy, we need to represent God correctly. In this case, God's character and His power were terribly misrepresented.***
18. Can you imagine yourself in Achan's place? In the city of Jericho, there was a great deal of wealth, gold, silver, and "goodly" garments. Achan rationalized that the small amount that he took could not really make any difference. Maybe he felt that his family desperately needed it. What kind of rationalizations might we use in our day to excuse our covetousness?
19. Let us turn to consider the covetousness of Judas.

[BSG:] One of the most tragic stories in the Bible is that of Judas Iscariot. This man had a privilege that only 11 other people in all the history of the world have had: to have been with Jesus all that time and to have learned eternal truths directly from the Master Himself. How sad that many people who never had anything remotely like the opportunities that Judas had will be saved, while Judas, we know, is now destined for eternal destruction.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Tuesday, February 28.‡ [Similarly, think of Lucifer who spent countless ages with God Himself as part of God's inner circle, and yet, Lucifer/Satan rebelled!][‡]

20. Look at the background story of Judas and Jesus as related to us through Ellen G. White.

[EGW:] **While Jesus was preparing the disciples for their ordination, one who had not been summoned urged his presence among them. It was Judas Iscariot, a man who professed to be a follower of Christ.** He now came forward, soliciting a place in this inner circle of disciples. With great earnestness and apparent sincerity he declared, "Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." Jesus neither repulsed nor welcomed him, but uttered only the mournful words: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." Matthew 8:19, 20. **Judas believed Jesus to be the Messiah; and by joining the apostles, he hoped to secure a high position in the new kingdom.** This hope Jesus designed to cut off by the statement of His poverty.

The disciples were anxious that Judas should become one of their number. He was of commanding appearance, a man of keen discernment

and executive ability, and they commended him to Jesus as one who would greatly assist Him in His work. They were surprised that Jesus received him so coolly.—Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages** 293.2-294.1 [1898].*†

[EGW:] He [Judas] loved the Great Teacher, and desired to be with Him. He felt a desire to be changed in character and life, and he hoped to experience this through connecting himself with Jesus. **The Saviour did not repulse Judas. He gave him a place among the twelve. He trusted him to do the work of an evangelist. He endowed him with power to heal the sick and to cast out devils.** But Judas did not come to the point of surrendering himself fully to Christ.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 716.4.*†

[EGW:] **Instead of walking in the light, Judas chose to retain his defects. Evil desires, revengeful passions, dark and sullen thoughts, were cherished, until Satan had full control of the man. Judas became a representative of the enemy of Christ.**—Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages** 295.3.*† [Imagine Jesus, living with that knowledge all those years!]*†

21. The covetousness of Judas became very obvious when Mary approached with a very expensive jar of perfume, poured it on the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair.

John 12:1-8: ¹Six days before the Passover, Jesus went to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, the man he had raised from death. ²They prepared a dinner for him there, which Martha helped to serve; Lazarus was one of those who were sitting at the table with Jesus. ³Then Mary took half a litre of a very expensive perfume made of pure nard, poured it on Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The sweet smell of the perfume filled the whole house. ⁴One of Jesus' disciples, Judas Iscariot—the one who was going to betray him—said, ⁵“Why wasn't this perfume sold for three hundred silver coins [a full year's wages for a common laborer] and the money given to the poor?” ⁶He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief. He carried the money bag and would help himself from it.

⁷ But Jesus said, “Leave her alone! Let her keep what she has for the day of my burial. ⁸You will always have poor people with you, but you will not always have me.”—*Good News Bible*.*†

22. It is interesting to notice that Simon, the one conducting the dinner for Jesus and paying for it, was a Pharisee who had been healed from leprosy by Jesus. His nephew, Lazarus, had been raised from the dead. (John 11) Mary, his niece, had had seven demons cast out of her. (Luke 8:1-3) Judas was not the only one at that banquet who had committed a terrible sin! Simon had led his own niece, Mary, into sin, (See *Signs of the Times*, May 9, 1900, par. 15 and *Daughters of God* 239.4.) committing incest. (See *Signs of the Times*, May 9, 1900, par. 9 and *Daughters of God* 238.2.) But, when Jesus turned to Simon and told him that story about the two debtors, Simon, the Pharisee, repented and became a faithful follower of Jesus. Judas, by contrast, was incensed by Jesus's very mild rebuke and went out and betrayed Jesus to the Sanhedrin.

[EGW:] She [Mary] had sought to avoid observation, and her movements might have passed unnoticed, but the ointment filled the room with its fragrance, and

published her act to all present. Judas looked upon this act with great displeasure. Instead of waiting to hear what Christ would say of the matter, he began to whisper his complaints to those near him, throwing reproach upon Christ for suffering such waste. Craftily he made suggestions that would be likely to cause disaffection.

Judas was treasurer for the disciples, and from their little store he had secretly drawn for his own use, thus narrowing down their resources to a meager pittance. He was eager to put into the bag all that he could obtain. The treasure in the bag was often drawn upon to relieve the poor; and when something that Judas did not think essential was bought, he would say, Why is this waste? why was not the cost of this put into the bag that I carry for the poor? **Now the act of Mary was in such marked contrast to his selfishness that he was put to shame; and according to his custom, he sought to assign a worthy motive for his objection to her gift. Turning to the disciples, he asked, "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein."** Judas had no heart for the poor. Had Mary's ointment been sold, and the proceeds fallen into his possession, the poor would have received no benefit.—Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages** 559.1-2 [1898].^{†‡}

23. Look at Ellen White's explanation about Judas.

[EGW:] **Judas reasoned that if Jesus was to be crucified, the event must come to pass. His own act in betraying the Saviour would not change the result. If Jesus was not to die, it would only force Him to deliver Himself. At all events, Judas would gain something by his treachery. He counted that he had made a sharp bargain in betraying his Lord.**

Judas did not, however, believe that Christ would permit Himself to be arrested. In betraying Him, it was his purpose to teach Him a lesson. He intended to play a part that would make the Saviour careful thenceforth to treat him with due respect. But Judas knew not that he was giving Christ up to death. How often, as the Saviour taught in parables, the scribes and Pharisees had been carried away with His striking illustrations! How often they had pronounced judgment against themselves! Often when the truth was brought home to their hearts, they had been filled with rage, and had taken up stones to cast at Him; but again and again He had made His escape. **Since He had escaped so many snares, thought Judas, He certainly would not now allow Himself to be taken.**

Judas decided to put the matter to the test. If Jesus really was the Messiah, the people, for whom He had done so much, would rally about Him, and would proclaim Him king. This would forever settle many minds that were now in uncertainty. Judas would have the credit of having placed the king on David's throne. And this act would secure to him the first position, next to Christ, in the new kingdom.—Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages** 720.4-721.1.^{†‡}

24. What happened to Judas? Having had so many wonderful opportunities and so many rare

privileges, why did Judas do something so evil? Many of us are familiar with the story of Judas. How many of us would like to join Judas in his covetousness and his final fate?

25. The day of Pentecost occurred shortly after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. Ananias and Sapphira, were a part of the group at that exciting time. It was believed by most of those disciples that everything that they owned really needed to be committed to the spread of the gospel because that was all that really mattered.

Acts 4:31-32: ³¹ When they finished praying, the place where they were meeting was shaken. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to proclaim God's message with boldness.

³² The group of believers was one in mind and heart. **None of them said that any of their belongings were their own, but they all shared with one another everything they had.**—*Good News Bible*.*†

26. Ananias and his wife had a valuable piece of property which they promised to sell and give the proceeds to the church. Ellen White tells us that when they sold the property, they received more than they actually expected to receive and decided to keep a portion of the money for themselves. What happened next is recorded in Acts 5:1-11.

Acts 5:1-11: ¹But there was a man named Ananias, who with his wife Sapphira sold some property that belonged to them. ²But with his wife's agreement he kept part of the money for himself and handed the rest over to the apostles. ³Peter said to him, "Ananias, why did you let Satan take control of you and make you lie to the Holy Spirit by keeping part of the money you received for the property? ⁴Before you sold the property, it belonged to you; and after you sold it, the money was yours. Why, then, did you decide to do such a thing? You have not lied to human beings—you have lied to God!" ⁵As soon as Ananias heard this, he fell down dead; and all who heard about it were terrified. ⁶The young men came in, wrapped up his body, carried him out, and buried him.

⁷ About three hours later his wife, not knowing what had happened, came in.

⁸Peter asked her, "Tell me, was this the full amount you and your husband received for your property?"

"Yes," she answered, "the full amount."

⁹ So Peter said to her, "Why did you and your husband decide to put the Lord's Spirit to the test? The men who buried your husband are now at the door, and they will carry you out too!" ¹⁰At once she fell down at his feet and died. The young men came in and saw that she was dead, so they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. ¹¹The whole church and all the others who heard of this were terrified.—*Good News Bible*.*

27. At first, it seemed as if they were sincere in their desire to give toward the work. However:

[EGW:] Afterward, Ananias and Sapphira grieved the Holy Spirit by yielding to feelings of covetousness. They began to regret their promise and soon lost the sweet influence of the blessing that had warmed their hearts with a desire to do large things in behalf of the cause of Christ.—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles** 72.1.‡

[BSG:] Whenever there was spiritual reform, the liberality of the people resumed in a clear sign of revival (*Exod. 35:20–29, 2 Chron. 31:1–12, Mal.*

3:6–12, Acts 4:34–37). But Ananias and Sapphira were not sufficiently impressed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and they reaped the consequences. **If Ananias and Sapphira had been successful in their fraud, the credibility of the apostles and the divine legitimacy of the church would have been corrupted from the start. Although the same immediate judgment does not occur today, a day will come when all shall give an exact account to the Lord for everything they have done, whether good or bad (Eccles. 12:13, 14).**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 122.†‡§

[EGW:] Not to the early church only, but to all future generations, this example of God's hatred of covetousness, fraud, and hypocrisy, was given as a danger-signal. It was **covetousness** that Ananias and Sapphira had first cherished....

Voluntary offerings and the tithe constitute the revenue of the Lord's work.—
Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles** 74.1-2.††

28. ***Have any of us ever been tempted to do anything like what Ananias and Sapphira did? What might that be like in our day?***

29. So, how can we deal with covetousness? Covetousness, along with pride and selfishness, are a matter of the heart and the mind. No one else needs to be aware of it because they cannot read minds! However, God, who can read minds and motives, certainly is! Many sins involve other people and are known to others in one way or another. Covetousness involves only us.

30. So, what is the solution to the problem of covetousness?

- We must make a definite decision to serve and depend on God completely.
- Pray regularly and in your prayer include Matthew 6:13, "Lead us not into temptation."
- Be regular in Bible study. Hide God's Word in your heart so that it can be the guiding light in your lives.

[BSG:] Jesus tackled the human/sin problem. He was tempted on every point that we are tempted on. And for power to resist, He spent whole nights in prayerful communion with His Father. And Jesus didn't leave this earth until He had both forged the way by example and then promised power to make it possible for every person to live a life of faith and obedience—to develop a Christlike character.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Thursday, March 2.‡

31. In Paul's list of signs of the last days, the first two items addressed money and possessions.

2 Timothy 3:1-2: ¹Remember that there will be difficult times in the last days. ²People will be **selfish, greedy**, boastful, and conceited; they will be insulting, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, and irreligious.—*Good News Bible*.*†

1 Timothy 6:6-10: ⁶Well, religion does make a person very rich, if he is satisfied with what he has. ⁷What did we bring into the world? Nothing! What can we take out of the world? Nothing! ⁸So then, if we have food and clothes, that should be enough for us. ⁹But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and are caught in the trap of many foolish and harmful desires, which pull them down to ruin and destruction. ¹⁰For **the love of money is a source of all kinds of**

evil. Some have been so eager to have it that they have wandered away from the faith and have broken their hearts with many sorrows.—*Good News Bible*.*†

32. Money is not the only thing that people covet. What other things can you think of that people have coveted and gotten themselves into terrible trouble? What is the difference between a legitimate desire for something and covetousness? Shouldn't we desire to be like Jesus?

33. In modern society, we need money to survive. So, how do we determine how much is enough and how much is too much?

34. The ultimate and only solution to covetousness is to allow the Holy Spirit to control one's life. What happens when the Spirit controls your life?

Galatians 5:22-23: ²² But the Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³humility, and self-control. There is no law against such things as these.—*Good News Bible*.*

Romans 8:6: To be controlled by human nature results in death; to be controlled by the Spirit results in life and peace.—*Good News Bible*.*

35. It is not easy to follow Jesus every day. Our natural human selfishness is opposed to such an idea. Look at these words that Jesus spoke several months before His crucifixion.

Luke 9:23: And he [Jesus] said to them all, "Anyone who wants to come with me must forget self, take up their cross every day, and follow me."—*Good News Bible*.*†

36. This statement made by Jesus months before His crucifixion must have puzzled His followers. What did He mean by saying, "Take up your cross"?

37. We often hear appeals to give money to support various aspects of the cause of God. However, sometimes, we are tempted to ignore these calls and keep the money we have for ourselves? There are several examples in the Bible of incredible generosity exhibited by the Israelites themselves.

1 Chronicles 29:14: [After the people had given very much for the building of the temple, David prayed, saying:] "**Yet my people and I cannot really give you anything, because everything is a gift from you, and we have only given back what is yours already.**"—*Good News Bible*.*††

2 Corinthians 9:7: **You should each give, then, as you have decided, not with regret or out of a sense of duty; for God loves the one who gives gladly.**—*Good News Bible*.*†

38. Desire is not evil by itself. It is possible to desire to be like Jesus! Wouldn't that be a wonderful thing?

39. Covetousness began in heaven next to the throne of God when Lucifer began to covet the position of Christ. Do we really want to follow his example? God promises us that if we are willing to allow the Holy Spirit to enter our lives and to take control, He can actually transform us to become like Him in character.

40. As we have noted in this lesson, there are many examples of evil desire, or covetousness, even in the Bible. The words *hamad* in the Hebrew and *epithymia* in Greek can also be used to refer to good desires.

41. Even Eve was tempted in the Garden of Eden by hearing the snake talk and seeing that the food appeared to be good, and she desired to have that fruit.

Genesis 3:6: The woman saw how beautiful the tree was and how good its fruit would be to eat, and she thought how wonderful it would be to become wise. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, and he also ate it.—*Good News Bible*.*

42. How many of us are tempted by covetousness?

1 John 2:16-17: ¹⁶Everything that belongs to the world—what the sinful self desires, what people see and want, and everything in this world that people are so proud of—none of this comes from the Father; it all comes from the world. ¹⁷The world and everything in it that people desire is passing away; but those who do the will of God live for ever. [*sic*]—*Good News Bible*.*†

43. Think of the privileges that Judas experienced. He was given the ability to cast out devils, to heal diseases, even to raise people from the dead. (Matthew 10:8) He appeared to believe Christ's commands to His disciples. But yet, despite all of that, he allowed covetousness to overcome him, and that resulted in the terrible story of which we are all aware.

44. Some people withhold their offerings because they feel the money is perhaps being used for something they do not fully approve.

[EGW:] Those self-sacrificing, consecrated ones who render back to God the things that are His, as He requires of them, will be rewarded according to their works. **Even though the means thus consecrated be misapplied, so that it does not accomplish the object which the donor had in view,—the glory of God and the salvation of souls,—those who made the sacrifice in sincerity of soul, with an eye single to the glory of God, will not lose their reward.**—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*,* vol. 2, 518.2-519.0.†‡

[EGW:] **Constant, self-denying benevolence is God's remedy for the cankering sins of selfishness and covetousness.... He has ordained that giving should become a habit, that it may counteract the dangerous and deceitful sin of covetousness. Continual giving starves covetousness to death.**—Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home** 370.4.†‡

[EGW:] This liberality on the part of the believers was the result of the outpouring of the Spirit. The converts to the gospel were "of one heart and of one soul." **One common interest controlled them—the success of the mission entrusted to them; and covetousness had no place in their lives.**—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles** 70.3-71.0.†‡

[EGW:] [As we read earlier:] Afterward, Ananias and Sapphira grieved the Holy Spirit by yielding to feelings of **covetousness**.—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles** 72.1.†‡

45. What have we learned about covetousness in this lesson that could protect us from this terrible problem?

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Last Modified: February 7, 2023