

TOTAL REVOLUTION of VALUES

Session #7- From Greed to Self-Control

Session Objective: We live in a society that values MORE and MOST. Consuming and accumulating are two telltale symptoms based on the value of greed. However, greed is based on the outside, the external controlling the internal. Our ultimate need is for internal control - self-control. This session will:

- Expose the power, control and futility of greed in our daily lives
- Provide clear steps to living a life of self-control

Extended Prep:

- **Movie Option:** “Toy Story 2” – Woody, a child’s doll, falls out his owner’s bedroom window. During the family yard sale, Al from Al’s Toy Barn spots the collector’s item and steals it with the intention of selling it for big bucks. Start 15:02 “Woody, I’m slipping”, Stop “Why would someone steal Woody?” 17:23
- **Object Session:** Add some potato chips or small special candy or desserts to your session. Taking one chip, etc. and not returning for seconds is a test in self-control.

Session Outline

Small Group Questions:

- 1. Have you ever collected certain things? (I.e. stamps, sports cards, McDonald’s monopoly pieces)**
- 2. A recent survey asked people how much money they would need before they would consider themselves ‘rich’. How would you answer?**
- 3. We often think of greed only in terms of money or things. What else can we be greedy for?**

Possibilities: attention/praise, position/prestige, power, etc.

4. Why is greed so commonplace?

Leader Teach:

We chase after things in an attempt to meet needs in our lives. Some things we chase after may be healthy and some unhealthy. Although what we chase may give us short-term fulfillment, it can't ultimately satisfy the need.

The need probably can't be satisfied by the object – i.e. money or possessions bringing happiness and contentment.

Read Matthew 6:19-21 – How does this passage put greed into context?

Long-term the object is worthless. After many years of doing funerals, one pastor said, "I've never seen a hearse pulling a U-haul behind it with the person's possessions." After the death of one of America's richest men, his accountant was asked how much money the man had left behind. The answer, "All of it."

We think having more will meet our need and give us power, control or independence, but doesn't the object have more power and control? Doesn't the person become dependent on the object for their identity and more? Just try taking the object away and see what happens.

One of the world's wealthiest people, when asked how much money it would take to satisfy them, answered, "just a little bit more." (In other words, they would never have enough).

5. How do we avoid greed taking control over our life?

Greed is based on the outside, the external controlling us on the inside. Our ultimate need is for internal control - self-control. The Greek word is self-mastery – in other words, that our "SELF" is mastered or controlled.

6. Why is self-control so difficult?

Leader Note: As a follow-up to discussion, read Galatians 5:16-18, 22:25

From this passage, we see that our sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit – and (v. 18) "...you do not do what you want."

We have limited self-control – especially in the battle against things that seem to be very attractive. Although our planning and choices play a big part in self-control, just 'trying harder' isn't the answer to a life of self-control.

7. How do we grow in the area of self-control?

We need outside help to have internal control. Two key places for outside help:

- a. **God** – *Paul writes that: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” (Philippians 4:13) However to harness the power of God, we need to depend on and submit to God-Holy Spirit. The first part of dependence is admitting that our independence doesn’t work. The first part of submitting is giving over and allowing God’s supernatural control. This may need to be a moment-by-moment dependence and submission.*

- b. **Community** – *We need the encouragement, prayers and accountability of others to keep us pressing on. A trusted friend or small group can provide regular support to bolster self-control.*

Prayer Options: Time of confession – for independence, greed, etc. Pray for specific requests in the area of self-control. Pray for God’s supernatural power and for community support.

Comments and Feedback

Leader Note: This is your place each week to record significant sharing or growth in the lives of your students for subsequent follow up. You can also use this space to provide feedback on the material. All suggestions are welcome.

Please see the following handout. You have permission to reproduce these handouts for your group.