

## **A The prosperity gospel. 2 Corinthians 8:2-4.**

- ❖ The “prosperity gospel” says: “Follow God and He will make you rich with earthly goods.” That motivation is very different to the one we see in the Corinthians or the poor widow (Mark 12:41-44).
- ❖ God can shower us with material blessings, but He won’t do it because of what we give Him.
- ❖ God loves a cheerful giver, not a giver that expects something in return (2 Corinthians 9:7).

## **B The three steps of greed (James 1:15 NIV):**

### ❖ **I see (“desire”). 2 Corinthians 4:18.**

- Potiphar’s wife let greed in when she “cast longing eyes on Joseph.” (Genesis 39:7). Our first defense is to look away from the things we could covet.
- In the parable of the sower, Jesus explained that the seeds that fell among the thorns were choked by “the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth.” (Matthew 13:22 NIV).
- The poor worry because they don’t have enough. The rich worry because they need more.

### ❖ **I want (“has conceived”). Genesis 3:6.**

- Materialism creates new needs and provides a way to satisfy them.
- That worked in Eden. Another example was Ahab; he saw the vineyard of his neighbor and wanted it. Then, he made a fuss until he got it (1 Kings 21).
- How can we separate needs from wants, necessities from preferences, or basics from embellishments?

### ❖ **I take (“full-grown”). Matthew 26:14-15.**

- When greed lives in our heart, we unceasingly look for a way to get what we want.
- That happened to Eve, Ahab and Judas. That’s also the root cause of wars between nations and tribes, and the ruin of families and people.
- It’s important to recognize when we’ve let greed into our hearts. If we do, we’ll be able to repent from our sin on time, and avoid the future terrible results of greed put into action.

## **C Controlling the greed. 2 Peter 1:5-6.**

- ❖ Bible study, prayer and Christian service can build a defense against natural inclinations like greed. Contentment and generosity are also tools to fight against greed.
- ❖ Peter encouraged us to have self-control. We must surrender all our thoughts, passions and energy to God’s control.
- ❖ Winning over sin is God’s work in us. That’s why we must make decisions that let God control our lives, and He will replace greed with contentment in us.