

#267 "Just Enough"

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Proverbs 4:23 says, "Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it *flow* the springs of life." In Proverbs 30:7-9 we see two predominant ways in which Satan seeks to gain entryway into our hearts, compromising our desires, contaminating our motives, and weakening our allegiance to Christ.

"Two things I asked of You, Do not refuse me before I die: Keep deception and lies far from me, Give me neither poverty nor riches; Feed me with the food that is my portion, That I not be full and deny *You* and say, 'Who is the Lord?' Or that I not be in want and steal, And profane the name of my God."

First, we should pray that our hearts do not get deceived such that we believe lies and subsequently live out the ramifications of the lies which we have foolishness and mistakenly believed. Matthew 13:22 says, "And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful." Love for the things of the world and being preoccupied with them can be enough to blind people from fully considering the cost of following Christ. Thus, they follow Him only as a matter of convenience rather than allegiance. These false conversions are the result of people being curious about Jesus but more committed to money, riches, fame, and being consumed by the things that this world promises them. But even Christians can allow the deceitfulness of wealth and of sin in general to compromise their hearts. Hebrews 3:13 says, "But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called 'Today,' so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." We can become deluded regarding the brevity of life, the importance and urgency of living for God, and as far as being sensitive to the Spirit's conviction over sin. We can lose heart and be prone to stop hoping in God. We can become selfish and begin to try to climb back on the throne of our lives, thereby grieving the Spirit by resisting Him rather than the devil (Ephesians 4:30). Sin indeed is deceitful by its very nature, promising a better life, satisfaction, more happiness, more pleasure, more fun, and more control. Thus, believers must encourage one another to keep striving against sin and the devil and to keep standing up for truth and living it out in holiness and integrity before God. A little lie here, a little deceit there, a small little sin here, and things can fast grow out of control, hardening a heart against God. God looks for those who are humble and contrite of heart and who tremble before His Word (Isaiah 66:2). He wants those whose hearts are totally committed and devoted to Him (2 Chronicles 16:9). By keeping our hearts free of lies and repenting of deception as soon as we are aware of it, we allow the Spirit to keep empowering us and filling us to do God's work (Ephesians 5:18).

Secondly, and this principle really flows out of the first, there is wisdom in praying for just enough. If money, stuff, possessions, and worldly distractions can be enough to make us fall for a lie and be deceived in our minds and hearts, then it makes sense to pray that we are kept from having too much. Yet it is also true that struggling and struggling day after day after loathsome day just to eat and make ends meet can make a person bitter against God and desperate to take matters into his own hands.

Perhaps he decides to steal, kill, or destroy just to keep his family safe and alive. Just as having an abundance of money can make a person trust in his money rather than God and stop considering God as relevant and as an authority over all, a person who is in severe lack could end up falling into sin and deception as well. Jesus commands us to seek first the kingdom of God, making sure our hearts are not following after lies or being deceived, and then He will take care of the rest (Matthew 6:33). He promises to meet our needs in Philippians 4:19, and He delights in using the church to look after the needs of others within the church (Acts 2:44-45, 2 Corinthians 8:14). Part of being a believer is that, if one has the world's goods, he must not close his heart toward the one in need (1 John 3:17, James 1:27). The west has had so much money for the past several decades and they have borrowed so much money from the future that even the widows and orphans in large part have had enough to eat thanks to the government. But there may come a day when the government cannot feed and care for all who can't care for themselves. The church better be ready to do what it should have been doing all along by looking after the needy so that they see God's provision, are encouraged, and are not led into the deceitfulness of sin according to a belief that God isn't love and that His people don't love. Those who have much to give should do so not just for the sake of the poor but for their own sake lest the deceitfulness of too much leads them astray and they forget God and serve a god whom they have defined based upon lies and deceptions. It is actually a protective measure for the heart to not hoard but to give as God enables.

In a world mired in sin, poverty and exceeding wealth co-exist, and they always will (Mark 14:7). The church has given into the devil's lies if it propagates the notion that God will make everybody rich on earth if they just believe. Proverbs 30:7-9 says that there is wisdom in having just enough, the implication being that those with extra should supply those who lack and do so willingly and in the fear of God (Exodus 16:18, 2 Corinthians 8:15). It is a gift of generosity, not compulsion, a heart desire, not a policy. What is so bad about seeing God meet needs and always needing to trust God to meet them again? The manna that was hoarded by Israel rotted (Exodus 16:20). It wasn't needed because God promised to provide for them each day. Every day they would have to trust God again that day. That honors God because it means that we believe that He is good, faithful, merciful, and true. It keeps us dependent upon Him. The temptation to hoard wealth that decays and rots and is easily stolen or lost can make our hearts lose their sensitivity to God.

God gave Israel just enough so that they would learn to live on the Word of God (Deuteronomy 8:3) and trust in Him rather than upon themselves and the lies of the world. In later years, Israel would have an overabundance, and their hearts were turned away. God may allow us to have to put our face in the dirt for a while (Lamentations 3:29) to teach us that He is enough, and we can always believe that He is faithful to His own. Like the manna (Numbers 11:9), God's mercies are new every morning, and they will be back the next morning and the morning after that (Lamentations 3:23). Being godly, being content, having enough, and having to trust God again tomorrow isn't bad. We need to be balanced in our hearts so that we live balanced, always dependent on God. The Lord is our portion. Just enough, when it is coming from God and through the love of His people, is actually great gain (1 Timothy 6:6), a profound encouragement, and a blessed reality.