

## NEEDS

### KEY TEXTS

#### Matthew 6:25-34 (NKJV)

<sup>25</sup> “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? <sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? <sup>27</sup> Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

<sup>28</sup> “So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; <sup>29</sup> and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, *will He* not much more *clothe* you, O you of little faith?

<sup>31</sup> “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ <sup>32</sup> For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. <sup>33</sup> But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to

you.<sup>34</sup> Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day *is* its own trouble.

**Philippians 4:19 (NKJV)- And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.**

**Psalms 23:1 (NKJV) - The LORD *is* my shepherd; I shall not want.**

It may be the sloppiest, most all-inclusive word used in human language: **NEED**.

We put far too many things into our “need” category.

Matthew 6 is a passage from the Sermon on the Mount. There, Jesus teaches about trusting God instead of worrying about our daily needs.

Jesus is reminding us in this Key Text that **WE HAVE A HEAVENLY FATHER WHO KNOWSEXACTLY WHAT WE NEED.**

This morning, I want to explore with you and dissect on the anatomy of “needs”, My title this morning will just simply be on this one sloppy yet simple word – **“NEEDS”**.

The outline of my sermon will be as follows:

- The Contrast
- The Comfort
- The Confrontation
- The Causes
- The Cure

(I) THE CONTRAST BETWEEN 'NEEDS' AND 'WANTS'

In order to know the contrast between “needs” and “wants”, we must know the definition of both of them.

What are “needs”?

- **BASIC NECESSITIES:** food, water, shelter, clothing, strength for the day, grace for the moment.

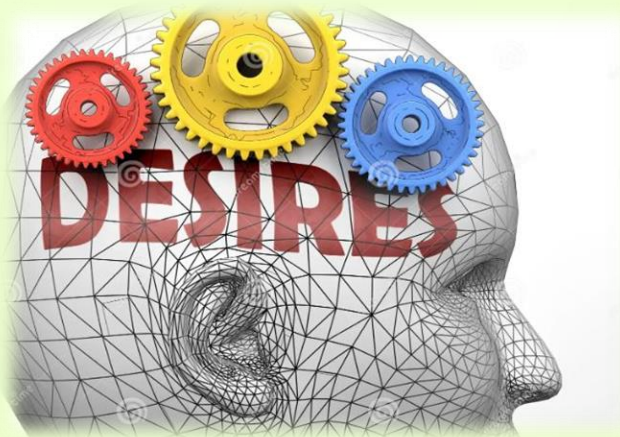


- **SPIRITUAL NEEDS:** forgiveness, salvation, guidance, peace



What are “wants”?

- **DESIRES** that may or may not align with God’s will.



- Often based on emotions, culture or comparison with others.

## (II) THE COMFORT FROM MATTHEW 6

We put far too many things into our “need” category. That is why Jesus **REMINDS** us in **Matthew 6** that we have a Heavenly Father who knows what we need. Embedded in this reminder are both a **comfort** and a **confrontation**.

### ***The Comfort***

The comfort is that there is One who once created and now controls everything that is, and who has unleashed His awesome power so that you and I may receive from His hand every good thing we need to be what we were designed to be and to do what we have been called to do. No need has been unmet by His gracious hands.

***What are the five comforting truths from Matthew 6 concerning our needs?***

- **God Cares About Your Needs**

**Matthew 6:25,32 - “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?..... For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.**

Here, Jesus identifies the **REAL STRUGGLES** like our need for food, clothing and shelter. These are real needs and not imaginary need. Jesus doesn't dismiss them. He says, **"Don't worry, because God knows."**

**Worry** is a symptom of **forgetting who God is**. Jesus says that birds and flowers don't stress, yet God provides for them. Jesus emphasizes to us – **"You are worth more. If God takes care of creation, won't He take care of you?"**

When we worry, it means we have **trust issues in God**. **Worry replaces trust**. Worry says, *"I don't believe God will come through."* But Faith says, *"Even if I don't see it yet, I know He's working."*

Are you worrying and stressing about your real needs? Are you losing your trust in your Heavenly Father to provide? God cares about your needs.

- **God Meets Needs Through Relationship**

**Matthew 6:33 - But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.**

Needs are met in the **right order**. God is not a vending machine for blessings. He calls us to **seek Him first, and in that relationship, He provides.**

**WHEN GOD IS FIRST, OUR PERSPECTIVE CHANGES.** We stop chasing things and start pursuing Him. Then we realize many things we thought were “needs” were just “wants in disguise”.

Are your needs not met today by God? Could it be you have been putting God last in your life? Consequently, because God is last in your life, the perspective of your needs is earth bound, filled with selfish worldly desires and not kingdom mentality. Some of you purposely schedule overtime or school work on Sunday. You purposely miss church so you can earn more or study more on Sunday. Let me tell you – no matter how much you earn or study on Sunday, your needs will never be met. Instead you will always have not enough. **“On the seventh day some of the people went out to gather, but they found none.” (Exodus 16:27)**

- **God Supplies Our Needs Abundantly**

**Philippians 4:19-And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.**



God supplies our needs **not** according to **OUR LIMITS BUT HIS RICHES**. God's provision isn't based on your bank account, your boss or the economy. It is based on **HIS RICHES IN CHRIST, WHICH NEVER RUN DRY**.

God provides more than just physical needs. Yes, He can supply money, food and job. But He also supplies peace, strength, joy, purpose, and grace – spiritual needs that money can't buy.



## The Shepherd Knows What His Sheep Need

**Psalm 23:1 -The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.**

A sheep trusts the shepherd. Sheep don't worry about where the next pasture is. They trust the shepherd to guide and provide.



When the Lord is your Shepherd, you will have what you need. You might not have luxury, but you will have enough. God often gives just enough to teach us to **TRUST HIM EVERY DAY.**

The Lord is my Shepherd; **I shall not want** .... I have all that I need (NLT); I have everything that I need (Easy); I always have more than enough (Passion); I don't need a thing (Message).

- **God's Provision Often Comes Through People**

He uses the **Church. Acts 4:34-35** shows believers sharing with those in need. You might be someone else's answer – or they might be yours.

He uses **unexpected channels**. Look at the raven feeding Elijah in **1 Kings 17:6**. How about a boy's lunch feeding thousands in **John 6**. Don't limit God to familiar sources – He provides in surprising ways.

God indeed used a raven to provide for our needs during the COVID. A raven is an unclean bird, very unlovable because of its aggressive character. To my surprise, God used Pastor Toh Nee's younger brother whose wife is very caustic in her words against me. She criticized my hairstyle to be like a monkey and I was very offended by her. I don't like her but when her husband gave us a big sum to settle our house amortization- this raven feeding verse came to me, of which I was very thankful to raven-like provision by God.

Don't limit God to **FAMILIAR SOURCES**. He provides in surprising ways.

What do you really need?

**Maybe today you need:**

- **Peace in your anxiety**
- **Provision for your bills**
- **Healing in your body or mind**
- **Direction for your future**
- **Or maybe you simply need to return to trusting God**

**Whatever your need is, God already knows and He is able to provide. These are the 5 comforting truths from **Matthew 6 and the other key texts.****

### **(III) THE CONFRONTATION FROM MATTHEW 6**

**Matthew 6** not only carries **COMFORT** for us but a **HUMBLING REBUKE – A CONFRONTATION**. Jesus **CONFRONTS** us with this truth – **WE NEED A HEAVENLY FATHER WHO KNOWS WHAT WE NEED BECAUSE WE DON'T**.



We get **NEED** and **WANT** confused all the time. We live in a world that **blurs** the line between needs and wants. Advertisers, social media and even our own hearts often convince us **WHAT WE WANT IS WHAT WE NEED**.



Let's explore what the Bible says about the difference between needs and wants and why that distinction matters so much in our walk with Christ.

Let's see how a **disordered desire** or **misplaced desire** spiral us to an addictive slavish need for things of this world.

**Disordered desire** means desire that is either excessive, wrongly prioritized, or internally distorted.

**E.g.** Sexual desire isn't inherently wrong but if it is pursued in ways that objectify others or ignore the

purpose of love and commitment, it is considered disordered. Or the desire for recognition for your hard work. It is natural but if that desire turns into pride or a need to dominate others, it becomes disordered.

**Misplaced desire** means the right kind of longing aimed at the wrong thing

**E.g.** Craving intimacy but seeking it through casual encounters or toxic relationships

Whereas **disordered desire** is about a desire out of proportion or wrongly prioritized, **misplaced desire** is more about a *misfire* – the desire is aimed at the wrong target.

### ***Development of Need-Driven Slavery***

#### ***1. Desire ("I want.....")***

It all starts with ***desire ("I want.....")***.

There is nothing evil about **DESIRE**. God created us with the capacity to **desire**. Everything we say and do is the product of desire. Yet it is very hard for sinners to hold desire with an open hand. It doesn't take long for our desires to morph into **DEMANDS**.

## ***2. Demands ("I must.....")***

The thing that was once a desire is now taking hold of us. We are less willing to live without it. Then demand morphs into **NEED**.

## ***3. Need ("I will.....")***

Now with great resolve and surety, we are convinced that we cannot live without it. This thing that was once an open-handed **DESIRE** has been christened a **NEED**. We are fully convinced that it could be impossible to live without it. It is now in control of our hearts.

We think about it all the time. We are fearful when we are without it. We plot how to keep it in our lives. But the cycle of slavery doesn't end there.

Need forms **EXPECTATION**.

## ***4. Expectation ("You should.....")***

You see, if you are convinced it is a **NEED**, you will think you are **ENTITLED** to it. You will be convinced that you have the **RIGHT TO DEMAND IT**, and you will **judge God's love** by His willingness to deliver it.

Expectation then leads to **DISAPPOINTMENT**.

### **5. Disappointment ("You didn't.....")**

Expectation leads to disappointment if God doesn't deliver. We can't believe that God would say that He loves us yet not meet this "need".



The fact is, God has been faithful to all He has promised us, but this **DESIRE** that morphed into a **NEED** is not something He's promised to give us.

So, disappointment leads us to some kind of **ANGER**.

### **6. Anger ("Because you didn't, I will.....")**



Because we now judge God as unfaithful, we quit trusting Him as we should and we let go of good habits of faith like prayer, bible reading and church attendance.

***The confrontation in a nutshell:***

YOU ONCE DESIRED IT, BUT NOW YOU ARE PERSUADED THAT YOU NEED IT. ONCE YOU'VE NAMED IT A NEED, IT HAS YOU.

- Your need enslaves you.
- Your need possesses you.
- Slavish need

**SLAVISH NEEDS**

- a type of intense dependency or desire that is submissive, excessive and often self-degrading.
- It is when someone feels they must have something or someone, often to the point that they lose their autonomy, self-respect and judgment.

**E.g.** Eve **DESIRED** the forbidden fruit and she was persuaded she **NEEDED** it to make her like God. It all started with a **wrong suggestion** from the devil just as our mind absorbs all the wrong suggestions from our culture, social media, advertisers, friends, the world

and Satan to birth the wrong desires, which later spiral down into **SLAVISH NEEDS**, which God will not meet or answer.



Are you asking for things that God never promised?  
Are you missing out on peace because you are choosing what **YOU WANT (DESIRE)** instead of thanking Him for what you have?

Examine your hearts today – Are your prayers full of wants or filled with trust for His provision? Do you know the difference between what you need and what you want?

#### (IV) THE CAUSES OF SLAVISH NEEDS

Let's examine the root cause of this slavish need.

It starts with a **wrong want**.

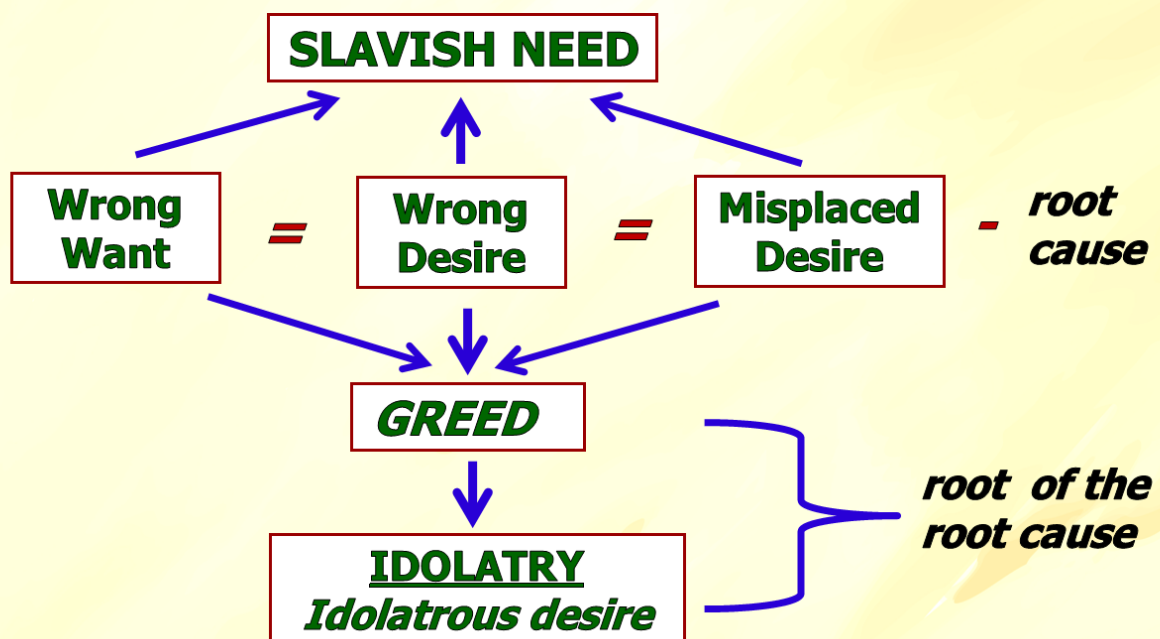
Wrong want = wrong desire

Wrong desire = misplaced desire or disordered desire

Misplaced desire or disordered desire = Greed

Greed = Idolatry (idolatrous desires)

#### The root cause of slavish NEED



**IDOTRATROUS DESIRE IS WHEN WE ELEVATE CREATED THINGS SUCH AS APPROVAL, SEX, SECURITY, SIGNIFICANCE, POWER AND CONTROL ABOVE GOD.**

These **DESIRES** often mask a deeper longing for love, purpose or belonging that only Christ can fully fulfill.

**Need to hoard, to have more and more – GREED**

What is **GREED**?

- Disordered desire for gain
- Elevates material wealth above spiritual treasure, and often reflects a deep distrust in God's provision
- Is not just wanting more – it is **THE INSATIABLE CRAVING FOR MORE**, often at the expense of others or one's own values.

**Root causes of Greed:**

- **Fear of lack (security mindset)**

*"If I don't take more, I might lose out."*



Greed often comes from **FEAR** – fear of poverty, irrelevance, or being left behind.

It reflects a **LACK OF TRUST** in provision by God, others or life.

- **Discontentment**

*"What I have isn't enough."*



Greed grows in the soil of **CONSTANT DISSATISFACTION.**

No matter how much is acquired, there is always a desire for **MORE** – money, status, possession, control.

- **Pride and Ego**

*"I deserve more than others."*

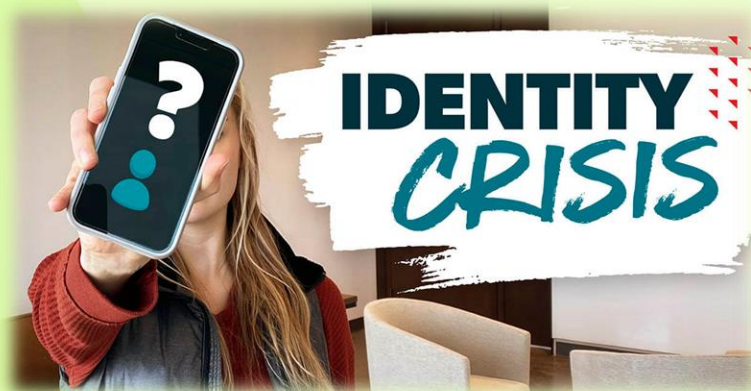


Greed can stem from a **SELF-CENTERED WORLDVIEW** that places personal gain above fairness, compassion or justice.

It is a way to elevate **SELF-WORTH** through **POSSESSIONS OR POWER**.

- **Identity Crisis**

*"What I own defines who I am."*



If someone bases their identity on **WEALTH, SUCCESS, OR APPEARANCE**, greed becomes a way to **PROTECT OR ENHANCE** that identity.

It is a false self built on **ACCUMULATION**, not authenticity.

- **Spiritual emptiness**

*"Stuff will fill the void."*

In many cases, greed is a **SPIRITUAL HUNGER MISDIRECTED TOWARDS MATERIAL THINGS**.

It is trying to satisfy **SOUL-LEVEL NEEDS** (like love, worth, peace) with **EXTERNAL REWARDS**.

It is a deep-seated **INNER EMPTINESS** – a belief that *"I don't have enough"* or *"I am not enough"*, which drives a person to accumulate more in hopes of **feeling secure, significant or satisfied**.

**ROOT CAUSES IN A NUTSHELL** – Greed is rooted in fear, pride or security-seeking.

**(V) THE GOSPEL CURE**

***Christ as the True Treasure***

- Jesus calls us to treasure Himself above all (**Mat 6**).

- In 2 Cor 8:9, Paul writes, “Though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor so that you by His poverty might become rich.”
- Christ gave up heavenly riches to make us spiritually wealthy – **HE IS THE ANTIDOTE TO GREED.**

### *Christ's Sufficiency vs Greed's Insufficiency*

- Greed says, “I never have enough.”
- Christ says, “I am enough” (Jn 6:35 – I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me shall not hunger....”)

### *Gospel Cure*

- The gospel liberates us from greed by giving us a **NEW IDENTITY**: not as consumers but as beloved Children who are already rich in Christ.
- As we see Christ's generosity, we are moved to give, not hoard.
- **E.g.** The young rich ruler (Mk 10:17-22) – He couldn't part with his wealth because he didn't see Christ as **more valuable** than his possessions. Jesus exposed his greed to invite him into something **Greater – life with God.**

**GREED IS OVERCOME NOT BY GUILT BUT SEEING CHRIST AS THE GREATER TREASURE – ONE WHO**

**FREELY GIVES, FULLY SATISFIED AND NEVER RUNS OUT.**

***Why should we treasure Jesus as the True Treasure?***

**Matthew 6** tells us that the lilies of the field are arrayed in a more glorious clothing than Solomon's rich and glorious apparel. Jesus is that **More Glorious Lilies**, arrayed in the glory of deity, alive at one time in Heaven but was thrown into the oven of God's fiery judgment on the cross so that He can take away the curse of inglorious poverty and lack – adding not just one cubit of life but eternal life and rich and unlimited provision to your life's needs as His redeemed. He became not only our **ONE TRUE SHEPHERD** who knows our need but became the **LAMB OF GOD**, offered as a sin offering for all our fallen, misplaced and disordered desire so that today when you receive Him and return to Him as your only **TRUE TREASURE AND TRUE SHEPHERD**, you don't have to worry anymore nor run after cheap substitutes for identity, love, control and material things because He is able supply all your **need** according to His riches in glory. As you cherish Him as the **ULTIMATE TRUE TREASURE OF YOUR LIFE**, you will put Him first and out of this cherished and prioritized relationship will flow the unfailing provision for all your real needs. Your perspective and worldview for

the things in this world will change as you love Him more and more – Turn your eyes upon Jesus and the things of this world will seem strangely dim. Your desires, trust and love will all be re-ordered to only be in Him and for Him only. Others are secondary and expendable. Christ is not our **PROVIDER** but also our **PROVISION**.

Let's reevaluate our needs today. Is it a real need or a slavish need stemming from a disordered heart; misplaced trust; or a misplaced desire?

How to tell the difference between a want and a need?

- Will this draw me closer to God or distract me from Him?
- Is this desire rooted in gratitude or greed?
- If I never get this, could I still praise God?
- Is this for my purpose or His purpose?

With Christ and the cross in view – let the Holy Spirit convict us and teach us to reorder our desires; priorities and above all – to rededicate your heart's love to Jesus. Put Him first in your life and then all these real needs will be met; not the slavish needs that your fallen self wants you to believe.

Next year we are going to exit this church and return to Singapore permanently. We have a flat in Singapore

that sorely needs a total renovation because all these years, it has been rented out and the tenants didn't take care of it well. Our desire is to have a nice and simple flat to live in. So, we checked with an interior designer in Singapore concerning the price of renovation. Our flat is a 5-room flat. And the quotations vary according to the style we are going to choose. If we choose a Scandinavian style, it will be above SGD100,000. If it is minimalistic, it is about SGD70,000. Immediately, I told Pastor Toh Nee to opt for the minimalistic design because God promised me if I live with eternity in view, sow into God's kingdom, live simply and modestly and associate with the lowly – He will never fail me till my hair turns gray. I don't have to be enslaved to the desire for an ostentatious house. As long as there is a roof over my head and a clean and simple house for me to live in, I am contented. After all, the main thing in my heart is to have Christ as my Ultimate True Treasure and not a nice and expensive house. All the things in this present world will pass away but not Christ.

**Steve Job** – famously reflected on how as we get older, we realize that a \$30 watch and a \$300 watch tell the same time. This observation was part of larger reflection on how material possessions like cars and houses, don't ultimately define happiness or provide

enduring value. The core message is that **TRUE FULFILLMENT COMES FROM RELATIONSHIPS; EXPERIENCES AND INNER CONTENTMENT, NOT THE PRICE TAG OF POSSESSIONS.**

**GOD ONLY MEETS OUR NEED AND NOT OUR GREED.**