

\$ince it's almost Christmas, you can bet greed will rear its ugly head. A child will cut through stacks of presents on Christmas morning then wonder aloud if there are any more. A business owner will look at her most excellent year-end sales figures and yearn for a bigger bottom line next year. A man won't be satisfied with his Mac-mansion so he'll draw up plans for a bigger, better place.

Greed is a selfish desire for more. For some people the feeling is insatiable; for others it's a nagging discontentment with what they have. But know that greed is a choice.

Choose to break free from it by reprioritizing your life, directing your desires toward Jesus, and finding your fulfillment in Him. Yeah, overcoming greed is that simple.

So don't waste another day being greedy.

TV shows fertile ground for greed

By John W. Kennedy

While many game show contestants may hope merely to gain enough quick cash to pay off debts, send a child to college or remodel the house, newer network television big-money programs are geared for greed.

"Most people go on game shows to win money to have a better lifestyle," says Stephen Winzenburg, communications professor at Grand View College in Des Moines, Iowa. "But some people are tempted to give up

a large amount of money to go for an even larger amount of money."

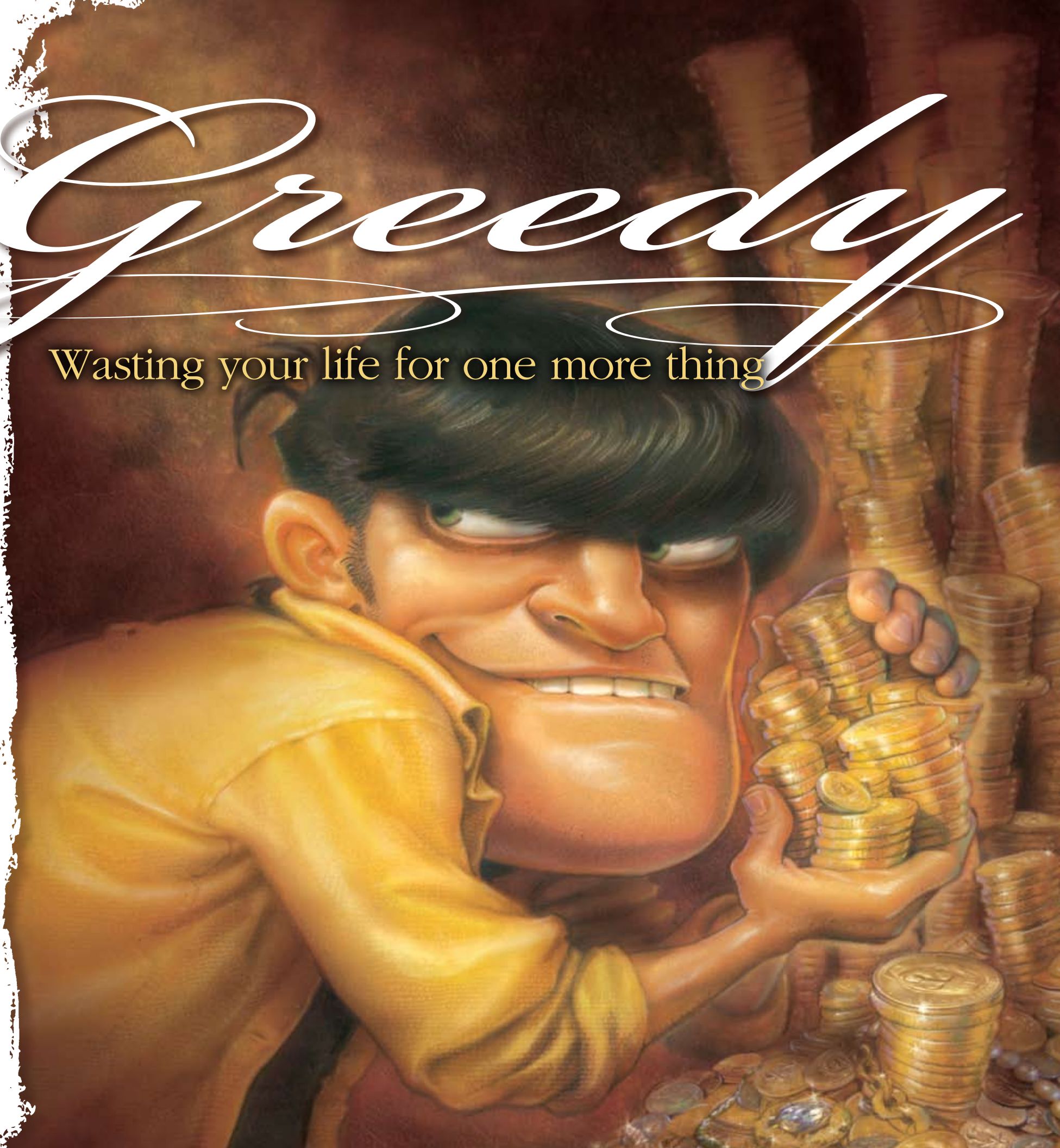
Shows such as *Power of 10* on CBS, *Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader?* on Fox, and *Deal or No Deal* and *1 vs. 100* on NBC routinely feature players risking \$100,000 or more only to go home with a few bucks or nothing.

Robert J. Thompson, director of the Bleier Center for Television and Popular Culture at Syracuse

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Greedily

Wasting your life for one more thing



Greedy

A contestant weighs her options on Deal or No Deal.



Parenting

6 ways to tame the gimmee monster

By Christina Quick



University, believes game shows are reflective of a capitalistic economy in which many individuals and companies are obsessed with stock market gains and growing profit margins.

Thompson says game show competitors, egged on by members of the audience, often go into denial. If they stop after winning \$100,000 or so, many feel they are giving up more than the opportunity to win a lot more. They also are forfeiting their spotlight on national

television and the potential to be famous, he says.

Winzenburg contends greed plays a still larger role in reality shows because many of the contestants hope to achieve the big prize plus fame. While a contestant usually disappears after one episode of a traditional game show, those who survive reality show elimination week after week can enjoy widespread name recognition.

“Greed for attention and fame is at the heart of reality

TV,” Thompson says. “Most people going on reality shows are looking to be famous, and they think if they become famous they will become rich.”

Quiz shows foster the perception that it’s easy to gain a lot of money with little effort, Winzenburg says. The message that you don’t need to work to acquire possessions is especially

impressionable upon young people, he says.

Thompson says not only can contestants win a huge amount of money in a few minutes, but sometimes they don’t even need any skill. *Deal or No Deal* only requires participants to eliminate briefcases, not answer questions. The big-money quiz shows of the 1950s had multiple-part questions with no multiple-choice options. For instance, Thompson says a contestant on *Twenty-One* once had to name all of Henry VIII’s wives and their fates.

Winzenburg notes Christians who participate in reality shows sometimes must compromise their beliefs or deceive other players in order to advance. Christian contestants on *Big Brother 8* this year on CBS proved to be as money-grubbing as non-Christians, he says.

“One character repeatedly said she knew it was God’s will that she would win — and she didn’t,” Winzenburg says. “God is not a good-luck charm.”

E-mail your comments to tpe@ag.org.

We live in a materialistic culture, and children are not immune to the self-centeredness it breeds. From Christmas to birthdays and beyond, kids seem to want and expect more with each passing year.

Here are six ways to rein in the greed and cultivate an atmosphere of contentment.

1. Limit TV exposure.

Corporations want kids to be greedy. Television advertisers are counting on them to demand the latest snack foods, toys, electronic devices and fashions. But you don’t have to play along. Set limits on TV time, and substitute commercial-free videos when possible. Also provide plenty of alternatives to electronic media, such as board games, books and craft supplies.

2. Explain needs and wants.

Teach your children to distinguish between life necessities and consumer cravings. You could even help them create lists or cut out magazine photos of items that represent each category. When they understand the difference, they might be willing to admit they don’t really “need” that new video game after all.

3. Model self-restraint.

If your life revolves around acquiring material things, your kids will probably follow your lead. Teach them by example to choose good stewardship over instant gratification. Compare prices and research product claims before buying. Stick to a budget and refuse to spend beyond your means. Explain the family’s financial parameters to your children and recruit them to help you find ways to save.

4. Focus on others.

Experiencing the fun of giving is the best cure for self-centeredness. As a family, get involved in a worthwhile project that will benefit others. For example, donate toys or warm clothes to a children’s charity, help stock a food pantry or participate in a church outreach.

5. Put the brakes on outside interference.

If grandparents or other well-meaning friends and relatives are overindulging your kids, gently explain your concerns and discuss ways to cut back on gift-giving. For instance, you could suggest that an outing to the zoo would be more meaningful to the children than another expensive toy.

6. Teach thankfulness.

Regardless of whether they get everything on their wish lists, kids should be taught to express gratitude for what they’ve received. At a minimum, they should be reminded to say, “Thank you,” to the giver before reaching for another package.

More formal gestures are often in order as well. Children don’t have to master spelling and handwriting skills before attempting thank you cards. Grandparents, aunts and uncles love getting personal notes scrawled in crayon. The youngest kids can pose with their gifts for thank you photos.

E-mail your comments to tpe@ag.org.

What the Bible says about GREED

Ecclesiastes 5:10

“Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. This too is meaningless” (NIV).

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What the Bible says about GREED

Luke 12:15

“Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”

Internal Memo: By Sherilynn Tounger

Greedy

Greed: A hot commodity that leaves people longing

Happy holidays to our sales staff and marketers! As you well know, greed has been a silent vice for countless people for centuries. But through an aggressive campaign utilizing clever marketing, dependency on consumerism, modern convenience and entitlement, greed has finally earned its due.

You've helped make it happen, and we're eternally grateful. Now that it's Christmas, the board of directors and I wanted to encourage you to continue to foster greed wherever and whenever you can. To do so, we recommend you influence people to spend like crazy, rack up huge credit card debt, and keep up with the Joneses. It is also crucial you remind people they deserve the best, and finances should not be a concern.

While reflecting on this year's efforts I vividly recall the young couple in Arizona who stretched themselves thin financially to get the oversized house with all the amenities and upgrades. Then they really fell into deep debt when they furnished the place. All of it was done because they were convinced they needed more.

In September, some of our most savvy marketers were able to whisper into the ears of thousands of college freshman that true independence could be had with a high-interest credit card. As it does every year, our little ploy worked and the students happily went into debt with no thoughts for tomorrow.

That's why greed works. People inevitably long for more. We at Greed Inc. believe being content with what God places before our customers is nonsense. We must continue to get the word out that it is good and healthy to get as much as one possibly can and then long for even more. To say otherwise is foolish. What else will motivate people to work hard and get the things they deserve?

Christians will obviously refute this and point to their Bibles. In John 4:10,14 Jesus says to a woman, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked Him and He would have given you living water. ... Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst" (NIV). *Never thirst?* Come on. That's impossible. Our research shows people will always be longing for something — that's how we stay in business.

Sure, the Bible promises people many things, but it also requires more than we do. To grasp all that Jesus offers, people are asked to admit their desires, unmet wants and needs, insecurities, and even fears. Then they have to leave them at Jesus' feet and trust Him for the best in their lives. To do that, people are forced to dig into more than just their pocketbooks or purses for a credit card. They actually have to surrender all their earthly desires to God.

Your help in promoting greed and keeping people focused on all the extra things they want is sure to keep them coming back for more. And that's right where we want people — never satisfied, always longing.

Happy holidays,
Greed Inc.

What the Bible says about **GREED**

1 Timothy 6:10
"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."

Greed will wreck your bottom line

"Money, Money, Money," is the opening song for the hit show *The Apprentice*, which features aspiring entrepreneurs working toward a shortcut to success. The show also highlights America's fascination with and pursuit of wealth. This leads to the question, "Can greed be good for our economy?" In our capitalist economy self-indulgence might appear to motivate people to create successful businesses and personal profits. But that is an illusion greed casts over our society. When someone is driven by greed, no amount of success or profits will suffice. When that person's expectations become unrealistic, ethical business practices are often abandoned. The constant drive for "more" has led to the moral failure of many successful corporate executives in recent years. And the fallout from those failures has cost companies and stockholders billions of dollars.

This leads us back to our initial question of whether greed is good for our economy. The answer is very clearly no. Since greed can never be satisfied it will ultimately lead to personal destruction. Scripture is very clear in outlining the importance of not only avoiding greed, but also fleeing from it (Mark 7:20-22; Luke 11:39; 12:15; Ephesians 5:3; Colossians 3:5). We are called to be good stewards of the assets God has entrusted to us. Among more than 2,350 verses in the Bible regarding money, there are common threads we can apply as stewards in the management of our assets. First, we must be content in our current financial situation (Philippians 4:11). No amount of financial success will bring contentment if we are not content today. Second, it is important to understand God owns everything. As we trust that He knows how much is enough for us, we can also trust He will supply our every need (Matthew 6:25-34).

— Bob Lamb

What the Bible says about **GREED**
Jeremiah 6:13
"From the least to the greatest, all are greedy for gain."

Gluttons for greed

Greed has no problem spreading on its own. But the media love to promote greed in all its forms, ranging from ugly to deceptively enviable. Following are some recent celebrations of greed with a bit of analysis to keep you from becoming infected.

MTV's Cribs — Viewers tour the houses owned by rich and famous movie stars, musicians and athletes. If that weren't enough, you also get to see what's in the fridge.

Underlying theme: If you don't live in a megamansion, aren't famous and don't have lots of money to spend on every imaginable gadget, you can't seriously be happy and content.

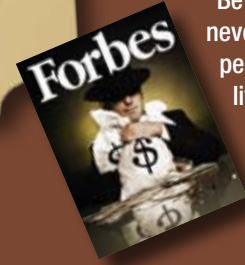
Enron — The energy giant collapses six years ago after the company severely exaggerates its earnings. Shareholders lose untold millions of dollars.

Greedy truth: If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

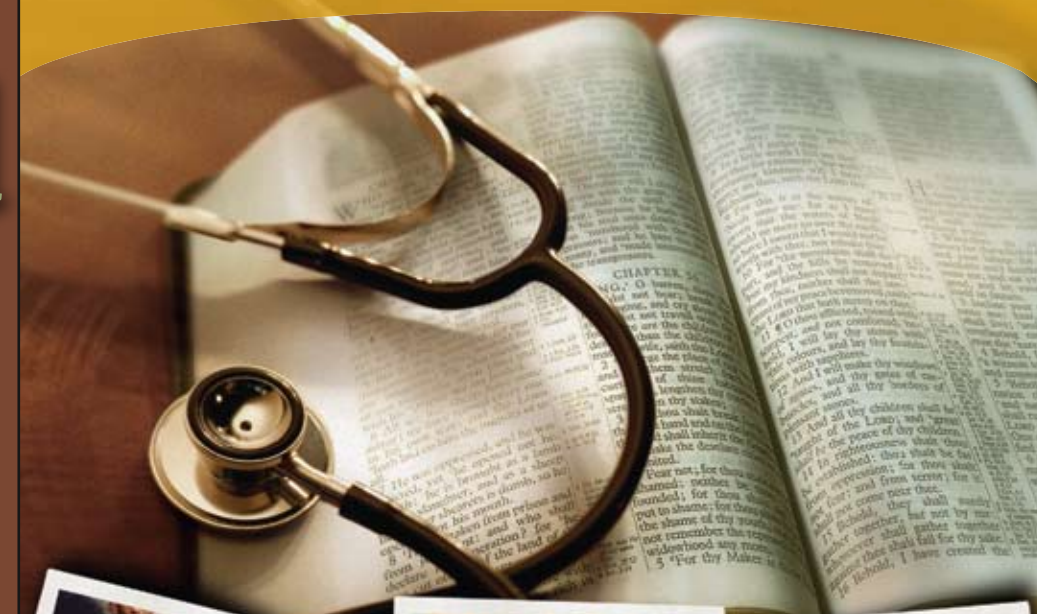
Forbes Richest People in America — Having a net worth of \$1 billion is not enough to make the list. Bill Gates, Microsoft visionary, sits at the top of the list and is reportedly worth \$59 billion.

Better things to do: You'll never be as rich as these people, so don't waste your life trying or pretending to be.

— Kirk Noonan



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Greedy

By John W. Kennedy

Gambling brings out the GREED in individuals, government

Americans looking for get-rich-quick schemes have plenty of options, from spending a couple of bucks on a lottery ticket to dropping a bundle at a casino. The problem, of course, for those looking for wealth is that the odds of winning are abysmally bad.

"When I was gambling, I wanted to make as much money as I could," says Jerry Prosapio, co-founder of the Crestwood, Ill.-

based ministry Gambling Exposed. "Even the few times I won, instead of being satisfied with my winnings, I only thought about how much more I could have made."

Prosapio won big the first time he bet and purchased three suits. For 13 addictive years afterwards he never gained anything from wagering. He gambled away his college tuition funds, squandered the money he and his wife received as wedding gifts, and fell into other

addictions, from alcoholism to pornography.

"The spirit of greed over-

takes you and you are never satisfied," Prosapio says.

Prosapio only stopped gambling when a mafia enforcer threatened to kill his infant son. Prosapio had failed to repay a loan — taken out to cover gambling losses.

"Gambling destroys everyone and everything around you," Prosapio says.

Gambling also can ruin cities, sparking everything from higher bankruptcy rates to increased insurance fraud among residents.

Charles Mattix III, pastor of Barstow (Calif.) First Assembly



Americans spent \$85 billion on legalized gambling in 2005.

of God, has been fighting to keep gambling out of his community of 23,000 for more than four years.

Five Native American tribes and their financial backers eye the city on Interstate 15 between Los Angeles and Las Vegas as the perfect site for casino gambling. The rivalry between gambling interests has sparked tribal feuds and tension between city council members over which proposal to support.

"The highly cash-intensive industry is based on greed," Mattix says.

E-mail your comments to tpe@ag.org.

What the Bible says about GREED

Luke 3:14

"Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely — be content with your pay."

By Scott Harrup

IF I only had *that*...

He appeared to have everything — vast wealth, a showcase palace, national influence. King Ahab ruled Israel's Northern Kingdom for 22 years in the early 9th century B.C. after inheriting a thriving nation from his father, Omri.

Despite his vast royal real estate holdings, Ahab couldn't keep his eyes off a single vineyard near his palace. The plot of land could not have been very large. When Ahab approached the owner, Naboth, the king said he wanted to turn the property into a "vegetable garden" (1 Kings 21:2, NIV). He would pay handsomely for the land.

Naboth declined. The vineyard had been in his family for generations.

Ahab's reaction was almost comical. He sulked in bed and refused to eat. There was nothing comical about his solution. On the advice of wife Jezebel, Ahab slandered Naboth and had him executed.

A powerful and wealthy king was willing to commit murder in pursuit of just one additional asset. Why? Ahab's material riches could not satisfy his moral and spiritual poverty.

We like to think such behavior is limited to idolatrous pagans. King David's lethal plot to marry Bathsheba says otherwise. How is it the human heart, even one dedicated to God, can fall prey to greed?

When we become distracted with this world's treasures, greed is inevitable. "Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. This too is meaningless" (Ecclesiastes 5:10).

In response to greed's allure, the follower of Christ must redirect all attention toward God. Right relationship with God rescues the human soul, which Jesus said is of more value than this planet's entire reservoir of material wealth (Luke 9:25).

Where do you find yourself and your priorities? Has that "one more thing" nudged itself into the center of your worldview? Are you letting goals and disciplines of eternal value slip to the sidelines of your day?

Refocus. Reprioritize. Remember what is truly important and what truly satisfies. **tpe**

E-mail your comments to tpe@ag.org.

What the Bible says about GREED

Ephesians 5:5

"For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person — such a man is an idolater — has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."

ARCS OF SALVATION

To know God and be ready for heaven, follow these steps:

A. Admit you are a sinner.

"There is no one righteous, not even one ... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:10,23 (See Romans 5:8; 6:23.)

Ask God's forgiveness and repent of your sins.

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Romans 10:13 (See Acts 3:19.)

B. Believe in Jesus (put your trust in Him) as your only hope of salvation.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16 (See John 14:6.)

Become a child of God by receiving Christ.

"To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." John 1:12 (See Revelation 3:20.)

C. Confess that Jesus is your Lord.

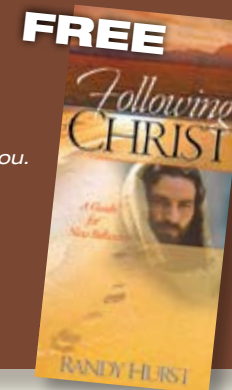
"If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9 (See verse 10.)

For further help, contact the Assemblies of God church near you.

If you would like someone to pray with you concerning your decision to follow Jesus Christ, please contact the church indicated on the back cover or call:

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I OPENING

Sunita:

- Rejected by her parents who longed for a son
- Forced into an arranged marriage at age 12
- Uneducated and unloved, she believes her sad life is punishment from the gods
- No one has ever told her otherwise

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