

LEARNING TO BE CONTENT

Philippians 4:11

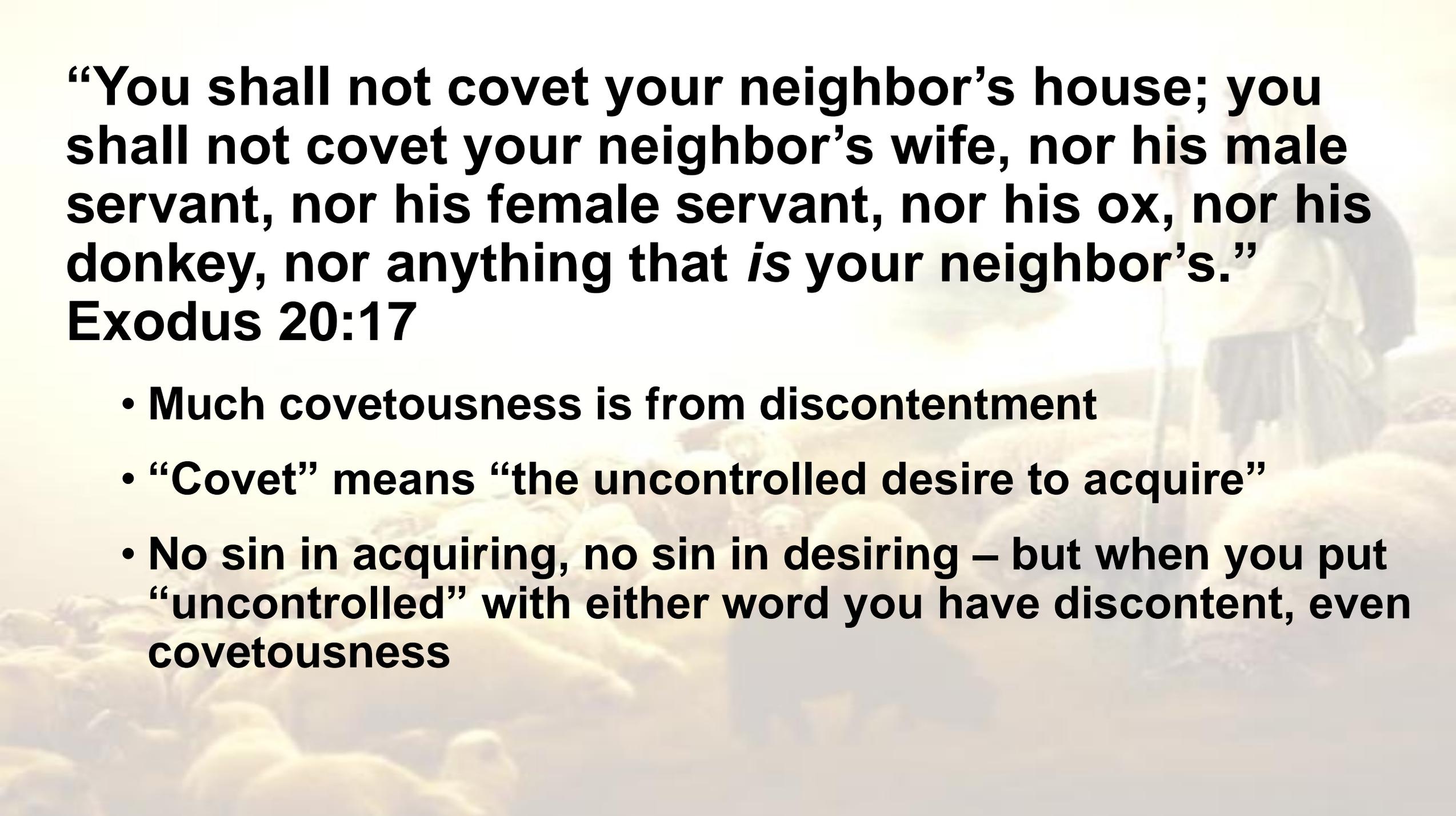


“Discontentment has reached epidemic proportions in America”

- **Solomon – Ecclesiastes – great discontentment –**
- **Wives, pleasures, possessions, beauty, silver and gold,**
- **Wisdom**
- **Do you know people who are always discontented?**
- **Discontentment may start early in life**
- **Notice some passages that deal with both contentment/discontentment**

“Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:” Philippians 4:11

- **“Again, I saw that for all toil and every skillful work a man is envied by his neighbor. This also *is* vanity and grasping for the wind. The fool folds his hands and consumes his own flesh. Better a handful *with* quietness than both hands full, *together with* toil and grasping for the wind. Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun: There is one alone, without companion: He has neither son nor brother. Yet *there is* no end to all his labors, nor is his eye satisfied with riches. *But he never asks*, ‘For whom do I toil and deprive myself of good?’ This also *is* vanity and a grave misfortune.” Ecclesiastes 4:4-8**

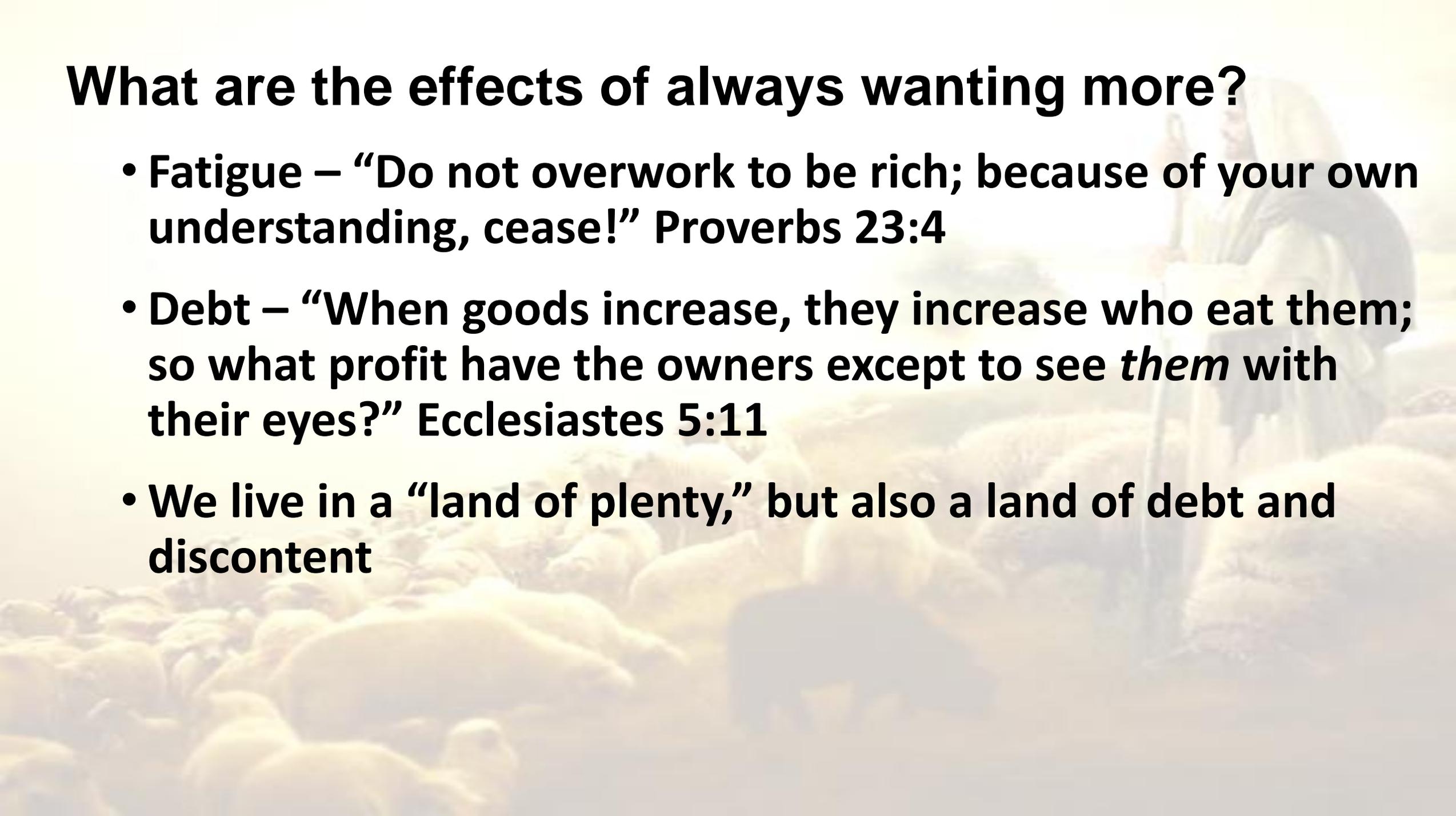
A background image showing a shepherd in a dark coat and hat, holding a long staff, standing in a field with a large flock of sheep. A dog is also visible among the sheep. The scene is brightly lit, possibly by sunlight, creating a warm, golden glow.

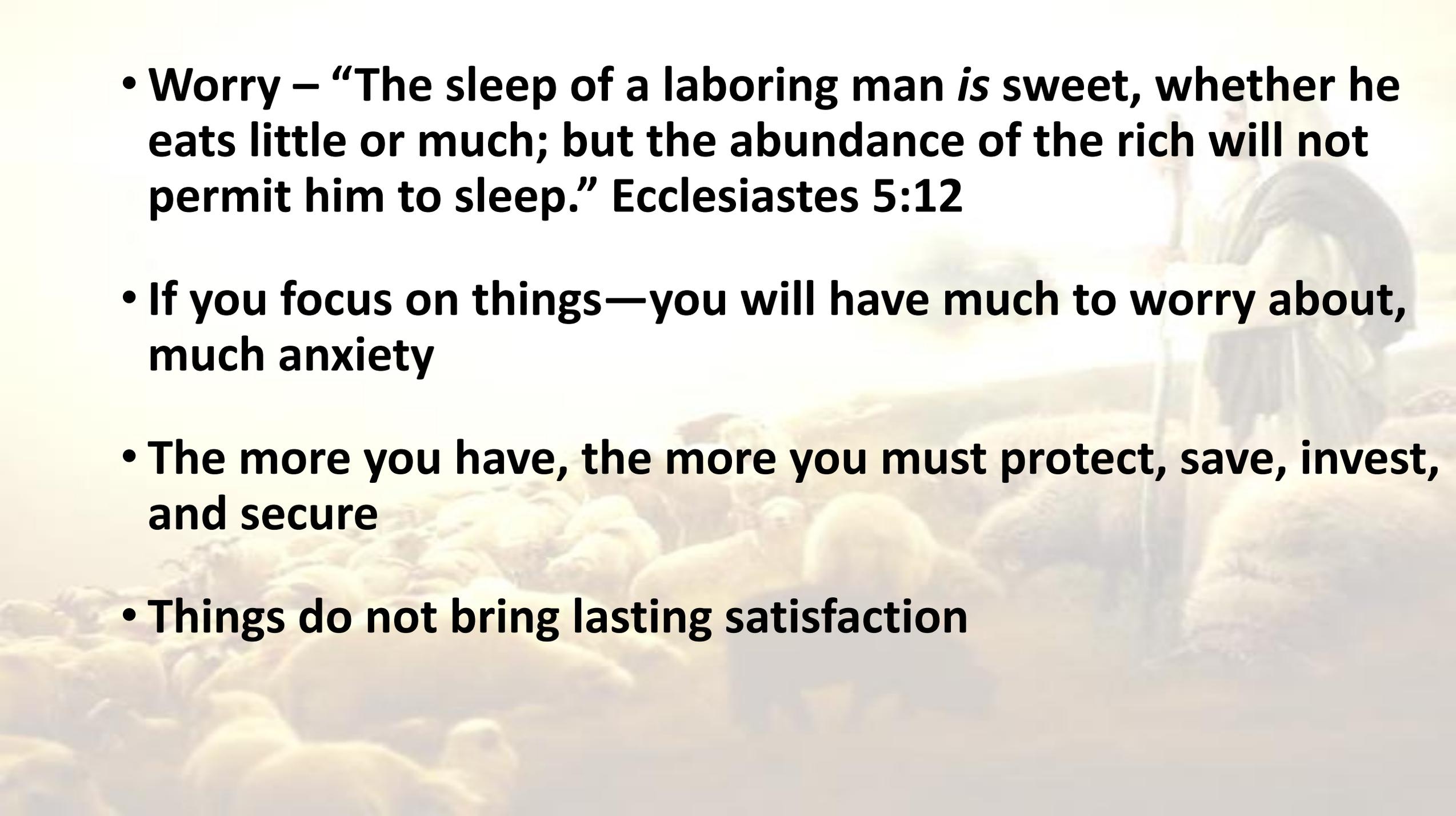
**“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that *is* your neighbor’s.”
Exodus 20:17**

- **Much covetousness is from discontentment**
- **“Covet” means “the uncontrolled desire to acquire”**
- **No sin in acquiring, no sin in desiring – but when you put “uncontrolled” with either word you have discontent, even covetousness**

What are the effects of always wanting more?

- **Fatigue – “Do not overwork to be rich; because of your own understanding, cease!” Proverbs 23:4**
- **Debt – “When goods increase, they increase who eat them; so what profit have the owners except to see *them* with their eyes?” Ecclesiastes 5:11**
- **We live in a “land of plenty,” but also a land of debt and discontent**



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- A background image showing a shepherd in a dark robe and hat, holding a staff, standing in a field with a large flock of sheep. The scene is bathed in a warm, golden light, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The shepherd is positioned on the right side of the frame, looking towards the left where the sheep are gathered.
- **Worry – “The sleep of a laboring man *is* sweet, whether he eats little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not permit him to sleep.” Ecclesiastes 5:12**
 - **If you focus on things—you will have much to worry about, much anxiety**
 - **The more you have, the more you must protect, save, invest, and secure**
 - **Things do not bring lasting satisfaction**

Conflict

“Where do wars and fights *come* from among you? Do *they* not *come* from your *desires for* pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend *it* on your pleasures.” James 4:1-3

- **Disagreement over finances is a major cause of marital conflict**
- **“Every war is a war of aggression” – Nations**

Dissatisfaction results from always wanting more

- **“He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also *is* vanity.” Ecclesiastes 5:10**
- **We will never get everything we may want!**
- **We need things, but not as the way to satisfaction**
- **Are you still excited over the gifts given you 11 months ago?**
- **Work in life – satisfied?**

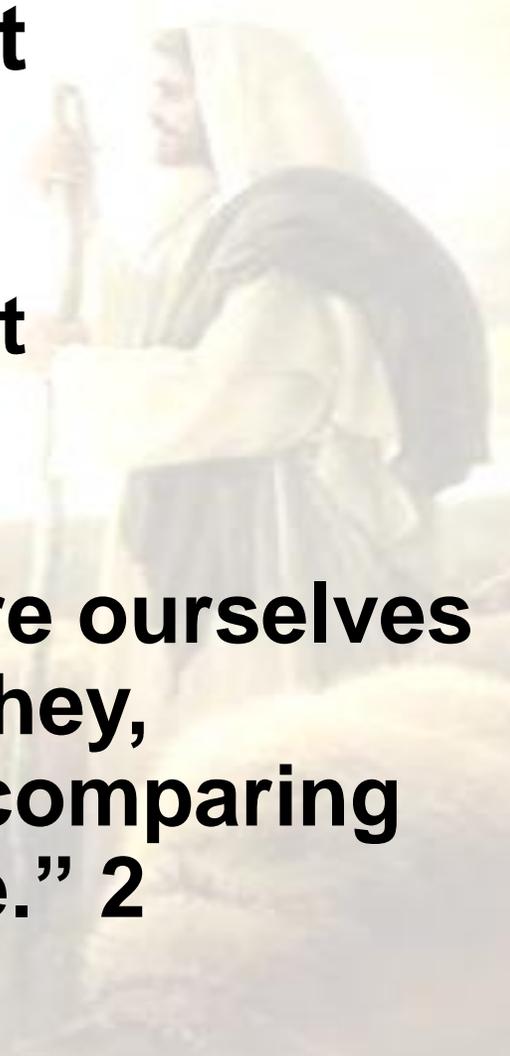
God teaches us how to learn contentment

- **Paul – “I have learned...to be content”**
- **Four great principles in learning to be content**

One – resist comparisons

“ For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.” 2

Corinthians 10:12



Two – Be grateful

**“As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labor—this *is* the gift of God.”
Ecclesiastes 5:19**

- **Be thankful for what you have**
- **Go back 1-2 generations – homes – meeting houses -**
- **Many live by the “when – than” philosophy**
- **Happiness is a choice**

Three – Helping others feeds our contentment

- Many of you know this joy – you are using your time, talents, and resources to bless others
- “Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. *Let them* do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.” 1 Timothy 6:17-19
- Four principles here: 1) don't be haughty/proud 2) don't trust in money 3) use money to do good 4) use money cheerfully

Four – Establish eternal priorities

“ while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.” 2 Corinthians 4:18

- Look around you – everything you see is temporary – decay, rust, deteriorate, die**
- Fix your attention on God, relationships, love, care, concern - eternal**

Conclusions

- **You can buy a bed, but not a good night's sleep**
- **You can buy things, but not faithfulness**
- **Paul wrote to Timothy:**
“Godliness with contentment is great gain”

