

Possessive Thinking – I Own You

Levels and Shades of Evil

The author describes this last thinking error as the embodiment of evil. He describes evil beginning in the lightest shades of gray which on a continuum move to darkest black. The picture is useful because possessive thinking begins with seemingly small violations of personal rights. A man orders a meal for his date without asking for her permission to do so. A teen promises friends that his mom will be the taxi for his friends without asking her. A woman calls her husband several times a day at his place of work to check up on him. A teen “borrows” her sister’s new shirt without asking and shows no remorse when the shirt is stained. And so begins the downward spiral until people and other’s possessions become their possessions to do with as they please. Can you see where this ends up? At the end of that spectrum of disrespect and possession, a person can commit rape and murder or enslave people because they are nothing more than things to serve their purposes. They deny a person’s God-given dignity. In those acts, the twisted thinker either subtly or flagrantly puts themselves in the place of God and demands worship for themselves.

Examples

- a. Arbitration without permission
The possessive thinker makes decisions for another person without their permission. Sometimes without knowing exactly what happened, the victim feels uneasy, pressed, used, manipulated or controlled. All they know is something got decided that they have to live with and their opinion didn’t matter.
- b. Jealousy
Jealousy builds a fence around the loved one who might leave and cause the possessive thinker to feel loss or abandonment. Jealousy can happen in almost any relationship: boyfriend/girlfriend, parent/child, child/child, and between friends, neighbors and co-workers. Jealousy, when it escalates to possessive fury becomes destructive and can lead to acts of violence against the loved one or others who might get in the way of the possessive thinker’s hold on the loved one.
- c. Stealing
For the possessive thinker, the idea of wanting something is the same as possessing it. They justify their theft by blaming the victim (“when she’s drunk, her money is fair game, “ “he left the keys in the car,” “the money was on the table, not in her purse where it should have been.”)

- d. **Stalking**
A possessive thinker can act out on those feelings by secretly following their victim, monitoring phone calls, using others to check up on their victim, or intimidating their victim with mail and phone calls.
- e. **Domestic Abuse**
Most domestic abusers display possessive thinking. They may not hit or threaten or verbally assault people outside of the family, but behind closed doors, if you're family you're somehow different – you don't have the same personal rights because you belong to them. A person with possessive thinking will protect their loved ones from other's abuse, even be overly sensitive to anyone coming close to crossing the line with their loved ones. At the same time, they feel they can abuse you.
- f. **Slavery**
Even though outlawed worldwide, slavery still exists in many forms. Slavery occurs in every continent in the world except Antarctica. The C.I.A. claims that a conservative estimate of slaves in the U.S. is 50,000. Most slaves are brought in from other countries and sold here as sex slaves, domestics, garment and agricultural slaves. A combination of arrogant thinking (I am better than they are) and possessive thinking (they are nothing more than things that I can own) make slavery possible in any culture or time.
- g. **Pornography and Sexual Assault**
A possessive thinker can attack the sexuality of a person by seeing them as sexual objects. One of the dangers of sexually explicit music videos, romance novels or outright pornography is that it encourages viewers to see others as things to use for personal sexual gratification without experiencing any consequences or risk the possible rejection of the object of desire. When a possessive thinker decides to act on their sexual fantasy, molestation, rape and other forms of assault can be the result. At this point, the assault is not about sex, but about domination, control and violence.
- h. **Murder**
This is the ultimate act of possessive thinking. But everything we have discussed so far is essentially relational murder. Possessive thinking keeps people from being humanly connected to others and strips them of their human dignity. When one person believes he can do that to another, he is in effect saying that he has god-like power and control over others. This is the lowest, below the street behavior of a twisted thinker and that is why we must bring even the smallest act of ownership to the attention of the twisted thinker and apply appropriate consequences.

Defeating Possessive Thinking

- a. Emphasize the rights of others. Do not honor the decisions possessive thinkers make for others without their permission.
- b. Encourage possessive thinkers to deal with disappointment in relationships and still be responsible thinkers without demanding satisfaction.
- c. Provide clear consequences for any violation of another person's rights or boundaries. Consequences make twisted thinkers aware of what they are doing, just as the Bible tells us the law helps us to see our sin. But just as the law doesn't stop us from sinning, consequences alone do not change the twisted thinker. Otherwise things like prison sentences would be more effective.
- d. Point out double standards. Double standards are used by twisted thinkers to increase the control they think they have on others. Every time a person uses a double standard, it should be pointed out and the twisted thinker challenged to see the situation from the victim's perspective. It can help in building empathy.
- e. When it comes to seeing people as sexual objects, the twisted thinker feels very affirmed by much of what they see and experience in our culture. That makes this type of possessive thinking both hard to defeat and dangerous. While the lighter shades of gray in this area are tolerated, even popularized in our culture, the darker shades of gray are detestable, horrible, damaging violations of human worth and dignity. The author says that we need to see gray as another form of black when discussing twisted thinking. For that reason, the possessive thinker should be encouraged to "flee from every type of sexual immorality" (1 Cor. 6:18), including media that suggests others can be viewed and used sexually. Encourage the possessive thinker to imagine the object of their passion or lust as a human being made in the image of God who has personal rights and feelings that will be damaged by their twisted thinking. Even if the object of their lust seems to be inviting sex, which may actually be a mistaken belief they are using to justify their actions, the possessive thinker should reserve sex in any form for intimate, committed relationships. It may be easy to only apply this to men, but women are just as guilty. Women who use their sexuality in the way they dress or behave are also displaying possessive and manipulative thinking. Sometimes, whether they can verbalize this or not, they are seeing men who respond to their bodies as means to get their own relational needs met or wield power or control over the other person. Young girls are taught early to flirt and use their bodies to get what they want. You may have heard comments like, "she has him wrapped around her little finger," referring to how a girl/woman possesses a father/brother/boyfriend/husband/friend. This needs to be exposed.
- f. Twisted thinkers who see children as sexual objects need very aggressive accountability as part of their plan to keep from offending. The justice

system now recognizes the need to inform our communities of child predators because children are the most vulnerable victims and this depth of twisted thinking requires a lifetime of vigilance and correction.

- g. Since possessive thinkers put self on the throne and act as god over other people, the best way to defeat this is for the twisted thinker to allow Jesus Christ to become Lord of their life and honor Him by offering their mind and body to His service. When that happens, our thinking can be transformed through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Chart of Corrections

Go over handout.

Chart of Corrections

From *Twisted Thinking Transformed*, Gerald A. Price

Sins	Twisted Thinking	Corrections
Envy	Possessive	Discover consequences for acts of ownership. See people with names and not as objects. Realize people have rights.
Murder	Manipulative	Develop empathy for others/victims.
	Arrogant	Understand their fantasies and schemes are used to maintain a false sense of uniqueness. Develop ability to ask for help. Realize people have rights.
	Possessive	<i>Same as for envy.</i>
Strife	Martyred	Must accept their part in creating the situation; recognizes choices; recognize they are the victimizers and not the victims.
	Inflated	Make balance sheet to show good deeds don't make up for bad behavior.
Deceit	Stubborn	Identify and challenge excuses to avoid effort.
	Impatient	Examine and develop responsible goals. Make decisions based on facts and not assumptions.
	Manipulative	They must realize the way in which their quest for power is conducted and the purposes it serves. Develop empathy and understand the effect their power thrusts have on others.
Malice	Inflated	Develop a ripple effect chart to see who has been hurt.
	Zero	Get facts and realize that feelings need not determine behavior.
	Manipulative	<i>Same as for deceit.</i>
	Possessive	Realize people have rights: point out double standards
Gossips	Inflated	<i>Same as for malice and strife</i>
	Reckless	Distinguish between activities, which are of genuine interest and those that are just for point scoring, refraining from the latter.
	Arrogant	<i>Same as for murder</i>
	Possessive	<i>Same as for envy, murder and malice</i>

