

Envy

Introduction. Have you ever played a game and realized that it is more fun when you cooperate together than when you play competitively? Is it not more fun volleying a ping pong ball across the table than trying to stuff it down someone else's throat? A game can often be much more fun as an opportunity for two people to work together at becoming more capable.

Now this attitude is not very healthy for a sports player, but it is healthy for a Christian. We really should not be trying to win honor, prestige, or power at the expense of another. We should be striving to build one another up in the faith, instead of trying to outdo the other person.

This would be so easy if it were not for envy. Envy is discontent at the good fortune of someone else (Genesis 26:14; 30:1). It is used in the Bible with the distinct idea of malice or spite. An envious person feels that any honor given to another is a irritating dishonor to himself. This lesson will discuss envy and explore the cure of this heart disease (Proverbs 27:4).

I. ***The Nature Of Envy***

- A. It is earthly, sensual, and devilish (James 3:14-15).
- B. It is insidious -- the righteous can be envious of evil doers (Psalms 37:1; Proverbs 23:17).
- C. It is not confined to any group. Clarendon said, "Envy is a weed that grows in all soils and climates."
- D. It makes its victims miserable and unhappy. In Luke 15:30, the elder brother was envious. Do you think he was happy?
- E. It is likened to rottenness (or cancer) of the bone (Proverbs 14:30).
- F. It is worse than wrath and anger (Proverbs 27:4).

II. ***The Associates Of Envy***

- A. You can think of envy as the egg in the middle of a nest of rotten eggs (Romans 1:29; 2 Corinthians 12:20; Galatians 5:21; Titus 3:3; 1 Peter 2:1).
- B. We now get a glimpse of God's estimation of the blackness of envy. It is interesting how many would not commit the aforementioned sins, but they envy and think nothing of it.

III. ***The Results Of Envy***

- A. Cain slew Abel (Genesis 4:3-5; 1 John 3:12).
- B. Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery (Genesis 37:11; Acts 7:9).
- C. Saul hunted David like an animal (1 Samuel 18:12-13).
- D. Wicked men crucified the Lord (Matthew 27:18; Mark 15:10).
- E. The apostles were persecuted (Acts 13:45).
- F. Envy can also be in the church.

1. Members of the church can be envious of one another.
 - a) The one talent man can be envious of the five talent man (Matthew 25:14-30).
 - b) A brother can be envious of another brother who receives recognition and praise.
2. Preachers can be envious of one another.
 - a) Some can envy another's success in the Lord's work.
 - b) They have forgotten that we all fight for a common cause (Romans 12:15).

IV. ***How To Overcome Envy***

- A. Put aside envying and put on Christ (Romans 13:13; Galatians 5:26; 1 Peter 2:1). "Laying aside" means that you put it away like a dirty garment.
- B. Fill your heart with love (1 Corinthians 13:4; cf. Titus 3:3). For example, a mother is never unhappy over the success of her child unless the success is hurtful to the child.
- C. Grow up and deepen your spirituality (1 Corinthians 3:1-3). Maturity is a great way to alleviate the temptation of envy.
- D. Walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16). If this is your desire, then you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.
- E. Be content (1 Timothy 6:8). Since envy is discontent over the advantages others, to overcome this, one must learn to be content with what they have and who they are.
- F. Crucify yourself (Galatians 2:20). Envy is born of pride and selfishness. The envious person considers every blessing and advancement of another a curse to himself.

Conclusion. The envious will be victims of eternal death. After listing envy along with other vices, Paul says, "they which commit such things are worthy of death" (Romans 1:32). Envy never finds itself in lofty characters, but like a snake, it creeps and crawls close to the ground. Repentance is the only approved "heart surgery" for this malady. Obey Jesus and have your sins remitted.