

Respectable Sins

The Ugliness of Envy

Grace Fellowship Church, Pastor Andre Rusch, March 13, 2011

James 3:14-16 “But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.”

Envy: Resenting God’s goodness in other’s lives while ignoring God’s goodness in my own life.

ENVY IN THE BIBLE

Cain envied Abel...	Genesis 4:5
Rachel envied Leah...	Genesis 30:1
Leah envied Rachel...	Genesis 30:15
The brothers envied Joseph...	Genesis 37:5
Saul envied David...	1 Samuel 18:7-9
Lucifer envied God...	Isaiah 14:13-14
Chief priests envied Jesus...	Mark 15:10

Proverbs describes envy as *spoiling* or *rotting* us from the inside out.

Proverbs 14:30 “A tranquil heart gives life to the flesh, but envy makes the bones rot.”

Saul took his eye off of the work of God, put his eye on someone else—based on envy and jealousy—and that brought about the beginning of King Saul’s downfall.

1 Samuel 18:8 “And Saul was very angry, and this saying displeased him. He said, ‘They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed thousands, and what more can he have but the kingdom?’”

Envy spoils life. Life can be great, but the minute you start resenting God's goodness in somebody else's life and ignoring His goodness in your own life, it spoils the blessings of God in your life.

Genesis 30:1 "When Rachel saw that she was not bearing Jacob any children, she became jealous, filled with envy of her sister. So she said to Jacob, Give me children, or I'll die!"

I. You will not effectively deal with your envy until you realize your problem is NOT a horizontal problem.

A. Envy is not an issue of people or circumstances.

The dilemma is that "I think that YOU are my problem." I think the way you make me feel and the way you are is your problem. So if I can distance myself from you, I think that I will be OK. But you're not my problem—because YOU can't solve my problem.

B. The only thing that makes a jealous person feel better temporarily only highlights the fact that they have a problem.

1. One thing that makes a jealous person feel better temporarily is if you FAIL.
2. Another thing that makes a jealous person feel better temporarily is if you lose or damage the object of which they are jealous of.

II. You will not effectively deal with envy until you realize that it is a vertical problem.

Do you know who your issue really is with when you are jealous or envious? God. When you dig down, and unearth it, you are really saying, "I have been ripped off! God, you owe me what you gave someone else."

- A. Your problem is with God—you think he ripped you off.**
- B. God distributed gifts to everyone, but did not give all the gifts to everybody.**

1 Corinthians 12:4-11 “God has given things to us as ‘HE WILLS.’”

“Envy is the daughter of pride, the author of murder and revenge, the perpetual tormenter of virtue. Envy is the filthy slime of the soul, a venom, a poison which consumeth the flesh and dryeth up the bones. It rots us like cancer from the inside.”- Socrates

Jealousy is dangerous because it shapes our attitudes toward other people. It’s hard to actively serve someone you are jealous of.

If you allow this to ooze into your relationships and don’t get this in check, you can’t even be a good Christian. The Bible says that God is love and the number one manifestation of Christianity is that you love one another.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 “Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant ⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶ it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

You can’t carry around a heart of envy and love at the same time.

- III. To root out envy in your life, you must acknowledge and confess it to God and those who have been affected by it.**

Titus 3:3-5 “For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. ⁴ But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.”

Hebrews 4:16, 15 “Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.”

IV. To guard your heart against jealousy, you’ve got to develop the habit of celebrating God’s goodness in others lives.

Romans 12:15 “Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.”

Celebrate the success, size, and stuff of those you have tended to envy.

I Samuel 23:17 “David don’t be afraid. My father, Saul, will not lay a hand on you. You will be king over Israel, and I will be second.”

- Is there somebody you have been jealous or envious of?
 1. **Acknowledge and Confess it to God (I John 1:9)**
 2. **Ask for forgiveness to those relationships that have been impacted by your jealousy.**
(Matt. 5:24)
 3. **Celebrate their successes out loud.**
(Romans 12:15)