

Love is not Jealous

1 Corinthians 13

**13:4 Love is patient, love is kind, it is not envious (Jealous). Love does not brag, it is not puffed up. 13:5 It is not rude, it is not self-serving, it is not easily angered or resentful. 13:6 It is not glad about injustice, but rejoices in the truth. 13:7 It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.**

Have you ever been jealous of someone? At one time or another, we've all wished we might have or believe we deserve what someone else has, right? We've been jealous of someone's success or the material things they own? Have you ever envied another's talents, gifts, blessings? When I was a young man, I was envious of the vocal talents of another guy. He always seemed to get the solo that I wanted. When he sang, people seemed to be in awe. I was jealous of that. I was immature. I pouted. I'm jealous of Tommy Aycock's metabolism. He can eat a ton of sweets and not gain an ounce...while I just look at the table and gain a pound.

Envy/Jealousy is a real problem...so let's illustrate and define it.

One of the earliest illustration of envy/jealousy and its terrible result is found in Genesis 4. You know the story, Cain and Abel brought their offerings to God...Abel's was pleasing to God while Cain's was not. The Bible describes Cain's emotion there. It says that he "burned with anger" toward Abel. God asked Cain what he was angry about and warned him that "sin is crouching at the door of your heart and it desires to dominate you, but you must dominate/subdue it." Of course, we know the flow of the story. Cain leads Abel

into the wilderness and kills him. Jealousy kills, literally.

Sara, jealous of her maiden, Hagar, who gave birth to Ishmael, nagged Abraham until he sent her away. Jealousy kills relationships.

Jealousy drove King Saul to madness...he was so jealous of Davids' accomplishments and accolades that he pursued him relentlessly to kill him, deceived into thinking that David was a threat to him, by jealousy. Jealousy kills us emotionally, drives us to irrationality and ultimately, as in this case, can kill our ability to serve where God has planted us.

We find an enormous number of examples of envy/jealousy in the Bible and the tragic results of being mastered by what has been numbered among a list, called the "Seven Deadly Sins." God forbids covetousness (one of the many forms of envy/jealousy), in the ten commandments, expressly, because it is a root cause of broken relationships and broken hearts.

So, we are jealous when we envy the accomplishments or qualities of others. We want what they have or who they are. We are not satisfied with ourselves and our life. Jealousy usually is accompanied with resentment concerning the blessings of others.

The philosopher, Bertrand Russell, said that envy was one of the most potent causes of unhappiness.

I confessed that I am jealous of Tommy's metabolism. BUT...the emotion attached to that doesn't get in the way of my love for Tommy. It doesn't make me bitter toward him and it doesn't plant seeds of resentment in my heart.

The envy/jealousy that is being addressed here does just that. It pollutes and poisons our relationships. With envy/jealousy as a hindrance, genuine love cannot flow. It's that kind of envy/jealousy that is being addressed here.

Have any of you had a slow/clogged drain at your house? We've had a slow

drain in our downstairs bath, recently. So, my wife, who is an accomplished DIYer, btw, grabbed our trusty little drain snake and cleaned it out real good. You should have seen what she pulled out...well, I'll save you from the gory details, let's just say it was a nasty clog. Envy is like that, you cannot love through envy/jealousy. BUT, you can choose to subdue it and kill it.

Envy stops the flow of LOVE...and that is the real issue in the life of the Christian. So it has to be mastered, subdued, killed. (remember the example of Cain)

Envy is a poison.

Last week, I sprayed some weed and grass killer on an area...well, where I am trying to kill the weeds/grass. It doesn't happen over night, though. Over a few days, what was lush and green and thriving begins to yellow, then wither, then dry in the sun and be swept away in the wind.

Envy does the same thing. It kills.

**Envy kills community.** It's God's intent that Christians live in unity, sharing our burdens and joys; sharing our successes and failures; sharing our blessings and our wants; sharing...that doesn't happen when there is envy/jealousy. Have you watched young children, lately. I see Ami and Owen battle it out daily for toys, for space, for Mom's attention, her lap, etc. Discord thrives where envy lives. Unity is choked out, like a plant that has been sprayed with poison.

**Envy kills compassion.** Where envy lives, compassion dies. At the root of this is the fact that when we are jealous/envious, we are never satisfied with our own

blessings. The more jealousy reigns in our lives, the less we are able to be thankful for our own lives. Such jealousy keeps us from having compassion on others, acting in loving ways to share in another's sufferings or being understanding of their shortcomings or setbacks.

**Envy kills our passion for God.** Loving God means we trust Him. We trust Him to provide for and sustain us. Envy is an expression of a lack of trust. Loving God means we will obey Him. God-given directives are meant for His glory and our good. Envy laughs in the face of this. Adam and Eve chose to eat the forbidden fruit, why? Because they envied God. They wanted to be like God. They wanted knowledge of good and evil. They didn't trust God's plan. In the end, this envy poisoned their passion for God to the point they were willing to disobey God to get what they wanted, what they believed they deserved...fleeing/hiding from God, when He came to them.

You may remember the Uncle Remus story of the tar baby. Brer Fox sets up a figure by the road made of tar and turpentine. When Brer Rabbit comes by, he ends up angry because the Tar Baby will not pay attention to him. He strikes it with one hand and becomes stuck, then strikes with the other hand, followed by his feet and head...ending up trapped by the sticky tar. For many of us, we are there when it comes to jealousy...first one hand...then the other...our feet...our heads...our hearts. We need to be freed, so that we might LOVE as God has called us to LOVE.

Can we be free from malicious jealousy? Yes, we can! God has given us the power to change.

First, we need to own our jealousy. Denying it only fuels it. We need to stop pretending that we're not jealous and examine the root of it. Do we feel inadequate? Have we been wounded in some way? Bring it all to God

Second, we need to confess, agreeing with God that jealousy is a problem, asking God to forgive and deliver us. He's faithful. He'll do it, because He keeps his promises (1 John 1:9 – If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.)

Third, we need to look at the blessings in our own lives. Look at all the ways God has been good to us. If the intent of our heart is to be content, envy will wither and die. Discontent is fertilizer to the root of jealousy. When we are content, we are less likely to envy others.

Fourth, we must make a conscience commitment to not allow the seeds of jealousy to take root and grow. When we begin to experience the emotion, we must plead with God, turn them over to Him and walk in victory over them.

Fifth, there is freedom through accountability. We should never walk this road alone. We should share our struggles with Christian brothers or sister who will pray for us, encourage us...and kick us in the pants when we need it :)

Love is not jealous.

Jealousy slowly chokes out the flow of love that God intends for us to enjoy...both giving and receiving.

Jealousy kills, when God wants us to have life and have it more abundant, so, are you willing to turn your jealousy over to the Lord, so that He might set you free?

Prayer:

Dear Lord, your Word is clear, tonight. Love is not jealous. Yet, we find it so easy to be envious, in small things that matter little and also in the big things that become a really BIG deal. We envy others appearances. We envy their success, their relationships and riches. We envy their happiness. This jealousy kills our ability to love them, Lord, as you call us to do. It poisons our passion for people, BUT even more tragic is the fact that it poisons our love and passion for You. Forgive us, Lord, for our jealous ways.

Root out the envy in our hearts, Lord, we pray and replace it with a fresh experience of your love. Help of to realize, with gratitude, that by Your grace you have granted us the power to change. You have opened the door of an intimate relationship with you...Lord, we are blessed. Give us eyes to see and ears to hear these things. Deliver us from envy and replace it with a genuine delight when others are blessed.

We pray these things in Jesus' Name, Amen!