

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Galatians 5:22-26.**
- B. Socrates said, "Envy is the daughter of pride, the author of murder and revenge, the begetter of secret sedition, the perpetual tormenter of virtue. Envy is the filthy side of the soul; a venom, a poison, a quicksilver, which consumes the flesh and dries up the marrow of the bones."
- C. A person might be a faithful churchgoer and live a morally good life, and yet harbor enough envy in his heart to damn his soul. Envy is a common sin, with almost every person having had some problem with the green-eyed monster at some time or another. Yet, it is a seldom confessed sin!

I. WHAT IS ENVY?

- A. Webster says that envy is "chagrin or discontent at the excellence or good fortune of another; resentful, begrudging."
- B. Cruden, in his concordance says of envy, "Discontent at the excellence or good fortune of another. It is frequently in the Bible with the distinct idea of malice or spite. The Revisions often replace it by jealousy."
- C. Etymologically the word means to look against, to eye with evil intent (1Sam. 18:8-9 RSV; Mk. 7:21-22, compare KJV and RSV).
- D. Envy is that uncomfortable feeling that one experiences over the advances, advantages, or good fortunes of another. An envious person feels that any honor done for another is a galling dishonor to himself.

II. THE NATURE OF ENVY.

- A. It is earthly, sensual, devilish (Jas. 3:14-15).
But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. **15** This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.
- B. It is not confined to any segment of society.
"Envy is a weed that grows in all sods and climates" (Lord Clarendon).
 - 1. It can be said of sinners outside the church (Ti. 3:3).
For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.
 - 2. It can be said of brethren in the church. Yes, Ephraim envied Judah (Isa. 11:13).
Then the jealousy of Ephraim will depart, And those who harass Judah will be cut off; Ephraim will not be jealous of Judah, And Judah will not harass Ephraim.
- C. It renders its victim miserable and unhappy.
Recall the definition of envy--experiencing *discomfort* at the advantages, advances and good fortunes of another. The elder brother was envious (Lk. 15:30). Was he a happy soul? Indeed, not!
'...but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with harlots, you killed the fattened calf for him.'
- D. Envy is likened to cancer of the bone.
"A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones" (Prov. 14:30). As malignancy to the bones and leprosy to the flesh, so is envy to our spiritual beings.
- E. Envy is classified as being worse than wrath and anger (Prov. 27:4).
Wrath is fierce and anger is a flood, But who can stand before jealousy?

III. THE HAVOC ENVY HAS WROUGHT IN THE EARTH.

- A. Because of envy (and anger), *Cain slew Abel* (1Jn. 3:12).
...not as Cain, *who* was of the evil one, and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous.

- B. Because of envy, Joseph's brothers sold him into Egyptian slavery (Gen. 37:11; Ac. 7:9).
(Gen 37:11) And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying *in mind*.
(Ac 7:9) "And the patriarchs became jealous of Joseph and sold him into Egypt. And yet God was with him,"
- C. Because of envy, Saul hunted David like he would hunt a wild animal, seeking his life (1Sam. 18:8ff).
- D. Because of envy, men crucified our Lord (Mt. 27:18; Mk. 15:10).
(Mt 27:18) For he knew that because of envy they had delivered Him up.
(Mk 15:10) For he was aware that the chief priests had delivered Him up because of envy.
- E. Because of envy, the apostles were cast into prison and were otherwise persecuted (Ac. 5:17 margin; 13:45; 17:5).
(Ac 5:17) But the high priest rose up, along with all his associates (that is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with jealousy;
(Ac 13:45) But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy, and *began* contradicting the things spoken by Paul, and were blaspheming.
(Ac 17:5) But the Jews, becoming jealous and taking along some wicked men from the market place, formed a mob and set the city in an uproar; and coming upon the house of Jason, they were seeking to bring them out to the people.

IV. GOD'S STRICT PROHIBITIONS AGAINST ENVY.

- A. We are to put aside envying (1Pet. 2:1).
Therefore, putting aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisy and envy and all slander,...
"Laying aside" in this text means literally to discard clothing, and is used in this text figuratively to signify the putting away of envy and the other evils catalogued, of one's former life, as one would discard dirty or filthy clothing.
- B. We are not to be envious of one another (Gal. 5:26).
Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.
- C. We are not to walk in envying (Rom. 13:13).
Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy.
- D. The envious will be victims of eternal death.
After listing envy along with many other vices, Rom. 1:32 concludes by saying, "they which commit such things are worthy of death."
- E. The envious will miss heaven.
Envy is one of the works of the flesh and Paul very vividly says, "They which do such things *shall not inherit the kingdom of God*" (Gal. 5:21).

V. WHAT IS THE REMEDY FOR ENVY? HOW MAY WE OVERCOME IT?

- A. Love is the remedy.
Envy is born in hate (Ezek. 35:11; Ti. 3:3). It is cured by *love*. "Love *envies not*" (1Cor. 13:4). A mother never experiences discomfort over the advantages and fortunes of her child. Why? Love! Do you want to overcome envy? Then, fill your heart with love!
- B. Put on Christ.
After exhorting us not to walk in envy, Paul says, "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 13:13-14). See also Gal. 3:26-27. No envious thought dwelled in the Lord's magnanimous heart. Those who put Him on, striving to live as He lived, will overcome envy.
- C. Grow up, deepen our spirituality, and become mature (1Cor. 3:1-3).
And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ. 2 I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, 3 for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?
- D. Walk in the Spirit.
Envy is one of the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21). But Paul says, "Walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16). Yes, if our lives are guided by the Spirit, as He influences our lives through the Word, we will overcome envy.

- E. Remember that we are members of the same body (1Cor. 12:26).
And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if *one* member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.
My left arm does not envy my right arm because it is stronger; nor are my hands envious of my feet because I can run on my feet but not on my hands. In like manner there must be no envy in the body of Christ.
- F. Be content (Phil. 4:8-11).
Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things. **9** The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you. **10** But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned *before*, but you lacked opportunity. **11** Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.
- G. Crucify self.
Envy is born of pride and selfishness. The envious person considers every blessing and advancement of another a curse to himself. Thus, out of self esteem, and selfishness, the envious soul reacts to the blessings and advantages which accrue to others. Hence, self denial (Mt. 16:24), the crucifixion of self (Gal. 2:20), is the remedy for envy (see also 1Cor. 10:24; Phil. 2:3-4).
- H. Ask for God's help.
After saying, "The spirit that dwells in us lusts to envy," James says, "But he gives more grace" (Jas. 4:5-6), indicating God's grace is necessary in overcoming envy.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. Don't allow the "green eyed monster" to devour your spiritual favor!
- B. Put away this heart malady so that you can spiritually grow.
- C. Obedience to Christ, is the way to begin fighting for the right and leaving the realm of sin.
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.