

INTRODUCTION:

1. Last week I crossed paths with jealousy. The first time, I heard about it in someone else. The second time, I found it in myself.
2. I think a lesson on jealousy might be a true spiritual blessing. I hope you'll find this lesson to be just that.



DISCUSSION:

1. Let's begin by defining our terms.
 - A. English definitions.
 - 1) *Jealousy*, "The state of feeling of being jealous."
 - 2) *Jealous*, "Feeling or showing envy of someone or their achievements and advantages."
 - 3) *Envy*, "A feeling of discontented or resentful longing aroused by someone else's possessions, qualities, or luck."
 - B. Greek definitions.
 - 1) There are two Greek words: *zelos* and *phthonos*.
 - 2) In my opinion, *zelos* is best translated, "jealousy," and *phthonos* is best translated, "envy."
 - 3) English versions of the Bible are not consistent in their translations of these Greek words. They use both English words to translate both Greek words. You have to do some digging to know which Greek word is being translated.
 - 4) It's important to know which Greek word is being translated because *zelos* and *phthonos* mean different things and because the English words "jealousy" and "envy," as commonly used, don't really capture the essence of the difference.
 - 5) The primary difference between the Greek words lies in their aims. *Zelos* wants something. *Phthonos* doesn't want something; it just doesn't want someone else to have it.
 - 6) *Zelos* can be good. Exodus 34:14; 2 Corinthians 11:2A. *Zelos* can be evil. Galatians 5:19-20. *Phthonos* is always evil.
 - 7) In this morning's lesson, we'll focus primarily on *zelos* or jealousy.
2. When is *zelos* or jealousy evil? There are four keys: **ends**, **motive**, **effects**, and **means**.
 - A. **Ends**. If we want something that's unlawful for us to have, jealousy is evil. Philippians 3:4B-6A. Example: Psalms 106:16-18.
 - B. **Motive**. If we want something for selfish reasons, jealousy is evil. Galatians 4:17. Example: Numbers 11:26-29.
 - C. **Effects**. If we want something and we are bitter, divisive, etc., jealousy is evil. James 3:13-18. Example: Genesis 30:1-2.
 - D. **Means**. If we want something and we use evil means, jealousy is evil. James 4:1-4. Examples: Acts 7:9.

APPLICATIONS

1. **Evil jealousy is deadly serious business.** Galatians 5:19-21.
2. **Are we guilty of evil jealousy?** Evil jealousy is a very real problem. We are passionate about certain things (hot buttons) and competitive in certain things (Ecclesiastes 4:4). I strongly suspect we all need to do some scripture searching and soul searching.
 - A. *Are we passionate about sinful things?* Entertainment.
 - B. *Is it about what's best or what we want?* Marriage. Refusing to share our wives with other men physically vs. refusing to share our wives with other people in any way.
 - C. *Do we weep when others rejoice?* Vacations, good relationships, etc. "Maybe it is true to say that there is no better test of a man than his reaction to the greatness and to the success of some one else. If it moves him to the *zelos* which is noble ambition to goodness, that is the work of the Spirit, but, if it moves him to a bitter and envious resentment, that is the work of the flesh, and what ought to be a spur to goodness has become a persuasion to sin" (Barclay).
 - D. *How are our relationships?* 2 Corinthians 12:20.
 - E. *Do we compete fairly?* Promotion. "At the time of Christ, the name 'Zealots' was applied to a party among the Jews, half religious and half political, founded by Judas the Galilean (Acts 5:37). These undertook to punish without trial those guilty of violating Jewish practices, under which pretext they themselves committed the greatest excesses of crime" (Zodhiates). When we are passionate or competitive, we especially need to be on guard against evil jealousy. Romans 3:8.
3. **We must come to ourselves.** Job 5:2.
4. **Repent.** Romans 13:11-14.
5. **Don't be a stumbling block.** "They provoked Him to jealousy" (1 Kings 14:22). Example: Jacob and Joseph. Genesis 37:3-11.
 - A. Be fair and balanced.
 - B. Be judicious.
6. **Don't envy, *phthonos*.** "*Phthonos* ... refers to displeasure at another's good. The Stoics defined it as 'distress at others' good fortunes.' It is the desire that the good of another might diminish, quite apart from any corresponding gain. It is not surprising that long ago Solomon described it as 'rotteness to the bones' (Prov. 14:30). It is not a desire to be raised to the level of the envied but only to lower the envied to one's own level" (Trench). "Cicero described it as 'grief incurred because of another's successes, which in no way harms the one who is envious' ... Phineas Fletcher said: 'Sick of a strange disease, another's health' (Trench). "*Phthonos* is 'a kind of pain at the sight of good fortune', 'pain at another's good,' ... And this pain springs not from the fact that the beholder does not possess the fine thing; it springs from the fact that the other person does. The man who has *phthonos* in his heart is not fired with noble ambition; he is simply embittered at the sight of someone else possessing what he has not got, and he would do his utmost, not to possess the thing, but to prevent the other person from possessing it" (Barclay). "Aristides was called the Just. He was on trial, and a man came to him, not knowing who he was, and asked Aristides to write his vote for his own banishment, because he could not write himself. 'What harm has Aristides done you?' Aristides asked. 'I am tired,' said the man, 'of hearing him called the Just' ... This was no noble ambition to be like greatness; it was simply the embittered resentment that anyone should be great. That is *phthonos*" (Barclay).