

ARE YOU BOTHERED BY JEALOUSY?

Jealousy really can be quite a bothersome thing... perhaps more than we know or care to admit at times! It is destructive and damaging to our relationships with others, it can steal our peace, joy and fulfillment. It often leaves us with a sense of disharmony and discontentment.

To avoid being trapped by it it is important that we learn to recognize jealousy for what it is. We need to acknowledge it's presence in our life and then deal with it in a wise and biblical manner (if you know biblical that is). We must be careful to guard against jealousy in our hearts because it flows out of a tendency to sin against God and all we humans have that very tendency!

In the book of Galatians it lists jealousy along with other "deeds of the flesh" such as immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, envying etc. God says such strong things about jealousy because He knows it is particularly destructive to our life. When we harbor envious feelings, we open the doors to anger, bitterness, and hatred.

So what is this thing called jealousy anyway? Well, one definition says it is the feeling of being suspicious or displaced.

What is the nature of this jealousy? Well, it springs from within us so it is the work of the flesh. It surfaces when we compare ourselves to others and focus on their blessings instead of our own. When we become envious, we find ourselves competing with other people and this puts a strain on our relationships. Jealousy can also stem from a fear of being replaced or outdone by another person. No matter what jealousy may look like in our life, we cannot point the finger of blame at anyone but our self. Jealousy always comes from within.

Jealousy creates strife between others and us. If you are jealous of or envy someone else, there will be tension and discord between you and that person. You may find yourself doing things to hurt the individual, either because you can't deal with what's going on in your life, or because you refuse to try. While your jealousy may come from a legitimate desire, it can quickly turn to anger, hatred, and even rage. When people begin to feel infuriated, their conduct can be absolutely disastrous--- jealousy is very dangerous if it goes unchecked.

Jealousy may cause us to battle with fear, a critical spirit, a divided mind. We may be easily offended and have a loss of focus, be indecisive and disorderly. We may be plagued with depression, lack of contentment and physical sickness. It blocks our ability to have fellowship with God if it rules our life. An attitude of envy means that we are in conflict with almighty God and that really means that we are disagreeing with His decisions about how to work in both the other person's life and our own.

So what do we do to alleviate this dilemma of jealousy that's ruining us and others? Well, first of all know that the Father in heaven loves you no matter what and He is more than willing to forgive you. So it is time to re-focus your attention and put it on the Lord. If you insist on succumbing to envy, you will actually begin to pray in a self-centered manner. You may even be praying for the destruction of someone you resent or obsessing about the material things you desire. Whatever the case may be, your focus will be so consumed with unhealthy desires that you will not be open to what God has for you.

Confessing your envious and jealous attitude to God is the first thing to do. Another positive step you can take toward correcting the situation is to thank the Lord for the way He is working in the other person's life. (That's right... pray for the other person!) Ask Him how He sees the other person and what He wants to do in your life. You cannot do your best or become the person God wants you to be if you are distracted by jealousy.

Dare to do a heart and attitude check up and ask God to reveal the condition of your heart. If jealousy is glaring at you or taunting you, offer it to God and let Him quench the fire of burning destruction. He knows how to change your heart and refocus your vision. God has a great purpose and plan for your life. Won't you partner with Him and let Him work His best in your life so that you can be free from jealousy? Go on! Let go and let God!!

Submitted by Ray and Leslie Johnson, pastors of Resurrection Life