

DEVOTIONAL

Hollywood Prayer Network

JEALOUSY AND ENVY

How many times a week do you feel jealous? Either a quick thought about your neighbor's cool car, the raise your co-worker got, or wanting a loving spouse like all of your friends have... Whatever it is, it's a struggle that can lead to sin. This week let's delve into the meanings of jealousy and plan our attack to beat it, embrace it, or use it for God's glory.

DAY 1

ENVY & JEALOUSY COME FROM THE HEART, SO LET JESUS TRANSFORM IT!

"O, JEALOUSY, THOU UGLIEST FIEND OF HELL!
THY DEADLY VENOM PREYS ON MY VITALS,
TURNS THE HEALTHFUL HUE OF MY FRESH
CHEEK TO HAGGARD SHALLOWNESS, AND
DRINKS MY SPIRIT UP." -HANNAH MORE

"THE CURE FOR THE SIN OF ENVY AND
JEALOUSY IS TO FIND OUR CONTENTMENT IN
GOD." -JERRY BRIDGES

Mark 7:20 - 7:22

New King James Version

20 And He said, "What comes out of a man,
that defiles a man. 21 For from within, out of
the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts,
adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 thefts,
covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness,
an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness."

DAY 1

PRAY: Dear Jesus, Your very words in the gospel of Mark warn us that our sins come straight out of our heart. So, jealousy is a heart issue! When I am jealous that means I have a jealous heart. And Lord, You list so many awful things that I have to take Your warning seriously and not do these things. But I need You to help me, to give me strength and courage, to keep going when I make mistakes, and to know that only with You are these sins possible to resist. I need You desperately every moment, Jesus, because I am weak on my own. But when I am weak, then You are strong in me. So, thank You for reminding me that I have a sinful heart but, also, that You are always there for me so I can choose not to sin. Amen.

DAY 1

REFLECT: In Mark, Jesus lists jealousy and envy with other horrible sins, like murder and adultery, as sins that come out of our heart and defile us. And yet, He also lists folly and arrogance on the list, which we would rate as lesser sins than some, especially murder. So, first of all, Jesus' list of sins shows that any sin is bad and separates us from God. He just doesn't tell us which ones are less bad and which sins are worse. He lists everything together and tells us it all comes out of our heart and we defile ourselves and others. That is very humbling. It also shows that we do indeed need Jesus desperately, because without having the Holy Spirit live in us, our dark hearts will do terrible things. Jealousy and envy are hard to control, but with God, ALL things are possible.

ACT: Look inside your own heart right now and ask the Lord what He sees? Do you see any of these sins that Jesus lists in Mark? Are you jealous of anyone right now? Do you envy the co-worker who just got a promotion? Or the friend who gets all the lucky breaks? Do you wish you had your neighbor's car? You can start this week on jealousy and envy by being honest with yourself and being willing to look deep into your heart to find out what's in there. This is the time to face your jealous thoughts and nip them in the bud right now.

DAY 2

ENVY IS NOT FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT

"IF SOMEONE IS LEAVING YOU BEHIND, AND YOU ARE BECOMING JEALOUS AND EMBITTERED, KEEP PRAYING THAT HE MAY HAVE SUCCESS IN THE VERY MATTER WHERE HE IS AWAKENING YOUR ENVY; AND WHETHER HE IS HELPED OR NOT, ONE THING IS SURE, THAT YOUR OWN SOUL WILL BE CLEANSED AND ENNOBLED."

-WILLIAM LAW

New King James Version

James 3:16

For where envy and self-seeking exist,
confusion and every evil thing are there.

Proverbs 14:30

A sound heart is life to the body,
But envy is rottenness to the bones.

DAY 2

ENVY IS NOT FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT

Galatians 5:19 - 5:21

New King James Version

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

DAY 2

PRAY: God, my heavenly Father, You tell us very clearly in the Bible that being jealous is wrong in Your eyes. And then You stress it by listing envy as well. You say these acts of the flesh are obvious, and You warn us that those who practice these sins will not inherit the kingdom of God. That's a serious warning that I haven't thought about before. You then say, through James, that wherever we have envy there will be every other evil practice as well. And Proverbs says that envy will rot my bones. So, Lord the only way I can have life is to clear my heart of jealousy and envy, and cry out to You for mercy. You lay out serious consequences to these thoughts, as well as actions, and I need to take Your words more seriously. God, thank You for your clear warning. I have work to do!

DAY 2

REFLECT: The facts from these verses are: Jealousy and envy are sinful acts of the flesh; those who practice these sins will not inherit the kingdom of God; "where there is envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice"; and "A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones". We learned yesterday that jealousy comes out of our hearts. So, if a peaceful heart gives life to our body, we have to extract every form of jealousy and envy from it. The dictionary definitions of jealousy and envy are so similar that they each list the other word as their first synonym. So, in using them interchangeably it seems even more powerful that both words would be on this list of sins. That drives home the point even more of how serious these are. We want to live victoriously in the kingdom of God now and forever, and we want peaceful hearts. We don't want disorder or rotting bones, so whether we take these warnings literally or not, we know any form of jealousy or envy is bad. We can choose to rationalize little thoughts away, or we can take captive every thought and give them to the Lord. How would you choose to take every thought captive?

DAY 2

ACT: You can start playing a mind game that will help you remember to catch yourself every time you have a jealous thought. If you can play this game with yourself then you can stop the jealous thoughts before they ever turn into actions. The moment you want something a friend, co-worker, or even a stranger has, choose at that moment instead to compliment that person. Celebrate his or her item, achievement, or award by telling them how great it is. What a great achievement, etc. At first you will be choosing to obediently take a positive action to counter your negative thoughts. If you keep doing it, you'll soon actually mean what you say and feel good about celebrating the other person, instead of thinking of what you want for yourself. You have to remind yourself about the game and take action immediately in order to break the habit of getting jealous, envious, depressed, or even angry. You can turn that jealousy immediately into a kind word and a selfless heart. You might want to practice some scenarios before it actually happens. And then go for it and watch your heart slowly transform.

DAY 3

BE CAREFUL NOT TO SLIP

"ENVY IS PAIN AT THE GOOD FORTUNE OF OTHERS."

-ARISTOTLE

"ENVY BLINDS MEN AND MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR THEM TO THINK CLEARLY."

-MALCOLM X

New King James Version

Psalm 73:1-3

Truly God is good to Israel,
To such as are pure in heart.
But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled;
My steps had nearly slipped.
For I was envious of the boastful,
When I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

1 Corinthians 3:3

For you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?

DAY 3

PRAY: God, You are so good to us, knowing that we're going to mess up. Please be there to catch me when I slip. When I lose my emotional or spiritual foothold and start envying other people, I need Your help to pull me back. I don't want to be worldly. Please help me to avoid jealousy and quarreling so that I don't act like a mere human. I want to be Christ-like in all that I do, so that I stand out as a Christian who is not worldly, but heavenly, minded. I can't do it without You, so help me Lord, when I slip and let me accept Your forgiveness and start again when I lose my footing. It's inevitable, Lord, but I want to keep my eyes on You to lessen the chances. I pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.

DAY 3

REFLECT: This Old Testament and New Testament's juxtaposition of these two verses shows us that we struggle with the same temptations and sin today that the people of Israel did thousands of years ago. This should help us be aware of the human condition and not be surprised when we fall. But it should also make us take sin more seriously and be prepared for it to come instead of being shocked when we're in the middle of it. We will be jealous. We will covet what others have and we will envy those who are smarter, richer, more powerful, more beautiful, kinder, more charming, more successful, and better dressed than we are. That shouldn't be a surprise. Now the issue is how to handle it so that it won't get the best of us. That's where prayer, planning, and purpose are important. As Christians we have to live on the offense, not on the defense. We should prepare for any possible sin or temptation to come our way and know exactly what we are going to do about it when, not if, it happens. Do you have a plan?

DAY 3

ACT: It's time to make a plan! Sin is coming. What will you do about it? First of all, you must pray. Pray offensively, asking the Lord to prepare you for what's to come and asking Him to show you wise steps to avoid falling into temptation. Next, learn the signs of how jealousy and envy sneak up on you and make a plan to counter it. If you have a negative or sarcastic thought or word against someone, hold your tongue and ask yourself WHY you were about to say that. Then instead, turn that negative thought or words into something positive - a compliment, a celebratory remark, or even a smile or a hug. Then remember your purpose: You are a Christ follower who wants to please Him by loving other people and putting others first. Jealousy and envy have no room to thrive in you. Your purpose will trump negativity every time, if you are prepared and committed to the task. You can do it!

DAY 4

THE RIGHTEOUS JEALOUSY OF GOD

"THAT PASSION OF PECULIAR UNEASINESS
WHICH ARISES FROM THE FEAR THAT A RIVAL
MAY ROB US OF THE AFFECTION OF ONE
WHOM WE LOVE, OR THE SUSPICION THAT
HE HAS ALREADY DONE IT."

-WEBSTER'S 1828 DICTIONARY

"SUSPICIOUS CAUTION OR VIGILANCE, AN
EARNEST CONCERN OR SOLICITUDE FOR THE
WELFARE OR HONOR OF OTHERS."

-WEBSTER'S 1828 DICTIONARY

New King James Version

Zechariah 8:2

"Thus says the Lord of hosts:
'I am zealous for Zion with great zeal;
With great fervor I am zealous for her.'

DAY 4

THE RIGHTEOUS JEALOUSY OF GOD

New King James Version

Joel 2:18

Then the Lord will be zealous for His land,
And pity His people.

James 4:5

Or do you think that the Scripture says in
vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns
jealously"?

Exodus 34:14

for you shall worship no other god, for the
Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God

DAY 4

PRAY: Lord, I want to fully understand the positive side of jealousy by learning how You're a jealous God. According to these scriptures, You love me so much that You get jealous when I spend more time, effort, and emotion on other things, and I know You want us to worship You alone. Help me to keep my eyes on You, to spend more time with You, to read the Bible more, memorize verses, and learn in a Bible Study or Community group. Help me to fall more in love with You so that You don't have to fight for my attention or my commitment. Help me want to spend time with You, obey You, and worship You, Lord. Knowing how much I want the people I love to spend time with me, makes me understand how You want me to spend time with You. Thank You for loving me SO MUCH. Amen and Amen.

DAY 4

REFLECT: The dictionary definition of Jealous says: "feeling or showing envy of someone or their achievements and advantages." or "Of God demanding faithfulness and exclusive worship" That's insightful to see that the word itself has no value placed on it. It can be used in different contexts to be either a negative emotion or a positive emotion. Many words in our language are like that and we have to learn the full meaning of some words in order to understand God. Here, God is demanding that we are completely faithful to Him and that we exclusively worship Him. He gets jealous when we have other idols that we worship, or other priorities that take us away from Him. That should be both extremely touching for us, to realize how much He loves us, but it should also be jarring enough to re-evaluate our time, our focus, and our priorities, to make sure He really is first in our lives. What do you need to do to satisfy a jealous God?

DAY 4

ACT: Are you spending so much of your time, your allegiance, your priorities, and your heart with the things of this world that you're not fully committed to God? How can you satisfy a jealous God? Do you worship Him alone? Do you want to be with Him, talk to Him, memorize His word? God is a gentleman and will never demand that you put Him first, but He longs after us and rewards us for our faithfulness in ways that the world can never do. What is one thing you would change in order to please your jealous God? Tell Him that you want to make a change so that He knows your intentions and can help you to refocus more on Him than on the world. Remember, the world will never satisfy you, but your jealous God is waiting patiently for you with open arms and a generous heart. Tell Him the one thing you're going to change, adjust, or begin right now, and then ask Him to help you stay committed to that change!

DAY 5

GET RID OF ENVY AND JEALOUSY

"OUR ENVY OF OTHERS DEVOURS US MOST
OF ALL."

- ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN

"NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF
JEALOUSY AND THE POWER OF ENVY TO
DESTROY. NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THAT."

-OLIVER STONE

New King James Version

Proverbs 27:4

Wrath is cruel and anger a torrent,
But who is able to stand before jealousy?

1 Peter 2:1

Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit,
hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking,

DAY 5

GET RID OF ENVY AND JEALOUSY

New King James Version

Romans 13:13

Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.

Galatians 5:26

Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

DAY 5

PRAY: Lord, these verses help me to understand the severity of being jealous and it helps me to understand the difference between feeling jealous and acting out, based on those feelings. Yesterday I learned that You love me so much, You're jealous of my attention, time, and priorities. Today I read that jealousy is worse than cruel anger and overwhelming fury, and that I must rid myself of all envy. Lord, I ask that You help me to understand my motivation for my jealousy and envy and then help me to control my response to my jealous feelings, so that I don't act out in sin. If I feel jealous, would You help me to define it and then have Your Holy Spirit respond through me with patience, wisdom, and discernment. Thank You that I can depend on You to work through my motivations, emotions, temptations, and understanding of right and wrong. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

DAY 5

REFLECT: Let's ponder the motivation for and difference between having a jealous thought and then acting upon that thought. God says that He's jealous that we're worshiping other things and other beings instead of Him. His motivation is that He wants us to fully live the abundant life that He created for us. Then He responds by telling us His thoughts and lovingly invites us to get closer to Him, waiting patiently for us to come to Him. And He knows that sometimes that's never going to happen, and yet He waits. When a person gets jealous, he or she often gets angry, argues, takes revenge, hires a Private Investigator, accuses the other person, or even commits suicide or murder! The sin is not in the thought but in the action taken in response to that thought. If you feel jealous and immediately bring that thought to Lord and ask Him for help, for strength, for understanding, and for perspective. Then, reach out to a strong Christian friend and ask them to help you to work through the motivation for that feeling, getting their perspective and Godly counsel. Listen and apply what you hear and watch the Lord take that negative emotion and turn it into good. The danger comes when the motivation for our jealousy is selfish and sinful, and because of that it gets out of control, becoming worse than cruel anger and overwhelming fury! It leads us to all kinds of other awful sins and ends up destroying us and the person we're jealous of. So, God's response: Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. If we can't divinely discern and control our thoughts then we have to get rid of them!

DAY 5

ACT: There seem to be three steps to take to get control over jealousy, envy, and covetousness: 1. We have to die to ourselves and live only for Christ; 2. We need to pray for the Lord and seek His face to help us overcome these powerful temptations: and 3. We need strong, mature Christians around us to advise, support and pray for us. Do you have those three steps in place? If not, what do you need to do to make all three of those happen. Remember, you have to act proactively in order to avoid sin. You will not avoid or overcome jealousy on your own. It will sneak in when you least expect it. But you can prepare for it, knowing that your human. Evaluate these three steps and make sure you include reading, singing, meditating and memorizing scripture all along the way. If you commit to these steps, you are on your way to living a life of freedom and joy.

DAY 6

DO NOT COVET

"THE WORST PART OF SUCCESS IS TRYING TO
FIND SOMEONE WHO IS HAPPY FOR YOU."

-BETTE MIDLER

"DO NOT SPOIL WHAT YOU HAVE BY
DESIRING WHAT YOU HAVE NOT."

-ANN BRASHARES

"HE WHO IS NOT CONTENTED WITH WHAT HE
HAS, WOULD NOT BE CONTENTED WITH
WHAT HE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE."

-SOCRATES

New King James Version

Exodus 20:17

"You shall not covet your neighbor's house;
you shall not covet your neighbor's wife,
nor his male servant, nor his female
servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor
anything that is your neighbor's."

DAY 6

PRAY: Father in Heaven, I ask that You teach me to not covet what other people have, but to focus on what You've given me and be satisfied with that. You tell us not to covet our neighbor's house, wife, servants or property because You know that we are always looking around and comparing our possessions and our success with the people around us and wondering if we're better off than they are, or if they have more than we do. Oh, Father, free me of that burden for it is a sin. Let me celebrate the people around me, or the people I see on TV or in the movies, and be thankful for everything I have. Help me to keep my eyes only on You and not on other people in my world. You are all that matters and I need Your help to live out that truth. Thank You for always wanting the best for me and being right here to help me learn and grow. I pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.

DAY 6

REFLECT: Have you ever thought about how much time you spend comparing your life to others? If you have, did you notice that your scope of comparison isn't very big. It's usually just between you and the people in your home, your neighborhood, at work, or whom you read about and watch on the news or on TV shows or in movies. We can easily find people around us who have more money, better relationships, more status, fame, or power. But if we had a heavenly perspective on the whole world and then compared...we would find horrible poverty, crime, abuse, violence, neglect, deep need, and hopelessness. Our jealousy would be immediately replaced by compassion, humility, and a desire to help! Watching the rich, famous, and powerful people on the news makes us jealous. Watching beautiful people who are bigger than life in films makes us compare the stars' perfect bodies with our out of shape bodies, thin hair, double chins, and worn out clothes. Looking at the media is an easy way to stimulate envy because it's not the full perspective. How will you stop coveting what you see other people have? around you? What steps do you need to take to get a Godly perspective on life? Think about how you're affected by comparing and coveting and then what you can do to stop that in your life.

DAY 6

ACT: Now is the time to stop being covetous, jealous, or envious. Coveting starts or ends in jealousy and envy. You're either jealous of what someone else has and then you want it for yourself. Or because you want that "thing" you become jealous of anyone who has it. You can stop these emotions right now by watching less news, analyzing what you watch on television or in the movie theatre, and understanding the lyrics you're singing from your favorite songs, and start being honest about the impact the news and entertainment is having on you. The media and entertainment subtly tell you how much you should weigh, what you should wear, who's cool and not cool, and what's important and not important. Be aware of that and don't let it lead you to covetousness, jealousy, or envy. Be stronger than all of the worldly influences around you and stand firm as a child of God, knowing what's true, right, and beautiful in God's eyes is not what the world and our culture will encourage. From this moment on, if you feel jealousy toward anyone, ask WHY you feel that way and then seek out God's perspective on that feeling. It will be very different than what the world is telling you!

DAY 7

GOD LOVES YOU MORE THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE

"HEALTHY JEALOUSY IS A MEANS TO GUARD YOUR TERRITORY AND COMES FROM A SINCERE CARE AND COMMITMENT TO A RELATIONSHIP."

-DR. GARY ROSBERG

"GOD IS JEALOUS FOR YOUR HEART, NOT BECAUSE HE IS PETTY OR INSECURE, BUT BECAUSE HE LOVES YOU. . . HE LOVES YOU TOO MUCH TO SHARE YOU."

-KYLE IDLEMAN

New King James Version

Song of Solomon 8:6

Set me as a seal upon your heart,
As a seal upon your arm;
For love is as strong as death,
Jealousy as cruel as the grave;
Its flames are flames of fire,
A most vehement flame.

DAY 7

PRAY: Dear Lord, I want to spend my last day of this week praising You for understanding jealousy, envy, and covetousness. Thank You that I can celebrate selfless, heavenly, jealous, unconditional love, and not confuse it with worldly, sinful, selfish jealousy. I want to embrace the Song of songs verse that expresses the power of a jealous love that places a seal over our hearts and is as strong as death. Lord, thank You for loving me that much! Your love for me burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame, and the opportunity for me to express that selfless love to others is right in front of me. Help me to want others to love You with that same jealous love that I have. I don't want to share Your love with any limited worldly love. I want Your mighty flame of love to motivate everything I am, do, and say. And I want to share that love with others so that they can experience its jealousy unyielding as the grave. So be it!

DAY 7

REFLECT: Did you ever think that you could end a study on jealousy with a verse from the Song of Songs?! God's ways should never surprise us. They are the opposite of man's ways and that makes life so exciting. As we struggle to identify, understand and control our feelings of jealousy toward others and catch ourselves when we become covetous of things or people that we want in our lives, let us simultaneously celebrate the power of God's jealous love for us and seek to offer that to others. Our love for God should always be first, but then we should be free to offer His jealous love to the people closest to us so that they can experience that love, purely and unconditionally. Have you experienced God's love burning like a blazing fire for you? Have you placed a seal on your heart to hold in His unconditional love? And have you ever experienced that deep, selfless, unconditional jealous love from someone else? Do we even comprehend the depth, length, width, and height of God's love for us? Let's get jealous for His love and not for the things of the world. It will lead us to an adventure ahead that we never before imagined possible...

DAY 7

ACT: Why don't you end your week on jealousy with two goals: 1) Identify, define, and then turn over any feelings of envy, covetousness, and jealousy to God the moment it creeps up, so that you can end it before it leads to sin. 2) Embrace God's jealous love for you with such understanding and passion that it overflows to the people around you and they will be jealous for what you have and seek God for how to get it. Then, simultaneously we will be keeping evil away, experiencing God's love to such a degree that it will be like a burning fire, and drawing people to Him because of its power and light. Could life get any better than that? Right now, ask the Lord to give you those priorities and then to walk you through the steps to break old habits and embrace His love in ways you have never experienced before. Your life is about to change forever!