

### Am I a Jealous Christian?

# <u>1 Corinthians 3:3</u>: (NASB) 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?



Jealousy and envy are often very secret sins. We invite them into our lives, and we harbor them deeply in our hearts where they fester and grow. One day we look around; if we are observant, we realize that we are seeing our world through different and damaged eyes. Jealousy and envy not only damage our personal character and outlook, they can easily damage our relationships and perceptions of others as well. What brings us to the place where these things creep in and take hold of our very

lives? How do we recognize them, and how do we take steps to not only fight back but overcome and defeat them?

To start, we need to scripturally define "jealousy" and "envy." Some of the words translated envy and jealousy can also have positive meanings, and we will review those later.

**Envy:** Strongs #2205 *zelos*, properly, heat, i.e. (figuratively) "zeal" (in a favorable sense, ardor; in an unfavorable one, jealousy, as of a husband [figuratively, of God], or an enemy, malice)

Envy: #2206 zeloo, to have warmth of feeling for or against

<u>Romans 13:13</u>: (KJV) Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and <u>envying <2205</u>>.

<u>James 4:2</u>: (KJV) Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and <u>desire to have <2206</u>>, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

These words are always negative.

Envy: Strongs #5352 phthonos, ill-will (as detraction), i.e. jealousy (spite)

Mark 15:10: (KJV) For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy <5355>.

Envy: Strongs #5354 phthoneo; to be jealous of

#### Only used once:

<u>Galatians 5:26</u>: (KJV) Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying <5354> one another.

Envy: Strongs #5355 phthonos, ill-will (as detraction), i.e. jealousy (spite)

Matthew 27:18: (KJV) For he knew that for envy <5355> they had delivered him.

Jesus knew they were envious, so they were against him. It is not because he did anything wrong.

This is a look-in-the-mirror subject as we ask ourselves where envy fits into our lives.



### (1) Differences, Jealousy and Envy, How to Deal With It, Teal Swan

People think that jealousy and envy are one in the same, when in fact there are some key differences between them. In reality, envy is the emotion that occurs when we experience an extreme desire for something that someone else has, whether it's equality, achievement or possession, but we don't think we can have it. Jealousy is the emotion that occurs when we anticipate or feel the loss of something of great value to us whether it be equality, achievement or possession. In other words, one exists when we wish to keep what we have, and the other occurs when we want to get what we don't have, and in either case we feel powerless to do so. Why do these emotional states feel so similar? Because they're both the emotional reflection of lack - the lack of something intensely wanted or needed. And sometimes you can feel jealousy and envy at the very same time.



The emotion that occurs when we experience an extreme desire for something someone else has.



The emotion that occurs when we anticipate or feel the loss of something of great value to us.

There is no better way to fight this fight than watching someone who has been in the middle of it and found the life-changing solutions that gave them victory.



To help us with this conversation, we brought in Becca, a CQ volunteer. Among other things, she produces all of our videos at ChristianQuestions.com/youtube. She works with our social media accounts ("cqbiblepodcast" on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest). Becca's comments will be in pink and may be edited for clarity or brevity.

Tell us how you one day looked around and found yourself in a situation where you knew you were being overcome with jealousy.



The last time I was on the podcast was Episode #1011 "How Do You Find Your Way Through Grief?" I talked about my desire to have a child. My husband and I tried for years, and it was not something that was going to happen for us. It was something that, like we said in the definition, I intensely desired. And so I went through a process of grieving. After I had grieved, things were changing in the way I felt and perceived the world.

# CQRewind

I'm in my mid-to-late thirties and lots of my friends were having kids. While still trying to conceive, at the time I was teaching in a high school and had two different students get pregnant. They were teenagers, people who are not in a place in their lives where this is a choice they are actively wanting to make. One of them chose to keep the child; the other chose to have an abortion. That was really tough for me. This is something I really wanted. They had it, and it wasn't the right time. This was the start of where jealousy seeds were sown and grew over time.

After I had found out we wouldn't be able to have kids, there were two coworkers who were pregnant with their second children. They would talk about their pregnancies all the time, and it got to the point where sometimes I would have to leave the room, because I would get these twinges of jealousy or just pure sadness as it was something I really wanted and knew it wasn't going to happen to me.

This feeling kept growing within me as more people around me got pregnant. Reflecting back on it now, when we feel jealous, it starts to feel like everyone and everything is purposely trying to make us feel bad, like everyone and everything is, "I'm pregnant! I'm pregnant!" But that is not reality. That is making the world about us, and that is clear to me now.

I think it really peaked when two close friends of mine announced their pregnancies, and I came to the realization that for the next ten years or so, I am not going to be able to escape this issue. There are going to be people having this joyful moment in their life, and it is going to be something I am going to have to deal with. They had the life I desired.



I had this really profound sadness about it, and it felt totally unfair. But I realized I didn't want to feel like this the rest of my life, especially towards my friends. I started to recognize this was bad and ugly. Rick, you mentioned it is a secret sin. I have a feeling some of my friends had no idea I felt this way. I didn't want them to know, because it is embarrassing.



I had these two light bulb moments where I realized this was out of control. One of them was talking to you, Rick, because you took an interest in me and my life. After that first podcast on grief, you asked how I was doing, and you wanted to talk. When I really reflected on that, I think that's when it started to mix in my mind that it wasn't just grief I was feeling; it was mixing with other things. This sort of awakened an idea in my head that there was something going on.

The second light bulb was when sitting at church on Sunday and someone brought up <u>Romans 7:14</u>, which we will read later. It just clicked. All of a sudden, I acknowledged I did not want to feel this way and had to do something about it. I have to not just acknowledge there is sin in me, but that there is a process I have to go through to get rid of it, because I don't want this running my life.





Sometimes we are in a broken moment or period in our lives and realize something has to change. This is a subject that affects all of us.

## Once you figure out you are in trouble with envy and jealousy, how do you climb out of it?

As with any difficult issue we have in life, realizing it exists is a major first step in the solving process. There are many things that come into play here as we battle our emotions. After all, who wants to admit they are envious and jealous? The temptation is to just ignore it. NOT a good plan!



It will come back around and hit us if we do not do something about it! Is there a solution to envy and jealousy? How do we personally conquer this?



It is important to take social media breaks in general, but particularly when you are at a point where you are feeling jealous. I have just recently gone back on social media after not being on it for six or seven months. Social media is about showing the best of the best parts of your life and cultivating what that image is. There are Instagram influencers whose job is to make this "thing" look so great and important - this is going to be the thing that makes you happy.

In a recent post from the BBC, (BBC.com *Is Social Media Bad for You? The Evidence and the Unknowns*, Jessica Brown, January 5, 2018) researchers surveyed 600 adults. They found a third of adults said social media, after consuming it, gave them negative emotions like frustration, and that envy was the cause. It was triggered mainly by comparing their lives to others, which, although we are not supposed to do it, feels inevitable. Going on social media is like opening Pandora's Box and saying, "What's everyone else doing? Oh, that looks great and I wish I could wear that and do that and be there."

(The article talks about an "envy spiral," where people react to envy by adding to their profiles more of the same sort of content that made them jealous in the first place.)

(ii) The happiness lie, Envy and Jealousy, The Secret to Slaying Envy and Jealousy, THE BEAT, Allen Parr

• So, today I just want to give you five things to consider when dealing with this issue of envy and jealousy and how God can actually use it to grow you into a better person. Number one is what I'm calling the happiness lie. Here I want to strongly encourage you to reject the idea that if I only had what I see other people having, then and only then, will I truly be happy. This is one of the things that the enemy uses to keep us chasing after everything except God.

#### Satan uses our desires, and social media fuels those desires.



Social media gives us the sense the grass is always greener on the other side, that if I just had this one thing it would make me happy. It is always unattainable, because there is always one more thing.

Knowing it was challenging for me to be on social media with people showing pictures of their beautiful families and children who never cry, and everything looks like it is from a catalog, it was not the kind of mindset I knew would be helpful and healthy in that moment to move past jealousy.

### Of course, that social media ideal of "perfect" is not real.

<u>Galatians 5:19-26</u>: (NASB) <sup>19</sup>Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, <sup>20</sup>idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, *jealousy* <2205>, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, <sup>21</sup>envying <5355>, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

These things can keep us from inheriting the kingdom of God. This is serious!

<sup>22</sup>But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup>Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup>If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. <sup>26</sup>Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, **envying <5354>** one another.

Each fruit of the Spirit is a powerful healing agent against jealousy and envy.

To understand the whole story, we need to know the WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY and HOW of the story. Let's take these in pieces and apply them to each part of our lesson. First, the WHO:





Our life is about something bigger. We need to understand who we are. Things like envy and jealousy do not belong.



Part of that is accepting God's will and releasing our own. We set things up in our lives, saying, "This is the way my life is going to be because this is what I want." And they are not always bad things. However, it is about God's will and figuring out what that is for yourself.

Sometimes we have to let go of expectations from society. I will be married, be happy, buy a house and now I will have children. Life is not always what we see on movies and television shows. It is different for everyone. So, Solution #2 is about accepting God's will. This is easy to say, but it is hard work. "I am okay with whatever you have for me, God." I think that's one of the hardest things to do. We also have to recognize Satan is working against us on all of this.

## (1)) Measuring Stick Syndrome, Envy and Jealousy, The Secret to Slaying Envy and Jealousy, THE BEAT, Allen Parr

 Number two is what I'm calling the Measuring Stick Syndrome. And this is the idea that the enemy would love nothing more than for you and I to spend our entire lives comparing ourselves and measuring ourselves up against what we see and think other people have. And what ends up happening, is whenever we



are at those critical times in our lives when we are most vulnerable, the enemy will allow something to be said to you that will discourage you, making you think that your life sucks because you don't have what somebody else has. And it keeps us in a pattern of comparing ourselves and measuring ourselves up against other people's success.

We have to remember Satan is specifically working in our lives to make them more difficult. There certainly is sin within us, but don't think that Satan is out of the picture on this. He is finding ways to make things more difficult.

This idea of comparing your life to someone else's dovetails perfectly with social media. He wants you to think your life is awful because you didn't get a certain thing, that there is something now wrong with your life and you should spend the rest of your life sulking over it. But we can't do that. If we have decided our life is not our own, if we decided we want to give our life to God and serve Him, we cannot spend our life sulking.

Instead, we should be asking, "Okay, God, what's next? What do I do instead? What other opportunities are out there? How can I thrive under this set of circumstances instead?"

For more on the topic of contentment under new circumstances, please search our archives for Episode #1041 "How Do You Bloom Where You Are Planted?"

The key word here is "instead." How can we replace what we want with what God will have us to be or to do?

James 4:13-16: (NASB) <sup>13</sup>Come now, you who say, Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit. <sup>14</sup>Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. <sup>15</sup>Instead, you ought to say, If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that. <sup>16</sup>But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.

*If the Lord wills* - it comes down to, "What is God's will for me," even if it means not having something I have looked forward to my entire life. For Becca, it was a real struggle to give up her core desire and find a way to move on. That is how we have to go into this battle.



## How often is our plan for our future based on how we feel? We are delivered from that:

<u>Titus 3:3,5</u>: (NASB) <sup>3</sup>For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy <5355>, hateful, hating one another.<sup>5</sup>He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.





We can't see the road map for our life. I think that's what is hard, especially because I am a planner. I like to know where I am going. This is one of those lessons I think I am going to be learning my entire life - understanding how to give up my own will and accept whatever God has in store for me.

### How do we fight our own fallen nature which gives envy and jealousy logical reasons to take hold?

This is a really powerful point, as our preprogrammed thinking and emotions shaped by a lifetime of experiences have immense power and influence in our daily life. These well-established habits pose the greatest challenge to our efforts to be in control of and then rid of envy and jealousy.

It is not love that is blind, but jealousy. - Lawrence Durrell

Are envy and jealously innate flaws that will always be there? Is it just a matter of controlling what is natural? Fallen human nature has built within it envy and jealousy.

### (1,1) Monkey study, We're Hardwired to Be Jealous, But Why, Seeker

But jealousy is a hard emotion to study, at least in people. Researchers know that animals are easier to control in a lab, but people aren't always truthful when they give their answers. That's why a team of researchers based their new study on Coppery Titi monkeys. This is a monogamist primate species that form strong bonds with their partner as well as mate guarding that is similar to romantic behavior in humans. To see what jealousy does to their brain, the



researchers introduced what they called jealousy conditions. They put males in view of their female partner and introduced her to another male. As a control, the same male monkey was made to watch a pair of unknown monkeys interact. In both cases the male was filmed during the viewing and given a brain scan after watching the others for half an hour. In the lab, as in the wild, Titi monkeys were visibly agitated when confronted with a rival for their mate. They arched their back, lashed their tails and put their hands on their female to keep them in place. The brain scans showed hormonal changes associated with this behavior; heightened activity in the cingulate cortex which is associated with social pain, as well as elevated levels of testosterone and cortisol indicating stress.

So, they are justified in their jealousy like, "Hey, man, back off. She's with me." This is how we can think. "I am justified. This is a natural emotion." We have to be careful not to allow our brains to go down that road.

There is a natural element, but just because something is natural does not mean it is good.

#### How do we manage this?

<u>Proverbs 14:29-30</u>: (ASV) <sup>29</sup>He that is slow to anger is of great understanding; but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly. <sup>30</sup>A tranquil heart is the life of the flesh; but envy is the rottenness of the bones.



We all have things we tell ourselves or familiar thought patterns. Sometimes they are comforting and sometimes not. But the idea is we have the ability to control what we think about. Once a thought enters our mind, we have a choice about what to do with it.

If we have some kind of evil, sinful bad thought, we have a choice as to what we decide to do next. This is where I think jealousy starts - in your head. When you start to recognize this, you might also notice some physical responses. These can sometimes serve as a personal check. Is my heart beating faster? Is my stomach turning? Am I starting to feel something? Thoughts can be very sneaky.

If we are trying to be godly, we should be looking at those physical symptoms and thinking, why is my stomach turning right now? Why does my heart feel like it is going to jump out of my chest? There has to be some reason. This can help us to be on alert to move forward instead of saying, "Well, this feeling is my natural inclination. I am going to follow it."



We need to change the recordings in our heads. They can be very comfortable. Even when they are not very comforting, they can still be comfortable. The idea is to observe them and say, "Wait! Is this appropriate? Is this godly?"

## (1)) Mirror principle, Envy and Jealousy, The Secret to Slaying Envy and Jealousy, THE BEAT, Allen Parr

• Number three is what I'm calling the Mirror Principle. This is the idea that God can use our jealousy to reveal certain things that are going on inside of our hearts. For instance, one of the things is that it reveals the idols that are in our lives. And so, if this is something that I'm thinking about constantly, I'm consumed with, and my whole entire life is wrapped around pursuing this thing, it can reveal that I'm more interested in pursuing this thing than I am in my relationship with God, which means that this desire has become an idol in my life. Not only does it reveal the idols in our lives, but it also can uncover some pride that's going on in our hearts, because oftentimes we want what we see because it makes us feel better about ourselves, and it actually makes us feel better around other people which is an indication that there is some pride going on in our lives that we need to deal with.

This next text is a classic example of having the recordings in our head bring us to a place of self-destruction.

## King Saul fell prey to his own pride and insecurity which resulted in a raging jealousy against David:

<u>**1** Samuel 18:5-9</u>: (NASB) <sup>5</sup>So David went out wherever Saul sent him, and prospered; and Saul set him over the men of war...

David is doing exactly what King Saul says. Saul thinks he is wonderful because he can be used to protect Saul's kingdom.

<sup>6</sup>It happened as they were coming, when David returned from killing the Philistine, that the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy and with musical instruments. <sup>7</sup>The women sang as they played, and said, Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.

Here is the celebration as the men come back from war. But the song lyrics are not exactly what King Saul's prideful heart wanted to hear.

<sup>8</sup>Then Saul became very angry, for this saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed to David ten thousands, but to me they have ascribed thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom? <sup>9</sup>Saul looked at David with suspicion from that day on.

This began the recordings in his head that said, "David is after me. David is after me. David is after me. David needs to be removed. David needs to be removed. David is not good. I need to kill David. I need to kill David."

Saul descended into madness against David, and it cost him his life. Becca, in a way you had to fight descending into that kind of madness, because it became an obsession at one point.

Right. I really appreciate how the audio clip talked about this being your "idol." It is such a sobering thought, because when we think about idols, we say, "Oh, I don't have a golden calf," but our idol is really the thing we are focused on and desire. For Saul, it was this thing he constructed in his own head that was his own destruction. Saul is an extreme example, but if our inner thoughts and feelings have created an idol out of our life pursuit, we have let sin overcome us, which is what happened to Saul. This is why it is so important to not let those idols run who we are.

Idols are not always tangible things. They can be these edifices that are in our head, and then they completely derail us from where we are supposed to go.

To alter a quote from Joshua - choose this day which mind you will obey: James 3:13-17: (NASB) <sup>13</sup>Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. <sup>14</sup>But if you have bitter jealousy <2205> and selfish ambition in your heart do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. <sup>15</sup>This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. <sup>16</sup>For where jealousy <2205> and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. <sup>17</sup>But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits,

These verses help us to understand that bitter jealousy and selfish ambition break us, but the goodness of God restores us.

We are talking about changing our recordings. What do we change them to? The idea is we are looking at the same life events but with a changed perspective.



unwavering, without hypocrisy.

When we were young, my brother Dave and I used to love to play basketball. He is two years younger and would play basketball with me and my friends. Because he was younger, he was always playing against older people and got to be really good - better than me. I didn't like that, because I'm the older brother and am supposed to be better but when he played in his league and I played in mine, he was really good and I was just kind of showing up for the game. It

# CQRewind

was a battle. I remember thinking at one point very specifically, this is my brother. I want him to be good; in fact, I want him to be great. I decided to coach him. I used to meet him at halftime during his games to give him pointers. When they got to the championship, I got to be a part of it. I got to support him in his excellence. Instead of being jealous, I became a really proud brother, because my brother accomplished something wonderful. It was a huge change that bound us together. What a wonderful experience that was. But it took a lot of work to get out of the idea of, "I can't stand the fact that he's better than me."

Imagine if King Saul just had that perspective...what a different life he would have led.



Our jealousy issue is within our own head. It does not matter what someone else thinks, what they accomplish, what they are blessed with. It matters what is in MY head. This is where the challenge lies. If we fight the battle where the enemy is, we have a really good chance of defeating it.

So, my worst enemy is...me! Looks like we have a lot of work to do.

### We manage envy and jealousy by reworking habitual thinking and emotions. What else can we do?

By now it is obvious that envy and jealousy are real problems. Not only do we need to challenge how we naturally think and feel, we also need to look deeper into the real results and outcomes of our many experiences. In other words, overcoming envy and jealousy requires an all-out assault! Just because it may be natural does not mean it is acceptable before God.

Envy is the art of counting the other fellow's blessings instead of your own. - Harold Coffin





"Count your blessings" is wonderful, but it is said so often it can lose its power and it sounds trite. It helps to take a macro view. If we can't be thankful for anything else at this point, we should be thankful we have life, because there are so many things we do not deserve and life is one of them. It is because of His son that we have the opportunity to know God and have this chance. Step back. Sure, there is this one thing I do not get to have, but what are all the ways God has taken care of me - not only now but in the past? It gives us the perspective that God has blessed us even through the challenging times. He surely will bless me in spite of me not getting this thing I want right now.

Counting your blessings, if taken seriously, is a step of dramatic faith. I might be feeling a lack, but by counting my blessings, I am building a bridge over that lack to something bigger, by God's grace.

Don't be distracted from those blessings because of our own personal wants. Focus on God's will and not our own.

What distracts us? Don't be distracted by the thing you *don't* have. Rather, be attracted to the blessings you *do* have.

Guard against ungratefulness, Envy and Jealousy, The Secret to Slaying Envy and Jealousy, THE BEAT, Allen Parr

• Number 4 is to guard against ungratefulness. In the Old Testament book of Numbers, the Bible says that the nation of Israel wandered around in the wilderness for 40 years, and one of the reasons why that happened was because God was displeased because of their constant complaining about what they had. If you think about what God had done - God had given them water from a rock, He had given them manna from heaven, He had done miracles, lead them through the Red Sea on dry land, but in spite of all the things that God had done they were still consumed about what they didn't have, and they complained about it constantly. And as a result, God did not allow them to move into the Promised Land in the next season of their lives. And so, the same thing can happen to us whenever we find ourselves ungrateful and complaining about things. Actually, it can end up serving to hinder us from moving forward into what God has for us in the future.

# CQRewind

Israel is such a good example and lesson for all of us. Look at all they had but it was not enough. Imagine if they would have just followed God and acknowledged those blessings, how much more blessed they would have been if they had been able to see the Promised Land. We can't always see that for ourselves, and that is where we have to trust God that He has something for us. It might not be that same blessing we



were hoping for, but surely for all of the things we have seen in God, all the ways He has blessed us, we can trust Him for the things we have not yet seen in our lives.

"Count your blessings" is much bigger than a trite little phrase.

The Apostle Paul is one of the many strong examples of seeing blessings during harsh circumstances.

### Here he is in prison writing a letter to the Philippians:

<u>Philippians 1:13-18</u>: (NASB) <sup>13</sup>So that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else <sup>14</sup>and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.

Even though Paul is in dire circumstances, he realizes it has to be good because it inspired others to have courage.

<sup>15</sup>Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from **envy** <**5355**> and strife, but some also from good will; <sup>16</sup>the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel;

But preaching has to be done for the right reasons. Here he warns some were preaching out of envy.

<sup>17</sup>the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment. <sup>18</sup>What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice.

In this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice - twice he says he rejoices. In other words, "Christ is being preached at my expense, but as long as Christ is being preached, I am good." They preached out of envy, and the Apostle Paul is not envious of them - at least Christ is being preached. This is a powerful example of counting your blessings where it does not look like a blessing exists.

Even when someone who envied Paul sought to do him harm, he found blessing. He did not envy their freedom. He basked in the glory of his witness opportunities while in chains.

In Becca's experience, she was in "chains" trying to break out of the negative patterns. Counting her blessings was one of the necessary steps to climbing back.



Paul is an amazing example. It is hard to imagine being in prison, realizing, "This, too, is for Christ. I will just preach from here." It is another example of blooming where you are planted. "What are the opportunities I have where I'm at? How can I be thankful for where I am right now?"



The "why" of our trial is for our benefit. If we are going to be jealous about somebody else while we are being fashioned for this *ministry of reconciliation* (<u>2 Corinthians 5:11-21</u>), we have completely missed the point. It comes down to reassessing and seeing things through God's eyes.

What about GOOD jealousy? Is there such a thing? YES, and it begins with God Himself!

This Old Testament word is only used to describe God's jealousy:

#### Jealous: Strongs #7067 qanna'; jealous

Exodus 34:14: (KJV) For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous <7067>, is a jealous <7067> God...

<u>Deuteronomy 4:24</u>: (KJV) For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous <7067> God.

God has fierce loyalty <u>FOR</u> His people. He will not sit idly if they stray from Him, as their allegiance to Him is in their highest interest.

### What about us? Is there good jealousy for us as well? Jesus was "jealous" <u>FOR</u> His Father's house:

John 2:16-17: (NASB) <sup>16</sup>And to those who were selling the doves he said, Take these things away; stop making my Father's house a place of business. <sup>17</sup>His disciples remembered that it was written zeal <2205> for your house will consume me. (From <u>Psalm 69:9</u>)



The word for *zeal* is one of those words for jealous, but in a positive way. Jesus was jealous for the house of God because it was sacred and needed to stay that way. It was being corrupted.

Paul was jealous FOR his brethren:

<u>2 Corinthians 11:2</u>: (NASB) For I am *jealous* <2206> for you with a godly *jealousy* <2205>; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.

In other words, "I have godly jealousy for you, because I love you so much, and I want you to be so pure before God and Christ."

We want to be jealous for righteousness, God and Jesus. These should be the focus of our life versus feelings of animosity towards other people.

Good jealousy grows out of counting your blessings. When you count the good things God has given you, you want to be protective of those things. You can see the blessings given to others and can reach out and be protective of their blessings as well. It is a powerful concept if we can understand good jealousy versus bad.



Make sure that you are jealous FOR something, not against someone or somebody. If we count our blessings and pour our energy into godly jealousy, we can make some serious progress.

## Obviously there are multiple steps involved in the battle against envy and jealousy. What are we missing?

We have learned the importance of knowing WHO you are, knowing the WHEN for your life is in God's hands, knowing WHERE the challenge of envy and jealousy resides, and knowing WHY God is so focused on you. We now examine the WHAT and HOW of our path to victory.

Those who believe in nothing are very jealous and angry at those who believe in something. – Dennis Prager

What are the hardest and yet most effective things we can do to rid ourselves of envy and jealousy?



### Humility test, Envy and Jealousy, The Secret to Slaying Envy and Jealousy, THE BEAT, Allen Parr

• And finally, number 5 is what I'm calling the humility test. So, there may be some things in your life that God doesn't have for you, but then there may be some other things that God really desperately wants to do in and through your life. And the humility test is tough, because if you're in a relationship with somebody that you are jealous and envious of, I want to encourage you to have the humility to have a conversation with them and actually confess that you are jealous and envious of them. And what you may find is that at first you may think, man, maybe this is going to make the relationship awkward, but it actually has the other effect. When you open up the lines of communication it actually draws you closer to that person. It can also serve as an opportunity for them to show you why it is they may be at a certain place in their life and you may not, if you're willing and humble enough to learn from them.

Built upon that basis of humble honesty come the next and perhaps most difficult solutions.



This sounds contradictory. You would think we should stay away from what makes us jealous.

Right. It is like when you were in a fight with someone at school and your mom says, "You can't get along, so don't be around each other." But this is not reality; this is living in a bubble. In my circumstance, I can't just say, "I'm just not going to be around anyone who

has children." It isn't reality. It is also counterproductive to isolate and protect ourselves in that way. We should be growing through these things to better deal with them. We should humble ourselves to realize it is not about ME. There are joys and experiences other people are having, and they have nothing to do with our own experience. It is all about how we are perceiving these things.

When going through this experience, I went out of my way to ask how people were doing. There were lots of baby showers I went to, and the first was for my two co-workers. I remember standing in the middle of the store looking at baby clothing and nearly crying. It was so hard just standing there and understanding in this moment this was not for me. I took some deep breaths, prayed and got through that moment. At the end, there was nothing. I didn't explode. The world did not end. It was better for me to be able to figure out how to maneuver and deal with these things rather than feeling like for the rest of my life people are going to have to be on eggshells around me.

It takes a lot of courage to face those things. It is so easy to just want to hide. Becca, because this was happening around you all the time, there were probably a lot of failures along the way.



Absolutely. A big part of this is do things in stages. You don't go all in and say, "Let me babysit your kid." If you do too many things at once, it is going to overwhelm you. Do things in stages, understanding that you will fail but will not give up. Don't give yourself the space to say, "Well, I don't know how to do this. This is just how I am." Don't give yourself an out.

Humility is scary, because it requires us to be exposed and vulnerable: <u>Philippians 4:11-13</u>: (NASB) <sup>11</sup>Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. <sup>12</sup>I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. <sup>13</sup>I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

*I can do all things* - meaning, I know I can accept God's providence in all circumstances. Whether I am rich or poor, whether I am able to have children, whether I am not able to have children, I can do whatever God puts in front of me because Christ strengthens me.

This fits with Solution #5. Be courageous enough not to avoid what makes us jealous. Even if we fall down, we get back up.



It is the strength of Christ and not mine that overcomes envy and jealousy. And let's face it, my strength and my determination brought me to the envy and the jealousy. I need something bigger than me to help lift me out.



What does repentance to envy and jealousy look like in relation to acknowledging your sin and praying for forgiveness?

For more on this topic, please search our archives for Episode #1082 "How Do I Live a Life of Repentance?" It is a daily checking in with your mind and saying, "Am I living the life I am supposed to be living? Am I doing the thing I say I am doing?" How are

you living your life? If you realize you are living in that sin, ask for forgiveness and work all these steps we have been talking about. *Live your repentance*. Live trying to change.

# CQRewind

Our prayers change and develop, as we go through the experience. By placing

this solution at the end we are not implying that the rest should be done without prayer. We ARE suggesting that as we work through the other solutions, our prayers for forgiveness and strength will become far more focused.



Going back to one of Becca's two "light bulb moments," here the Apostle Paul is not only acknowledging his sin before God but in front of his brethren as well. This is an enormous step of

but in front of his brethren as well. This is an enormous step of humility and growth.

<u>Romans 7:14,18-19,22-25</u>: (NASB) <sup>14</sup>For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. <sup>18</sup>For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. <sup>19</sup>For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want.

This reminds us of Becca's story. She saw something was wrong and wanted to fix it but did not immediately know how.

That was the moment where I felt Paul was just like me. I just love that verse, because it is so real. It is so exactly what we all feel on a daily basis with this sin living in us.

It is powerful to look to Scripture and see the answers unfold exactly when we need them. But this does not happen unless we are looking for them. They do not jump out and tap us on the shoulder unless we are open to them.

<sup>22</sup>For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, <sup>23</sup>but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. <sup>24</sup>Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?

In other words, "I see the goodness of God's will in my life, but I am still not doing everything I am supposed to." We see the contradiction. Becca, how long was this struggle?

My experience with jealousy lasted about two years. But after acknowledging it, it was probably a good six months of really working and thinking and praying on all of this. It depends on how long this is entrenched in our thinking and how hard we are really working to get it out.

This is not a quick fix. Envy and jealousy drain us - drip, drip, drip. It happens slowly and we might not even realize it. We need to acknowledge it, think it through and take action.

<sup>25</sup>Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

Step one: I see the sin. I have to ask for forgiveness, but now what? I have to do something about it. I can't be allowing this sin to be driving my life. This is not what my life is supposed to be about. I have to figure out a way, a process, to eradicate this from my life.

It takes humility to say something is wrong, something must change. It then takes humility to move forward and identify the things we can do to make a change, and then more humility and courage to actually do those things.

One of the things that helped me was talking to you, Rick. It was confessing this sin to you and having some sort of accountability, feeling like someone's going to hold me accountable to make sure I am moving along this road towards bettering myself. Having you check in on me really helped me in terms of being able to continue to move forward.

Accountability to God through Christ is the most important thing. But when we get serious about difficulties in our lives, oftentimes finding someone we can trust, who will have our best interest in mind, is a powerful tool.



For me, overcoming jealousy was a process. It does not come easily. It takes real work on our part, but it is possible. A big part of jealousy is catching it before it gets out of control, kind of like weeds in a garden. When the weeds pop up you have to pull them out right away, because the longer you ignore them, the more they will grow and sap the energy from whatever it is you are trying to grow.

Staying on top of those weeds of jealousy from the very start requires honesty from ourselves. Satan is looking for ways to trip you up and to make you fall, but you can't let him. Acknowledge your sin. Repent. Pray. Do the hard work with strength from God that you can use to overcome jealousy in your life. I am a big believer in action, so you do the work until everything else catches up to where you want it to be. If the desire is there to be better, it is just a matter of time until things actually change.

Jealousy and envy are part of us. To be Christlike is to attack them and overcome them, because Satan finds his way into our hearts through these kinds of things. We can overcome!



So, am I a jealous Christian? For Jonathan and Rick (and Becca!) and Christian Questions... Think about it...!



Join us next week for our podcast on August 12, 2019: Ep. #1086: Are Jesus' Ransom and Our Salvation the Same?

### **Bonus Material!**

The jealous are troublesome to others, but a torment to themselves. - William Penn

Jealousy is love and hate at the same time. – Drake

The wicked envy and hate; it is their way of admiring. - Victor Hugo

One aspect of envy and jealousy we did not even touch on is that of coveting. In Scripture, to covet is to have a strong desire for something. Sometimes this is a good thing, and sometimes this is a bad thing (See Episode #888 "Is Wanting What Others Have Really that Bad?"). Any negative form of coveting is often readily attached to envy and jealousy.

We are not to covet those <u>things which do not or should not rightfully belong to</u> <u>us!</u>

**Examples:** 

### Satan, the original coveter:

<u>Isaiah 14:12-14</u>: (NKJV) <sup>12</sup>How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! <sup>13</sup>For you have said in your heart: I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; <sup>14</sup>I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.

There is a <u>repeated pattern</u> that runs through the process of covetousness:

- The Observation Stage: Seeing something attractive.
- The Thought Stage: Holding and personalizing the image of that which is attractive.
- The Rationalization Stage: Convincing one's self that you "deserve" that which you covet.



• The Action Stage: Turning the inward sin of covetousness into an outward sin of action.

### Eve, the first human coveter:

<u>Genesis 3:6</u>: (KJV) And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be <u>desired <2530></u> to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

Eve connected the positive desire that God implanted with the lying deception of Satan.

#### **Angels:**

<u>Genesis 6:1-2</u>: (NKJV) <sup>1</sup>Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, <sup>2</sup>that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.

God's own angels followed the lead of Satan and desired that which was created out of their reach.

### Israel's national coveting:

<u>1 Samuel 8:1,3-9</u>: (NKJV) <sup>1</sup>Now it came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel. <sup>3</sup>But his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice. <sup>4</sup>Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah <sup>5</sup>and said to him, look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. <sup>6</sup>But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, Give us a king to judge us. So Samuel prayed to the LORD.

### Rebellion - a clear symptom of a covetous approach:

<sup>7</sup>And the LORD said to Samuel, Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them. <sup>8</sup>According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day—with which they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also. <sup>9</sup>Now therefore, heed their voice. However, you shall solemnly forewarn them, and show them the behavior of the king who will reign over them.

# Common factor - ALL VIOLATE THE FIRST COMMANDMENT! All replace the divine character and standard of God with the deviant characters and stand-ins of whatever the moment brings.

