

XLIX. ENVY MAKES THE BONES ROT: 1 Samuel 18:6-16

INTRODUCTION/CON(TEXT).

Beloved, brothers and sisters; friends and visitors: 1 Samuel 18:6-16 is a picture perfect example of **Proverbs 14:30**: "A tranquil (lit. *healthy*) heart gives life to the flesh, but envy makes the bones rot." What we have before our eyes in these pages is the destruction of King Saul after David slew the Giant Goliath. Rather than loving David, like Jonathan, Saul envied him to his own destruction.

The doctrine which naturally arises out of this text is this:

DOCTRINE. Envy makes the bones rot.

QUESTION 1. What is envy?

ANSWER. **WILLIAM PERKINS**: "Envy is a disease of the heart, whereby a man is grieved at the good of another, and especially at the gifts and graces of God in them." — **William Perkins, A Treatise of the Vocations or Callings of Men**

QUESTION 2. What is the difference between coveting and envy?

ANSWER. Coveting is being discontent with what you have and wanting what God has providentially given to someone else. [Envy is coveting set on fire with ill will.](#)

Envy not simply wanting what someone else has—that would be covetousness. Envy goes further and begrudges the person or wishes bad upon the person toward whom your covetousness is aimed.

Romans 12:15 says, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep." **Envy does the opposite of what God commands: Envy weeps when others rejoice and rejoices when others weep.**

I) Envy is a work of the sinful flesh.

Galatians 5:19-21 "19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: . . . 21 envy."

II) Envy is the opposite of love.

1 Corinthians 13:4 "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy."

III) Envy must be guarded against in the church.

Galatians 5:26 "Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another."

IV) Envy is why Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery.

Genesis 37:11 "[After his dreams were made known, Joseph's] brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind."

V) Envy is why the Jews delivered Jesus up to Pilate to be crucified.

Matthew 27:18 "For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up."

OUTLINE.

- I. Envy makes the bones rot (1 Sam. 18:6-16).
- II. Four antidotes to envy (Selected Scriptures).

I. ENVY MAKES THE BONES ROT (1 Sam. 18:6-16).

I) Saul envied David because others praised David more than him (1 Sam. 18:6-8).

1 Samuel 18:6-8

"6 As they were coming home, when David returned from striking down the Philistine, the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with songs of joy, and with musical instruments. 7 And the women sang to one another as they celebrated,

"Saul has struck down his thousands,
and David his ten thousands."

8 And Saul was very angry, and this saying displeased him. He said, 'They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed thousands, and what more can he have but the kingdom?'"

USE FOR EXAMINATION.

Q. How do you respond when others succeed and are even praised?

Learn two additional things from this:

I) People pleasing will trap your soul.

– Look at Saul so affected by other's opinions and how miserable that is.

Proverbs 29:25 "The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe."

II) Put Not Your Trust In Princes.

- *Imagine if David had hung his hat on Saul doing the right thing; imagine if he had put his trust in earthly rulers.*

Psalm 146:3 “Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.”

II) Saul's envy led him to keep a close watch on David, and seemingly interpret everything negatively (1 Sam. 18:9).

1 Samuel 18:9

“And Saul eyed David from that day on.” *[NASB “Saul looked on David with suspicion”]*

- **This Hebrew word *āvan***, which is translated “eyed,” means “to watch with jealousy” or “to eye enviously.”
 - **JOHN TRAPP:** “[Saul] looked upon him with an evil eye: prying into all his actions, and making the worst of everything.” — **Trapp, John. John Trapp's Complete Bible Commentary (p. 2837). Kindle Edition.**

USE FOR EXAMINATION.

Q. Do you have an envious eye toward anyone?

III) Saul's envy led to the return of the harmful spirit from the LORD and the return of his melancholic madness (1 Sam. 18:10a).

1 Samuel 18:10a

“10a The next day a harmful spirit from God rushed upon Saul, and he raved within his house while David was playing the lyre, as he did day by day.”

- **MATTHEW POOLE:** “Saul's envy, and jealousy, and discontent revived his melancholic distemper, which the devil, according to his wont, struck in with.” —**Poole, Matthew. English Annotations on the Holy Bible . E4 Group. Kindle Edition.**
 - **JOSEPH HALL:** “Never was Saul's breast so fit for a lodging for the evil spirit as now, that it is drest up with envy.” — **Joseph Hall, Hall's Contemplations, vol. 1, pg. 486-487**
 - **THOMAS BROOKS (1608-1680):** “Envy is a moth that frets the garment of a man's soul, and it secretly eats out all comfort and contentment.”

IV) Saul's envy led him to do the devil's work and even try to murder David (1 Sam. 18:10b-11).

1 Samuel 18:10b-11

“10b Saul had his spear in his hand. 11 And Saul hurled the spear, for he thought, 'I

will pin David to the wall.' But David evaded him twice."

- **BOYS AND GIRLS...**

USE FOR WARNING.

See the evil of sin!

Everyone of us must cast ourselves on Christ alone for salvation from sin's penalty and power!

V) Saul's envy led him to fear David rather than fear the LORD (1

Sam. 18:12-16).

1 Samuel 18:12-16

"12 Saul was afraid of David because the LORD was with him but had departed from Saul. 13 So Saul removed him from his presence and made him a commander of a thousand. And he went out and came in before the people. 14 And David had success in all his undertakings, for the LORD was with him. 15 And when Saul saw that he had great success, he stood in fearful awe of him [*lit. he dreaded his face*]. 16 But all Israel and Judah loved David, for he went out and came in before them."

- **JOSEPH HALL:** "One would have thought rather, that David should have been afraid of Saul, because the devil was so strong with him, than that Saul should be afraid of David, because the Lord was with him; yet we find all the fear in Saul of David, none in David of Saul.

Hatred and fear are ordinary companions. David had wisdom and faith to dispel his fears; Saul had nothing but infidelity, and dejected, self-condemned, distempered thoughts, which must needs nourish them; yet Saul could not fear any hurt from David, whom he found so loyal and serviceable: he fears only too much good unto David; and the envious fear is much more than the distrustful." — **Joseph Hall, Hall's Contemplations, vol. 1, pg. 487**

II. FOUR ANTIDOTES TO ENVY (Selected Scriptures).

Antidote 1.

I) Faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ is an antidote to envy (Rom. 5:6-10).

- **Romans 5:6-10** "6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— 8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much

more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life."

- **QUESTION. How is the gospel of Christ an antidote to envy?**

ANSWER 1. Because the gospel reminds us that no matter our lot in life, because of our original and actual sin, we always deserve worse.

Thanks be to God for Christ's death on the cross, wherein He took the worst we believers deserve! Because of Christ's substitutionary death in our place, Christians, "He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities" (Ps. 1-3:10).

- **ANSWER 2.** Because the gospel reminds us that one day we shall be totally saved from the fleeting pleasures, the penalties, the pervasive power, and even the presence sin.

Thanks be to God for Christ's resurrection from the dead!

No matter your losses or your crosses in this life, if you belong to Christ, one day you will be free from all sin, suffering, and sadness when you receive the inheritance that Christ has purchased for you!

That faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ is an antidote to envy is clear in 1 Peter 2:1:

- **1 Peter 2:1** "So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander." (c.f. the verse just before — **1 Peter 1:25** "And this word is the good news that was preached to you.")
 - **BOYS AND GIRLS** [rehash]

Envy makes the bones rot, but Christ can give you a healthy heart that gives life to the flesh!

Antidote 2.

II) Faith in the Providence of God is an antidote to envy (Eph. 1:11, Rom. 8:32, Gen. 50:20).

- **Ephesians 1:11** "[He] works all things according to the counsel of his will."
 - **Romans 8:32** "He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?"
- Think of Joseph sold into slavery, slandered by his owners wife, and forgotten by his prison mates. Yet that was the providential path to Joseph being raised out of the pit and up to the throne, so that he would save a multitude from dying and even preserve the line of Christ.
 - **Genesis 50:20** "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept

alive, as they are today."

- **BOYS AND GIRLS, [rehash Joseph's life]**

Antidote 3.

III) Love for your neighbor by the power of the Holy Spirit is an antidote to envy (1 Cor. 13:4; Gal. 5:19-21, 22).

- **1 Corinthians 13:4** "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy."
 - **Galatians 5:19-21, 22** "19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy. . . 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love. . . ."
 - **Love enables you to obey Romans 12:15:**
"Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep."
 - **BOYS AND GIRLS**

Antidote 4.

IV) A sober remembrance of the outcome of the wicked is an antidote to envy (Ps. 37:1-4).

- **Psalm 37:1-3**
"1 Fret not yourself because of evildoers;
be not envious of wrongdoers!
2 For they will soon fade like the grass
and wither like the green herb.
3 Trust in the Lord, and do good;
dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness.
4 Delight yourself in the Lord,
and he will give you the desires of your heart."
- **BOYS AND GIRLS,**

USE FOR EXHORTATION.

Use these four antidotes to envy for the glory of God!

CONCLUSION.

I) There is no peace for the wicked.

Isaiah 57:20-21

"20 ' . . .The wicked are like the tossing sea;
for it cannot be quiet,

and its waters toss up mire and dirt.
21 There is no peace,' says my God, 'for the wicked.'"

II) The Lord gives peace to His people.

Isaiah 57:18-19

"18 I have seen his ways, but I will heal him;
I will lead him and restore comfort to him and his mourners,
19 creating the fruit of the lips.
Peace, peace, to the far and to the near," says the Lord,
"and I will heal him."

HELPS

- **18-19, 1 Samuel** - Joseph Hall - Jonathan's Love, and Saul's Envy - *Contemplations on the Historical Passages of the Old and New Testament by the Late Right Rev. Joseph Hall (Lord Bishop of Norwich) (3 vols.), printed by Gilbert and Rivington at St John's Square in London, 1833; reprinted by Soli Deo Gloria, 1995.* - vol. 1. pg. 484

PURITAN QUOTES ON JEALOUSY AND ENVY

- **THOMAS BROOKS (1608-1680):** "Envy is a moth that frets the garment of a man's soul, and it secretly eats out all comfort and contentment."
- **JOHN OWEN (1616-1683):** "Envy is a rebellion against the providence of God, a discontented murmuring that His hand has dealt better with another than with ourselves."
- **RICHARD BAXTER (1615-1691):** "Jealousy and envy are the sparks of hell that set fire to the peace of the soul, consuming charity and breeding strife among brethren."
- **WILLIAM GURNALL (1616-1679):** "The envious man is his own tormentor, for he drinks the poison of his own malice while wishing it upon another."
- **THOMAS WATSON (c. 1620-1686):** "Envy is a disease of the heart that rots the bones of grace, making a man grudge at the good of his neighbor."
- **JOHN FLAVEL (c. 1627-1691):** "Jealousy is the shadow of pride, cast long and dark over the soul that cannot bear another's light to shine brighter."
- **MATTHEW HENRY (1662-1714):** "Envy turns the blessings of others into curses for ourselves, for it blinds us to the goodness of God in our own lot."
- **JEREMIAH BURROUGHS (c. 1600-1646):** "A heart full of envy is a heart empty of contentment; it cannot rest while another prospers."
- **SAMUEL RUTHERFORD (c. 1600-1661):** "Envy is the rust of the soul,

eating away at love, and it turns the sweetness of Christ's grace into bitterness."

- **THOMAS MANTON (1620-1677):** "Jealousy and envy are born of the flesh, nursed by pride, and they grow fat upon the miseries of others."
- **RICHARD SIBBES (1577-1635):** "The envious man cannot rejoice in God's gifts to another, for his eye is fixed on what he lacks rather than what he has."
- **WILLIAM BRIDGE (c. 1600-1671):** "Envy is a thief that steals peace from the heart and sets up a tyrant of discontent in its place."
- **JOHN BUNYAN (1628-1688):** "He that envies another's good does battle with God's decree, and his soul becomes a prison of his own making."
- **STEPHEN CHARNOCK (1628-1680):** "Jealousy is the offspring of a covetous spirit, which seeks to possess what God has not given and to destroy what He has."
- **EDWARD REYNOLDS (1599-1676):** "Envy is a venom that poisons the soul, turning the prosperity of others into a dagger against our own peace."
- **THOMAS GOODWIN (1600-1680):** "The jealous heart is a furnace of fire, kindled by Satan, and it burns hottest against those nearest to us."
- **WILLIAM PERKINS (1558-1602):** "Envy is a sin that cloaks itself in justice, pretending to seek fairness while it gnaws at the soul with malice."
- **JOHN PRESTON (1587-1628):** "The envious man is like a dog in the manger, neither enjoying his own blessings nor allowing others to enjoy theirs."
- **CHRISTOPHER LOVE (1618-1651):** "Jealousy is a chain that binds the soul to misery, forged by the hammer of pride and the anvil of discontent."
- **THOMAS ADAMS (1583-1652):** "Envy is the devil's echo in the heart, whispering that another's gain is our loss, though God decrees otherwise."
- **JOHN TRAPP (1601-1669):** "The envious eye sees not the bounty of God but the portion of man, and it turns honey into gall."
- **OBADIAH SEDGWICK (c. 1600-1658):** "Jealousy is a worm that eats at the root of love, leaving the soul barren and unfruitful."
- **WILLIAM GREENHILL (1591-1671):** "Envy is a fire that consumes the house of the soul, leaving nothing but ashes of bitterness behind."
- **RALPH VENNING (c. 1621-1674):** "The sin of envy makes a man a murderer in his heart, for he slays his neighbor with every grudging thought."

- **ISAAC AMBROSE (1604-1664):** "Jealousy and envy are twins of the same dark womb, birthed by pride and nursed by a refusal to trust God's hand."
- **HUGH BINNING (1627-1653):** "Envy is a cloud that darkens the soul, hiding the light of God's favor from our sight."
- **GEORGE SWINNOCK (c. 1627-1673):** "The jealous spirit is a restless sea, tossed by every wave of another's success, finding no harbor in grace."