

Small Group Guide: Envy

Opening Prayer

Begin your time together by asking God to reveal areas of envy in your hearts and to help you receive His truth with humility and openness.

Key Scripture

James 3:14-16 "But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but it is earthly, sensual, and demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there."

Key Takeaways

1. Envy is about identity, not possessions - At its root, envy reveals what we believe about our own worth and value.
 2. The progression of envy - Envy moves from earthly (comparison) to sensual (insecurity) to demonic (distrust of God).
 3. Envy opposes love - We cannot truly love God, others, or ourselves when envy is present.
 4. Our identity in Christ is the solution - We are unconditionally loved children of God, not defined by achievements or comparisons.
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Discussion Questions

Understanding Envy

1. How does the sermon's definition of envy differ from jealousy?
 - Jealousy says "I want what you have"
 - Envy says "I wish you didn't have it"
2. Why is this distinction important?
3. The pastor shared: "At its root, envy is not about what someone else has. It is about who we believe we are not."
How does this reframe your understanding of envy? Can you think of a time when someone else's success made you feel "less than"?

4. Review the progression: Earthly → Sensual → Demonic
 - How have you seen this pattern play out in your own life or in others?
 - At what stage is it easiest to recognize and stop envy?

Personal Reflection

4. The sermon listed several symptoms of envy:
 - Being offended at others' talents or success
 - Unnecessary rivalries or competition
 - Taking pleasure in others' distress
 - Assigning false motives to people who succeed
 - Belittling, backbiting, gossip, slander
 - Teasing, ridiculing, or bullying
5. Which of these symptoms have you recognized in your own life? (Be honest and vulnerable with your group)
6. The pastor mentioned that envy affects people "in our lane" - those closest to us or in similar situations.
Who are the people in your life that you're most tempted to compare yourself with? Why do you think that is?
7. Read the quote from the sermon: "In the misfortunes of our best friends, we always find something not wholly displeasing to us."
This is uncomfortable to admit. Why do you think we sometimes feel this way? What does this reveal about the human heart?

Biblical Examples

7. The sermon mentioned several biblical examples of envy:
 - Cain and Abel (led to murder)
 - Joseph's brothers (led to betrayal)
 - Saul and David (led to obsession)
 - Pharisees and Jesus (led to crucifixion)
8. What patterns do you notice in these stories? What can we learn from how envy progressed in each situation?
9. In the story of Cain and Abel, God warned: "Sin lies at the door. Its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."
What does it mean to "rule over" envy? What practical steps can we take?

The Gospel Solution

9. The sermon emphasized that our identity must come from who we are in Christ, not our achievements or comparisons.

Read Isaiah 43:1-4 together. What specific truths about your identity in God stand out to you?

10. The three antidotes to envy presented were:

- Contentment (combats comparison)
- Gratitude (combats insecurity)
- Love (combats distrust of God)

11. Which of these three do you most need to practice right now? Why?

Practical Application

This Week's Challenge

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Gratitude Journal

- Each day, write down 3-5 specific blessings or gifts God has given YOU
- Don't compare them to anyone else
- Focus on your unique calling, gifts, and blessings

Option 2: Celebrate Others

- Intentionally celebrate someone else's success this week
- Send a genuine congratulatory message
- Pray for them and their continued success
- Notice how it feels to genuinely rejoice with them

Option 3: Social Media Fast

- Take a break from social media for 3-7 days
- Use that time for prayer and reflection
- Notice how comparison culture affects your heart

Option 4: Identity Meditation

- Spend 10 minutes each day meditating on scriptures about your identity in Christ
- Suggested passages: Ephesians 1:3-14, Romans 8:31-39, 1 Peter 2:9-10
- Write down what God says about who you are

Accountability Questions

1. What is one area where you've been comparing yourself to others?
 2. How can this group pray for you specifically regarding envy?
 3. Who will you ask to hold you accountable this week?
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Prayer Exercise

Guided Prayer Time:

1. Confession (2-3 minutes of silence)
 - Confess specific areas of envy to God
 - Ask Him to reveal hidden envy you may not recognize
 2. Receiving God's Love (read Isaiah 43:1-4 again)
 - Sit quietly and receive God's love for you
 - Hear Him say: "You are precious in my sight and honored, and I love you"
 3. Intercession (pray for one another)
 - Pray for freedom from comparison
 - Pray for secure identity in Christ
 - Pray for hearts of gratitude and contentment
 4. Commitment (pray together)
 - Commit to walking in love rather than envy
 - Ask for the Holy Spirit's power to transform your heart
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Closing Thought

"What would it be like to live anchored in such deep, secure love? What would it be like to believe that you yourself have unconditional and non-comparative value? As a spiritual problem, envy requires a spiritual solution. To overcome envy, we need to work from a new vision of who we are as unconditional, beloved children of God."

Additional Scriptures

Direct Warnings About Envy

- **Proverbs 14:30**
 - **Proverbs 23:17**
 - **Proverbs 24:1**
 - **Proverbs 24:19**
 - **Ecclesiastes 4:4**
 - **James 3:14**
 - **James 3:16**
 - **1 Peter 2:1**
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Envy Listed Among Sinful Traits

- **Romans 1:29**
 - **Galatians 5:19–21**
 - **Titus 3:3**
 - **1 Timothy 6:4**
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Envy Contrasted With Love

- **1 Corinthians 13:4**
 - **James 4:1–2**
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Stories That Reveal Envy

- **Genesis 4:3–8** – Cain and Abel
 - **Genesis 26:12–14** – Philistines envy Isaac
 - **Genesis 37:11** – Joseph's brothers envy him
 - **1 Samuel 18:6–9** – Saul envies David
 - **1 Samuel 19:1** – Saul seeks to kill David
 - **Esther 5:13** – Haman envies Mordecai
 - **Matthew 27:18** – Religious leaders envy Jesus
 - **Mark 15:10** – Jesus delivered out of envy
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Wisdom About the Consequences of Envy

- **Job 5:2**
 - **Psalm 37:1**
 - **Psalm 37:7**
 - **Psalm 73:2–3**
 - **Proverbs 3:31**
 - **Proverbs 27:4**
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Scriptures That Teach the Opposite of Envy

(Contentment, humility, gratitude)

- **Philippians 2:3**
 - **Hebrews 13:5**
 - **1 Thessalonians 5:18**
 - **Romans 12:15**
 - **James 3:17**
 - **Colossians 3:12–13**
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