

Revolution – Love is Content

11/8/20

1 Corinthians 13:4

Sunday AM

Who here has ever heard of **fomo**? Fomo is the **fear of missing out**. It refers to having an apprehension that b/c you're out of the loop/uninformed, or worst of all, on the outside looking in, that you're being left out while someone else gets what you could've gotten. It's a sickness that often consumes us w/ discontentment.

Fomo was diagnosed in 1996 by Dan Herman, but it wasn't until the *rage of the digital age* that it took off w/ internet, cell phones, and social media. That's when we began to see the effects of this disease. I call it a disease b/c *fomo* negatively impacts lives. Recent studies show it's a leading cause of dissatisfaction having a detrimental effect on our physical/mental health as we show signs of extreme mood swings, loneliness, anxiety, reduced self-esteem, and increased pessimism/depression. Fomo directly impacts our sense of contentment causing us to be envious/jealous of others. It fosters an inability to be satisfied w/ where we are in life and of the blessings of others.

Funny – I'd never heard of fomo – I was missing out on the fear of missing out.

If you're just joining us, we're in a series entitled, **Love Revolution** – looking at the kind of love Paul speaks of in 1 Corinthians 13 that God puts in us thru the H.S. so that He can love others the way He loves us. Let me remind you that the love Paul is speaking of here is **no ordinary love** – it's God's *agape* love.

When the Bible speaks of love, it does so w/ precision. Koine Greek is depictive using (4) distinct words to explain love – *storge*, *eros*, *phileo*, and *agape*.

storge – refers to a friendly affection/preference focused on what you like about someone/something. FE – *I love football* or *I love sweet tea*.

eros – refers to a romantic, intimate kind of love

phileo – refers to a family/brotherly love – and is the height of human affection. It's a genuine love for others expressed in care/compassion for them.

agape – refers to a self-sacrificing or God-inspired love. It's a love that can only be expressed by God living in you loving thru you by the H.S.

This is the kind of love God gave to us thru Christ and that He expects us to give to others in Christ.

In **1 Corinthians 13:4**, Paul does more than tell us to *agape* love others, he explains what God's *agape* love looks like when put into motion. Today, we're going to look at (2) phrases that speak to *agape* contentment – *love does not envy* and *it is not self-seeking*.

*If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. **It does not envy**, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, **it is not self-seeking**, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices w/ the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails... Now these (3) remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.*

Notice – *agape* love isn't envious or self-seeking

IOW – God's love in me living thru me is always content w/ the blessings I have and is never out for itself, especially at the expense of others. **It's content!**

contentment is internal satisfaction which doesn't require changes in external circumstances. This is b/c a people who are content have learned to accept God's provision for them while not becoming envious of God's provision to others.

Contentment is being satisfied w/ what we have, who we are, and where we're going – trusting God's sovereign goodness to us and thru us.

I think of Matthew 6:25 – *I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat/drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?*

In essence, Jesus was telling us that we need to learn to be content w/ who we are and w/ what we have so that His love in us might live thru us. In fact, He's explains why we are to be content in vs. 32-33.

For the pagans run after these things, yet your Father in heaven knows that you need them. Instead, seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Matthew 6:32-33

Jesus was saying a lack of contentment is the result of operating in the flesh – which puts us in the same category as those who don't know God. Thus, we must be on guard against the attitude of – **whoever has the most toys wins!** While this epitomizes the cravings of the world, it will never satisfy our souls.

Did you know based on some of the latest global statistics that if you have a roof over your head and a meal on his table, that you are richer than 93% of the world's population. If you have (1) pair of shoes, your wealthier than 75% of all people in the world.

Solomon – *Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied w/ his income. This too is meaningless.* Ecclesiastes 5:10

In saying *agape love is not envious or self-seeking* – Paul was saying that God's love in us living thru us is never jealous of others but always excited for how God is moving in the lives of others.

This means if you have an envy/jealousy issue, it's b/c you have a spiritual issue. Either you don't know God, or you're choosing to operate in the flesh rather than in the Spirit. B/c the fruit of the Spirit is *agape* love and *agape* love is not envious/self-seeking.

I The **ROOT** of Envy

A cursory look into Scripture provides us w/ a plethora of envious examples: Cain envied Abel so he killed him; Jacob's sons envied Joseph, so they faked his death selling him into slavery; King Saul envied David so he threw a spear at him. It's as if every time envy appears in Scripture, we see deception, destruction, and violence fostered by a jealous sense of entitlement.

But envy isn't just an issue for the people in the Bible – envy is a disease we all have to deal w/ on a daily basis. And so, we'd all be wise to take note of the words of Solomon found in Proverbs 14:30:

It is healthy to be content, but envy will rot your bones. Pr. 14:30

IOW – envy is a cancer that if left untreated will eat you alive from the inside out.

Think of it this way – what color is envy? Ever heard – *Green w/ envy*? Some people think they look good in green, but no one looks good in envy. No matter what shade it might be, from lime green to pea green to army green – **envy is always an ugly gangrene.**

envy (*zeloo*) – is to earnestly desire what someone has.

It comes in 2 forms: (1) I like/want what they have – it's a **desire**. (2) I like/want what they have, I don't like they have it, so I'm going to take it – it's a **crime**.

This is the kind of envy/jealousy Solomon uncovered in 1 Kings 3:16-27 when one woman secretly exchanged her dead baby for a baby of a friend who was alive. Solomon's wise solution to discover which woman was the true mother was to cut the baby in ½ and give each woman a half. Of course, the envious woman agreed, while the true mother was willing to give up the baby to save his life. Envy was the issue.

We learn envy is making God's business our business thinking – you have it. God gave it, I don't like it – so I'm going to take it. No one is immune from it.

*For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find **disorder** and every evil practice.* James 3:16

Envy is a spiritual virus that'll rot your reasoning and ruin your relationships b/c it always leads you to resent somebody who has what you want.

II The **RESULTS** of Envy

B/c envy is resenting someone who has what you want, it tends to leave a mark on your life. It looks at someone who's beautiful and says how come them? At someone who's rich – why not me?

Envy paints the inside of the heart an ugly black.

A Un-**HEALTHY**

It is healthy to be content, but envy will rot your bones. Proverbs 14:30

Think of envy as bone cancer. **Rot** means *to decay* – In Hebrew culture life was found in the bones. Envy is a slow death of cancer rotting you from the inside out.

- It kills contentment
- It slowly siphons the joy out of your life
- It abducts the ability to enjoy what you have
- It rots your reasoning – ruins your relationships

B Un-**WISE**

Resentment kills a fool and envy slays the simple.

Job 5:2

Envy is a characteristic of a fool – one who is empty headed; and the destination of envy is always death.

kill is the word *murder*. Meaning, envy will murder your reasoning, your relationships, and even your life. Envy will kill anything associated w/ you. In using **slay** Job placed an emphasis on the means of death – envy is a capital offense that puts you on death row.

C Un-LOVING

Love does not envy... and is not self-seeking.

Love looks through a telescope; envy looks through a microscope. *Unknown*

Let me say it another way – it's impossible to envy someone and to love them too. To envy someone is to love yourself and to despise the other person.

III The REMEDY of Envy

In Matthew 20, Jesus shared a parable about man who hired a group of men early in the day to work for him. Later in the day, he hired a 2nd group and paid them the same wages. At the end of the day, the men who worked all day complained they were being treated unfairly although they received what they'd been promised. I believe this story offers a remedy for envy.

A Stop COMPARING

The guys in Jesus' story couldn't help but compare their plight w/ the blessings of the other guys. But comparison always leads either to pride – I am better than you; or to envy – I want what you have.

There's a fun story behind the 1st hole-in-one on the 12th hole at Augusta during the Masters. In 1947, Claude Harmon and Ben Hogan were paired together. While they were good friends, their personalities were worlds apart. Harmon was outgoing/charismatic, and Hogan was professional/business-like. Harmon was 1st on the tee when he stepped up and hit the ball into the cup for the 1st ever hole-in-one on that hole. The crowd went wild; but Hogan never said a word. Not high-5, no congratulatory shake of the hand, or tip of the hat – no acknowledgment of any kind. He simply stepped up to his ball, and in a business-like manner, hit it a few feet from the hole. As they walked to the green w/ the crowd roaring for Harmon, Hogan marked his ball, surveyed his putt, and stroked the ball into the cup for the birdie. As they made their way to the 13th tee, w/ the crowd still buzzing, Hogan finally spoke, "Claude, that's the first '2' I've ever made on that hole."

Hogan's story teaches us that if we get so caught up in the success of others, that we will likely fail to focus on the opportunities before us. Stop comparing!

B Stop COMPLAINING

Complaining compounds envy. It's like throwing gas on the fire. It's allowing the gangrene to spread.

They grumbled b/c they didn't think it was fair and that they deserved better. Listen. Gripping/complaining are the 1st signs of an envious life. If you'll stop and listen to yourself you can determine if your envious.

Parent PSA – the worst thing you can ever do for you kids is to let them get away w/ complaining thinking it will get them their way. It WON'T! We cripple our kids when we tolerate/give into their complaining.

C Start Being GRATEFUL

It is better to be satisfied w/ what you have than to be always be wanting something else. Ecclesiastes 6:9

Be content w/ what you were promised. The men in this story should've walked up and given the other guys high 5's and said, "Good for you."

Rejoice w/ those who rejoice. Romans 12:15

When your friend drives up in the car of your dreams, can you rejoice? When someone you don't like gets a break can you rejoice? You have a choice. You can **REJOICE** or **RESENT** – you can **LOVE** or **LUST**. but to rejoice is the only godly option.

True satisfaction in life comes not from getting something bigger and better, but from learning to enjoy what we already have.

D Start Reading **SCRIPTURE**

Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. 1 Peter 2:1–3

It's simple – God's Word in your heart puts your heart and mind on notice to the schemes of Satan, the inclinations of flesh and the motivations of the world.

Let me close w/ a true story. Have you ever heard of Henrietta Garret? Ms. Garret was lonely 81-yr. old widow who died on 11/16/1930. While there was nothing extraordinary about her life, her death ignited the most fantastic case of inheritance litigation in U.S. history as she left no will to her \$17 mil. estate. At the time of her death, she had only one known relative, a second cousin and few friends. However, more than 26k people from 47 states and 29 countries, made attempts to prove relationship to her and claim a part of her estate. In their efforts to obtain a piece of her estate, people committed perjury, faked family records, changed their names, altered data in Family Bibles, and even concocted tales of illegitimacy. As result, 12 were confined, 10 sentenced to jail. 2 committed suicide, and 3 were murdered.

POINT – Ms. Henrietta's story is a story of greed, envy, and discontentment. It's what the Bible calls covetousness. In the 10 Commandments, God said, "You shall not covet your neighbor's house, you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his manservant or maidservant, nor his ox, his mule, nor anything that's your neighbor's." Let me give you a modern-day translation would be, "You shall not covet your neighbor's house or wife, neither his job, his business, his Mercedes Benz, or his John Deere tractor."

May I go back to something I said earlier. The only way we can produce agape love is to know Christ as our Savior and to walk under His influence as our Lord – this is the only way our lives can bear the fruit of the Spirit. Remember – the fruit of the Spirit is *agape* love – and *agape* love is never envious or self-seeking.