



SEVEN DEADLY SINS

SEVEN DEADLY SINS: ENVY

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Genesis 4:3-16

Doxa church is taking a look at the seven deadly sins. Commonly brushed off and rarely considered for our own lives, each sin presents a unique sickness in our hearts that can only be remedied by Jesus and a battle only winnable through the Spirit's empowerment. Join us for this eight week series on these deadly sins and their antidotes found in Christ. Visit doxa-church.com for service times or more info on how we make disciples in the everyday stuff of life.

"Now, Adam knew Eve his wife and she conceived and bore Cain saying, 'I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord.' And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. The Lord said to Cain, 'Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it.' Cain spoke to Abel, his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. Then the Lord said to Cain, 'Where is Abel your brother?' He said, 'I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?' And the Lord said, 'What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.' Cain said to the Lord, 'My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.' Then the Lord said to him, 'Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.' And the Lord put a mark on Cain, lest anyone who found him should attack him. Then Cain went away from the presence of the Lord and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden." This is the word of the Lord. You may be seated.

All right. Good morning everyone. We got some energy this morning? Oh man, I'm gonna have to rely on you. I'll be honest. I've been coaching flag football lately and you know I'm not Nick Saban or anything. I like to think maybe I'm Pete Carroll or Bill Belichick, but the truth is, the age is five to seven, and what that means is most of my coaching is me telling the five year olds to get off the ground or to stop

chasing butterflies. So I like to think I'm drawing up amazing plays, but really I'm just babysitting. So you can pray for me. I'll need your energy this morning. We are in Genesis chapter four, and I wanna get right into it because we have a lot of ground to cover. So I'm gonna pray for us and we'll get started.

Well, Lord Jesus, I'm thankful for our 11:15 crowd. I'm thankful for their energy. I pray that my voice will hold up and I pray that man, we are, we're coming to a text that is so foundational for us. And so I pray for our hearts to be open. I pray for our minds to be receptive. I pray that anything that you want communicated, Lord God, I pray that I do that and I pray that anything that comes from me, would you just discard that Lord Jesus. And when my friends really understand what it means to wrestle with the things of their heart that are causing their brokenness, and would you be good news to them this morning? Love you. Praise you. In His name. Amen.

All right. I'll begin with a story to just show you a little bit, demonstrate a little bit about, you know, who Little Eddie was as a 10 or 11 year old. So in the summers I used to help clean houses with my aunt. My aunt was a housekeeper, and she would travel all around cleaning houses. And so I'd jump in the car with her. And you know, as a 10 year old, you don't do a lot, you just empty trashes, mostly, try not to get in the way. But we would go around these beautiful houses all around the Bay Area, which is where I'm from, and one area is a place called Hillsborough. If you've ever lived there, you know, or if you just heard of it, it's an amazing place. Beautiful mansions. And my favorite thing as a 10 year old was to go to these big houses. Cause I never got to see these massive, amazing houses. But this one house in particular, brick house on the hill, reminds me a little bit of like the Home Alone house. You know, they have 500 people living in one house. That's like unrealistic, but this place you could fit all of those people in there. Amazing house. And I'd walk in and you'd see the beautiful mahogany wood, and you see the marble countertops in the kitchen and the five dishwashers they had for several, they had so many appliances, their cheese boards, their credenzas and sconces and pillars and all these amazing stuff, right? Amazing. I'm wandering through, I'm like, Oh my gosh, look at this place. And then my favorite thing to do was to go to the kids room, because if there was a kid around my age, I gotta go see it. You know, they got Legos, What do they got? So I'm going up there and I'm wandering, in this room, I'll tell you, it was unbelievable. This place, this room. I imagine it as a 10, 11. It was bigger than my house now. It was huge. The bed was huge. Cal King mattress and unbelievable decor. Shelves full of Star Wars figurines and WWF wrestlers and Legos galore. They had more toys than anyone I could imagine. It was amazing. And then there's the desk. The desk was amazing. It was beautiful, It was huge, massive. It looked as if Shakespeare himself had sat at this desk and penned many of his great works. It was so beautiful. So I wander up to this desk and there on lies a binder, just closed like this. Of course, my curiosity. Gotta open it. Open it. First page. And what do I see? Cards. Now I used to collect cards. Football, basketball, baseball cards as a kid. These were Pokemon cards. And this isn't like, you know, this is the original. So this is mid nineties, so this is a long time ago. So I'm looking through them and I open it up and I see Pokemon cards. And what do I see? The rarest of rare Pokemon cards, right smack dab in the middle of the pages. It was beautiful. And all of my signals went off. The coveting began to ensue. It was flooded with, with pride about what I might, people might say about me if I had this, but certainly covetousness. In fact, I actually went through the old, my old files. I actually found a live look at me staring at this card. My aunt took this picture. I am green eyes, just yes, good. Rubbing my hands like a villain. Now, I don't really, I wasn't a thief, you know, it wasn't my thing as a kid. But I will say in this moment, every desire in me was to steal that card because everything was flooding through me. And do you know what I did? I took the card, I slipped it out of the page, put it right in my front pocket, went about life, business as usual, kept cleaning, emptied the trashes, went to the next house. That was that, went home, slept like a baby, slept like an absolute baby. And then my aunt knocks on the door early in the morning. Adrenaline floods in. She busted in the room. Eddie, did you steal some card from this house yesterday? My answer? No, not a chance. Do you know what card I'm talking about? Oh yeah, I

do. I know, I remember seeing it. I remember seeing it. Well, well, where is it? I don't know. Okay, I believe you, but I have to check all your stuff so that way I can tell them that I know you didn't for sure steal it. You understand right? Of course. So she begins to look through my stuff. And by the way, I'm 10, 11 years old. I'm not super good at hiding stuff. She goes right into my bag, zip opens up whatever first, boom, there it is. There's the card staring, all my shame staring at me right in the face. And so then she of course proceeds to scream at me for lying, mostly barely angry at me for everything I did. And I'm like, Oh my gosh. And I just felt so ashamed of myself. I was embarrassed. I laid in bed for three days. I didn't go to any houses with her. I was just waiting to go back home. All of the shame. I had envy. That's envy to be sure. And my envy wasn't a symptom of really needing the card. I didn't need the card. The card really was a symptom, and my envy was a symptom of my dissatisfaction with my own life. See, I wanted a better life. I was deeply unsatisfied. I longed for what I had never been given. I want, I didn't just want the card. I wanted everything. I wanted the house. I wanted the televisions. I wanted the room, the bed. I wanted the sconces and the end tables and the five dishwashers. I wanted everything. I wanted it. But I didn't just want the card. I wanted to be the kind of person that would get the card.

Envy that is shown is always sort of the tip of the iceberg. And underneath there's this well of internal strife and dissatisfaction and discontentment with our own lives. You see, envy is not only about wanting someone else's things, it's about oftentimes getting what we feel we need in order to be who we think we deserve to be. Envy is a longing for what we need to be the person we think we deserve to be. When we look into the lives of others, we deem what they have, we deserve. And we all do this from time to time. Okay? Don't look at me with judgment. I'm not gonna rob you out here. Okay? You might think Eddie's a thief. No, come on. I've changed, man. I did my time. I've moved on. Okay? But we do live in an age of envy. We envy all sorts of stuff. And don't lie, career envy, kitchen envy, family envy, abs envy, abs. Come on, abs, dinner envy, even vacation envy. We live in this world. And what's more telling is how modern culture is making envy worse, not better. Ethan Cross a psychology professor. He says that envy is being taken at extreme as we're overwhelmed with images of Photoshop lives. In these Photoshop lives, they exert a toll on us, the likes of which we have never experienced in the history of our species. And it's not particularly pleasant. Now, Envy's been around for a long time. But the pervasiveness and the way we receive envy today is really intense. It's really intense because of this thing. Makes it really easy to just grasp onto envy very quickly. All is not lost, though, I promise. See, with each of these seven deadly sins, there is an antidote to it. But in order to receive an antidote, in order to solve the hole in our hearts that we try to fill with stuff, we're gonna have to pay particular attention, and we're gonna have to take control over our lives in a way that maybe we're not used to. Okay? So let's unpack envy. We'll look at what it is, where it hides, and then we're gonna discover how to eradicate it from our hearts. Okay?

First, what is envy? Now you can look at Webster's dictionary and you can read the verse, the verse, read the definition on envy. That's great. What I did was I looked at it through a biblical lens, took that definition and sort of built out one for you. Okay? Here's what I got. Envy is a feeling of discontent or ill will because of another's advantages, traits, or possessions. It is fundamentally about getting what others have in order to be the person we feel we deserve to be. This also can manifest in something like a resentful dislike for someone, even a hatred for other people, of someone who has something you desire, right? So, but in order for us to get the full understanding of envy, it's gonna be helpful for us to look at perhaps the most significant instance of envy ever recorded in the Bible. And we find that in Genesis chapter four. Okay? Now, in this passage, Cain and Abel are the brothers, they're the children of Adam and Eve, and they are now living amongst them, him, outside of the garden and trying to be in relationship with them. Verse three.

"In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground. And Abel also brought the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his

offering. But for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. And the Lord said to Cain, 'Why are you angry? Why has your face fallen?'

Okay, so we see here that God says he has <gulp> no regard for Cain's gift. And with our modern Western sentiments, we think, Oh, geez, how could a God do that? How could he, how could he have no regard for a gift? He went and plucked his finest plants out of the ground and gave it to him? I mean, after all, we're all parents, some of us are parents, right? If you are a parent, you understand that your kids like to draw you stuff, they often times will draw you different drawings. And when they're really young, they're not so good drawings, okay? That just is what it is, okay? But they love you and it's awesome. So they bring you gifts. And if two of my kids brought me these gifts in the form of drawings, I would look at 'em and go, Hmm, that's great. I love you. I wouldn't take the other kids, look at it and go, Oh my gosh, this is horrible. Try again. You need to go back to school. Like, I'm not gonna do that to my kids, right? But God, he's not just looking at the outward, He's looking at something deeper. He's looking at what's going on under the surface. The, not the outward behavior, but the inward disposition. That's what he's looking at. So Cain's reaction of anger in a fallen face was only a symptom of what was going on inside of him. Okay? But God knew that envy and anger lurked within Cain. And so that's why he has no regard for his gift. Now, you might say, still, I don't care if two of my kids draw me a gift or draw me a gift, and then you hand it to me, I'm gonna take 'em and I'm gonna love 'em both. Hmm. Let's say two of my kids come to me and one of 'em comes to me and they're, they love me. And here it is, Daddy, I'm so thankful for you Happy Father's there, whatever. And they hand me this gift, Ah, thank you so much. But when I went to the other kid's gift, let's say this kid seemed a little uneasy, and this kid's eyes were darting back and forth, and this kid was staring at how much love I just gave to the other kid. And when they drew their gift, they drew it in such a way that it would be better than that gift. And so when they presented it, they weren't looking at me, they were looking at them. Now you would say, Well, I'd still accept the gift. Here's what I would do. I would stop 'em and say, Hey babe, I appreciate that you're bringing me this, but hey, I just want you to know that the way you're bringing this to me is unnecessary. I don't want you to draw something for me because you're jealous of the way they're drawing it. I don't want you to draw something for me because you want to be better than your sibling. I want you to draw something from me because you love me and because you care about me and you want relationship with me. That's why I want you to draw it. So why don't you draw me something with love that you care about, and don't worry about what they're thinking. That's what I would do. And I think that's what God's doing here. God is doing this. See, Cain's offering was not about pleasing God. It was about being the best. It was about getting the affection that the, from the Father, the way he saw Abel get the affection from the Father. He wanted something he perceived Abel to have, which took his heart off of God and put it on what was happening. The gift became less about God and more about himself.

Have you ever done something that seemed really good, but you did it with the wrong heart? Be honest. You ever did something really good? Like let's say you clean the house and the house was filthy and you spent three, four hours cleaning the whole house and it's amazing, beautiful. And then nobody noticed, not a soul. I mean, in fact, your husband comes in, he kicks his shoes off and he turns the game on. And it's just like, Huh? Like, did you notice the kids cereal already all on the floor? No one cares. Now, didn't you clean the house so that it was clean? Wasn't that why you did it? Or did you kind of clean it so people would notice? Did you kind of clean it so that people would give you credit for what happened? Now, this is a lighthearted example, but it is, it is true. We can often do good things with the wrong motives and the wrong heart. And that's what God is pointing out here in this text. This is Cain's heart, and we also experience it. Look at verse seven. Let's continue.

God says to Cain, "'If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it.'" Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And

when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him." Uh oh. "Then the Lord said to Cain, 'Where is Abel, your brother?' And he said, 'I don't know. Am I my brother's keeper?'"

One thing leads to another, and before they know it, Cain's envy becomes murder. Just like that. So God comes out and asks the question, Where is Abel? As if he doesn't know the answer, right? You know, God actually will often ask us rhetorical questions that he knows the answers to, to get to show, to show us something about our hearts. That's what he'll often do. And so he asks, he asks, Cain, "Where's Abel?" Not that he doesn't know, he's trying to get to know, I know you killed him. What were you thinking inside? That's what he is trying to get him to do, right? He'll ask questions like this of us, like, "Did you really think you should have said that?" God knows the answer. Do you really think you should have maybe made that move? Do you really think you should have talked to the person that way? Do you really think that you should have taken that job? Or, or he'll say something like exactly what we just read here. Do you think? Or, Where is Abel? Where's your brother? Oh my gosh. He knows the answer to that question.

His envy led to anger that led to murder. But then he says something interesting. He says, Or, or God says to him, Where's Abel? And he says, I don't know. I don't know. I don't know. Kind of sounds similar to the way I, I answered with my card there. Where's, where's the card? Eddie? Where did you take, I don't know. I don't know. Protecting ourselves. His envy leads to anger that leads to murder. That eventually leads to more lying. Now, we may think envy is the least of our problems. We may think that envy is just this one thing that we have. I kind of want what they want and we kind of make light of it. I want that car, I want that Tesla, blah, blah, blah, right? But envy is oftentimes the tip of the ice break. It's far more serious than we might have thought. Now, you might not go off and murder somebody. I hope you wouldn't do that because of a seed of envy. But envy might lead you to other places that cause you to hurt other people and hurt yourself. For instance, envy may cause you to lie to people around you to protect your ego. It may cause you to tell half truths in order to make yourself look better or feel better than you actually are. Envy may cause you to gossip or to slander those you envy. You might even gossip or lie to take 'em down a peg just to cost 'em a little bit of that social equity that they built up. This all could really lead to then your resentment and bitterness that rules you in your heart and creates a spirit of negativity or even a lack of joy in your life.

Envy is an insidious sin that spirals outta control and becomes something more. This quote summarizes envy in its worst form in our heart, I think. And this is by Patricia Polledri. She wrote a book called "Envy In the Everyday Life", it says this "Envy is wanting to destroy what someone else has. Not just wanting it for yourself, but wanting other people not to have it. It's a deep-rooted issue where you are very, very resentful of another person's wellbeing - whether that be their looks, their position or the car they have. It is silent, destructive, underhand - it is pure malice and pure hatred." Now, that's what envy is. But you might be at a spot where you're thinking, "Okay, like, I'm following you. I'm tracking. I still don't know if envy is my biggest thing. I still don't know that." Well, let's look at a few places it hides.

Now, just to be clear, it hides a lot of places, but I'm gonna look at three specific ones I think might be helpful. First place I think envy might hide is this idea of entitlement. Entitlement is when we say I deserve what they have. I don't just want what they have, I deserve what they have. Now, again, envy is just about wanting things you don't have, sometimes it's about becoming a person you're not. Okay. And that's what we do with entitlement. You don't just want that person's vacation. You might want it, but you also wanna be the sort of person that would take that vacation. You don't just want their career. You might look at their career and wow, then geez, he's really climbing up fast. He's getting promoted really quick. Wow, he's already off to the next level. Good for him. You don't just want the career though, you want to be the sort of person that could have that career. Or you might look at a marriage and you say, man, look at their spouse, look at their husband, look at their wife. I want that. You don't just want their spouse though. You wanna be the kind of person that could attract a spouse like that. It's

about wanting to be this image of who you think you deserve to be. And that's entitlement. But at its root entitlement is not just wanting stuff that you feel like you deserve. Entitlement is a dissatisfaction with who God has made you. You aren't actually mad at the person you envy. Just to be clear. You're actually really mad at God. God's the one who grants these things and envy says, "God, if you're real, of course I deserve better than this." You believe you're entitled to be someone different and God is supposed to make you that way, and he didn't. And so sometimes you gotta go get it yourself. Okay? Entitlement.

Envy also hides in social media usage. Now, a couple weeks ago, someone asked me, "Why do we talk about social media so much now that you're here?" <Laugh> Okay, fair enough. Who here has used social media in the last 24 hours? By a show of hands? How about in the last 72 hours? Okay, how about last month? Okay, so most of us, okay, most of us, some of you are monks, Good for you. We basically live lives on social media. Even a quick glance at Facebook or a a quick, you know, scroll through TikTok. We live lives and we are in a digital forum society. And so what we do on our forums is not divorced from who we are. Social media and apps like Instagram actually were designed for just that. Social media. But as social media's evolved, the apps have been designed to become less social and more media. So they're less interactive and more performative. Which means that, as you well know, we will take carefully curated versions of our lives and place them online for people to accept or like, or dislike. That's what we do. The problem with that is it's causing unconscionable amount of envy in people's lives. Serious lives, seriously. And it's not just college and teen girls that are being affected by this, although disproportionately they are being hammered by this undeclared catastrophe. They are being caused to envy at a rate that is causing higher rates of depression, higher rates of suicide in them. But it's also happening to everybody. All of us. Our phones have become what Moya Sarnier calls envy amplification devices. This device here is designed for you to want whatever it's showing. That's the game. It used to be that it was a utility for us to serve, to serve us in order to make phone calls and to connect us deeper. Now it's designed to market to you so you want whatever it shows. The problem with that is that if a heart is wicked above all else, who can understand it as it says in the Old Testament, then we're more apt to sort of fall into the trap of wanting to obey whatever we're, whatever we're seeing on here and envy more. Phones, social media, Instagram in particular are designed to get you to desire.

Now, this might not be news to us. In fact, I actually think it's not news. I think you already know the answer to that. I think you know that what you see online from people, if you're old enough, is fake or at least the best versions of themselves. And I think you all, you probably know you do the same thing, or you'll post the worst things of yourself on purpose as a performance to get people to engage you. Either way, it's a performance and it's more media than it is social. I think you know that. But I think this quote from Moya Sarnier is really interesting cuz I think we're still affected by it. "What I notice is that most of us can intellectualize what we see on social platforms - we know that these images and narratives that are presented aren't real, we can talk about it and rationalize it - but on an emotional level, it's still pushing buttons. If those images or narratives tap into what we aspire to, but what we don't have, then it becomes very powerful."

Social media is a absolutely pervasive form of envy. There's another place envy can hide though. And that's in self pity. That's in self pity. Now, you might be thinking what? Self pity doesn't look necessarily like a big vice. I mean, people just feel bad for themselves. I mean, I don't understand. Hmm. It could be a, it could be a hidden form of envy. Well, what if you see what other people have and you begin to feel bad for yourself that you don't have them? That could be a form of, that could be a form of self pity and a form of envy. Whoa, that person got that promotion? Huh? I thought I was up for that. Oh really? They got into that school? Oh, geez. I didn't know they were smart enough for that. Oh, they're getting engaged. Seriously. Oh, they're pregnant again? What's even more crazy is that society is starting to

develop something because of the, because of our phones. It's starting to develop this idea and not that we just envy other people that we actually begin to envy our former selves. What if you're no longer who you were and you've begun to envy your former self? What if you could in theory, not that you all do this? Go back and look at the last six or seven years of your life and scroll through and go, "Oh man, look at that trip. Oh wow, that was awesome. Looking at your pictures. Oh man, remember that fishing trip? I caught a big one that day. Oh man, look man, man, I was so thin back then." <Laugh> No one's ever done that, huh? Oh wow. I used to be able to fit in those pants. Oh man, look at her man. You know what? I missed my shot with her. I'll never get that chance again. Or you know what? I never should have moved. Life was good there. Self pity as envy manifests in things like complaining and frustration and anxiety. But it's a real trick of Satan for you to then go back and envy of former life that you've had, by the way that you personally curated to look awesome. And is there any difference between that person and this person? No. That's the human heart at work. Complaining, frustration, forms of faux depression. All too often we can hide our self pity and depression when we're not clinically depressed. And we'll say things like, Oh, I'm just upset. I'm just melancholy. Why? Oh, I'm just upset. Is it because you don't, you didn't get the promotion? Oh no, I just, we're hiding it. And you know what's funny is this plays itself out in the passage. Look at verse 11. God's about to talk to Cain. He says this.

"And now Cain, you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.' Cain then said to the Lord, 'My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.'"

You see what our friend Cain here does? It's actually quite clever. You see what he does? Here's what he doesn't do. He doesn't repent. He doesn't take responsibility. He doesn't vow to change or ask for forgiveness. He doesn't do any of that. What does he do? He feels bad for himself. He pouts. He focuses in on all of the causes, the ramifications of his sin, instead of actually the sin itself. And then he begins to twist reality. Oh, whoa is me. Whoever finds me will kill me. Did God say that? Verse 15 says,

"The Lord said to him, 'Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.'"

God was interested in Cain's protection even though he had punished him for his sin. Question for you. When you're caught in sin, do you blame shift? Do you cry? Do you begin to focus all on on how much your sin has hurt you? Do you begin to draw attention to your emotions instead of what you actually did? And then do you begin to muck up the truth and fuzz the facts about what really happened? And really just pay attention on, Oh, I'm just so sad right now and I can't believe this is happening and oh my goodness, like there's so much going on in my life and I just, it's just about and it becomes about you and about you and about you. It happens, doesn't it? It happens to all of us. We're all guilty of this. At its core then self pity isn't just feeling bad for someone cause they didn't get something. Self pity is discontentment with God. It is the belief that we are also a better judge of what people get and what they should get when they shouldn't get. And that way God's giving them that stuff? That belongs in my, my house. Why? Why can't God see this? It's discontentment with God. And by the way, dissatisfaction with the sovereignty of God is not the mark of a sanctified believer. It's not the mark of a sanctified person, yet we live our lives this way. Okay? That's what it is. We need an antidote fast. Okay? Cuz that's, that's a lot. What is the antidote to envy?

Well, it's in two parts. Check it out. The antidote to envy is contentment that leads to service. First Timothy 6 says that there is great gain in godliness with contentment, but let's be honest, how hard is it to be content? Almost impossible, right? I mean, when we're envious of others, we start chasing the highs and then all of a sudden they're telling us about their wonderful trip and then they're, we're, we're reading about it on the text message. We're seeing it in an email or it's a team meeting and they're

describing it. We're, Man, I wish I went there. I wish I owned that. I wish I had that person. Oh, they've got a family that's so great, I can't find somebody. Or Wow, they don't have a family. That's so great. I'm so tired, I wish I could be them. Trust me, it doesn't matter which side of it you're on, you're not gonna like it. I'm just kidding. <Laugh> You'll find some reason to be discontent and upset. Then we start looking at the highs of everyone. Oh wow, they're going to that trip, they're gonna that restaurant. Look at that date they're on. Oh my gosh. And we start looking at the highs. And then we'll look back at our lives and we start looking at our former highs. Oh, remember that vacation? Remember when I was in shape? Remember when we had that dinner? Oh man, that was so great. And then life becomes about living for all of the highs and avoiding the lows. Are you there with me? The issue is, 98% of your life is neither of those things. It's the every day. So at 2:00 PM on a Tuesday afternoon in a team meeting on Zoom, you sit there and you're in front of the computer and you go, You know what? This sucks. 5:30 PM Saturday night, you're not out partying. You know where you are? Softball game the kids, you know what this sucks. Sunday morning, same old deal getting ready for church here, preacher that's crazy. <Laugh> This sucks every day. But in six weeks I got that vacation coming, then things will turn. That road trip's coming, Oh man, Disneyland, holy cow. Oh it's gonna be great. And then you get there and it's not so awesome because really your bodies are designed with these dopamine releases and this serotonin, a serotonin state of wellbeing, dopamine, right as you're trying to get to this point. And when you get there, all of it goes away. And so now you gotta recreate another high in order to re, re, and you become an addict for serotonin and dopamine to get to the next high, the next, next high, next high. And they never come cuz you always need another one. The world is designed to provoke envy outta you. And your heart has such a sick problem that it loves the envy. But here's what you need to do, okay? You might be thinking, Well what do I do then?

A friend of mine or not, well I wish he was a friend of mine, a man who I met with once and he was awesome to me. His name is John R Burke. He gave me this quote, said it to me, he said this. You need to arrange your days in such a way that you experience every day contentment with God. And by the way, you get to decide this. No one else, no one will arrange your days for you. Not your boss, not your spouse, not your pastor, not your friends, not your mom, nobody. You are in charge of arranging your days in such a way that you have every day contentment with God. Anybody thinking that sounds really nice? Well, I wanted to give you four things to realize about envy in its antidotes that I think can really help you sort of put this into practice. Okay?

So here's four things. First, recognize that all money, all success, money and possessions that people receive is God's choice. God decides if they got what they have, God decides what you have. It's God's choice, not yours, not theirs. God's. Do you believe that God is in control? Do you believe God is sovereign and is a loving father who gives? Do you believe the Bible when it says the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away? Blessed be the name of the Lord as Job says. Do we believe these things? Recognize that all success, money and possessions that people have is God's choice.

Second, recognize that there is a war for your time and money and you will have to decide where they go. Listen, you're not gonna default into being content with God, I'm just gonna tell you right now, you're never going to just end up, Oh you know what? I haven't thought about it much in eight years and I'm just really content with the Lord. That's not how it works. You end up envious, greedy, lustful, slothful. That's how we end up. Gluttonous. Ruffled. Proud. That's the default mode. The default mode here is consumers. We end up with lots of stuff, lots of stuff. Go to people's house. That looks good. I think I'll go buy that. We got all this stuff to show for it. That's where we end up. Recognize there's a war for your time and money and you've gotta decide where it goes. And so if you wanna arrange your days in such a way that you have everyday contentness with God, you've gotta figure out what you have to stop doing in order to do that. You can't say yes to everything, then you need to figure out what you

need to start doing. You've gotta order your life in a way that you can go 50 in a 55 with Jesus instead of 80 in a 55, which is like the pa, the, that's the pace of the east side here.

Third thing, recognize that ultimate satisfaction comes by uniting people to Jesus Christ. Go figure. Your best satisfaction comes from having what God has given to you, not what he's given to someone else. And you know what he's given you? A mission. Matthew 28 says, Go forth and make disciples. Real satisfaction comes with living in sync with who God's made you to be and what he's made you to do. And what he's made you to do is not to buy a bunch of stuff. He's made you to make a bunch of disciples. Now, if you were to look at your life and take an audit, just be straight with me, disciples, stuff where you at? I think I'm mostly here. I got a lot of stuff. God's called us to make disciples. And your ultimate happiness is not found in being someone else, it's found in doing what God's called you to do, which is to make disciples.

Fourth thing, recognize that serving those you're tempted to envy is agreeing with God's plan for that person. Friends serving will kill envy in your heart like nothing else. I tell you what, because you, you want what they have, right? You want what they have. So what if you serve them? And what if you help them get more of that what you envied? Wonder If you saw that they fell in amazing wealth and wonder if you helped them get more wealthy? What if you helped them serve more, helped them become, you know, build their confidence so they can do whatever it is they call, they're called to do. What if you serve them into doing that? You've seen the blessing. You're acknowledging the blessing that God has put on their lives. You're agreeing with that blessing and then you're gonna help them get more. You're committed to helping them become who God's created them to be. I wonder if you did that? After all, First Corinthians 4 says, "What do you have that you did not receive anyway? Everything we have is from God." Everything they have is from God. Why do you want something else that God's given them? Why don't you help 'em get more?

Proverbs 14:30 says a tranquil heart gives life to the flesh, but envy makes the bones rot. A tranquil heart comes from contentment and service and peace that comes from being with Jesus. And your bones rotting comes from doom scrolling or what scientists are now calling hate scrolling. We'll scroll through our feeds, hating on every person that scrolls by. And tell me something. How do you feel when you get done with that? You feel like you have life, you're happy? Or are you in a worse mood because the Imago Dei in you wants better for you? It was Jesus. When Jesus was most content and serving other people, that's when he was most in sync with the purpose the Father had given him. John chapter 13, when Jesus, you know this story, I'll read it to you.

"When Jesus had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, 'Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should also do just as I have done to you.'"

Jesus slowly and patiently lived in sync with the will of his father. He gently and contentedly served. He was going 50 in a 55. He might have even been going 40 in a 55. And many of us would go by Jesus and be honking at him. Get outta the way. Come on, get outta the way. I got stuff to do. I gotta buy stuff. I got a 401k to fund. And Jesus would be, "Ah, I think I'm gonna serve some people in the slow lane." Jesus wasn't over committed. He was perfectly committed. He was contentedly serving others not for recognition so other people would know who he is or that they knew he was the coming Messiah. But because he was connected to the Father, because that's what the Father willed him to do. As a result, he could love his friends without any conditions and enemies as well. He washed Judas Iscariot's feet that day. Jesus set an example for us in serving others. He wants us to also, to do that. And by the way, Jesus wasn't envious. He had a servant like disposition and was completely contented to do so. Do you feel lost in your walk right now? Your walk with Jesus? If you do consider your servant attitude. Do you give

more or do you serve more or do you give and serve more or do you take more? Are you a giver or a taker? Do you wash more feet or do you stick out your feet to be washed?

One last thing. Envy in us deep down is a failure to see the biggest act of service of all time. That is that Jesus Christ came down into the world as a gift for sinners like us. That anyone who would believe in him, in his wonderful life, his torture, his death and his beautiful resurrection would receive his righteousness on them and they could go free living without this idea that they need to be more than they actually are, which is what envy is. Jesus says, I came not to be served but to serve and give my life a ransom for many. When we feel that in our gut, what we are gonna experience finally, is that we're finally free to contently serve those who we are attempted to envy. But I don't think it's your service by the way, that conquers envy. In fact, it's absolutely not. It is service that conquers envy, but it's actually Jesus' service. You see, Jesus Christ dies on this cross. He goes willingly. He lovingly, he dies and then he offers us a free gift. And if our minds are off looking at the next high of someone else's life trying to catch a little of that dopamine or serotonin release and we're so overcommitted and so busy that we don't have time for the greatest gift God has ever given anyone, has ever given, then we're really playing right into the wickedness of our own hearts. Jesus has a far better gift, and he's not. He's not telling you, I hate what you're offering me in this life. He's telling you, Hey, why are you looking over there at him? Why are you offering up that gift? Listen, don't worry about what he's doing in my relationship with him. I want you to love me, I'm not worried about this. I want you. Go back to your life, kill the envy in you. I'm gonna grant you the Holy Spirit's power over you to do that. And you come back and engage me in a way that lovingly is for me. I want you, envy wants other people. That's why service and contentment can kill it. But it's his service, not ours. Let's pray.

Jesus, it's so hard to kill the green eyed monster in ourselves sometimes, Lord. We long for other things, but deep down because we're made in the image and likeness of God, we're longing for you to fill that hole. But we're just distracted, all these different things around us as bells and whistles. So Lord, I pray for a moment we might be focused. That you are not found like Elijah thought in the fires or in the earthquakes or in the rushing winds. But Lord, you are found in the close and quiet moments of contentment and of service. So Lord whisper to us all how much you love us and care for us. For here, those are my friends here that don't know you. They will not be able to, they have not been able to hear you yet. I pray that you lovingly open their minds that they might be receptive to your word, that you're a good God who loves them and desires what's best for them. And as we go to respond, Lord, let us remember you are a righteous God who gave us a wonderful example, but you also paid our penalty and we can be thankful and gracious for that. We love you and praise you in his name. Amen.

