



Day thirty-five

For the next 40 days we are offering us all a challenge to consider 40 things that are sucking the life out of us. The challenge is to examine these and through confronting God's word, his Spirit, and his community of faith as we seek to be filled with his life and his love again. At the conclusion of each challenge there will be an opportunity to engage about this with another person and/or the larger community.

Today the thing we are asking us to explore giving up is:

envy.

Confronting the text

*A tranquil mind gives life to the flesh,
but passion makes the bones rot, (Prov. 13:40).*

Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another, (Gal. 5:26).

Confronting my self with God

In Greek, the word envy is a feeling word which speaks of our feelings of displeasure when we see or hear of the advantage or prosperity of others.

Pleasure is an idea of contentment, satisfaction, happiness, and enjoyment. *Dis-pleasure* is the opposite of all that.

Envy kicks up our emotions several notches placing them into the realm of "If I can't have that why should you have that?"

This makes envy work, in the words of Frederick Buechner, as the . . .
"consuming desire to have everybody else as unsuccessful as you are."

While we all look at other people and wish, secretly or not, that we could have the sort of things or life they have there is, within envy, an almost consuming nature to envy.

Again, Buechner writes this time about anger but it certainly fits . . . “Of the seven deadly sins, anger is possibly the most fun. To lick your wounds, to smack your lips over grievances long past, to roll over your tongue the prospect of bitter confrontations still yet to come, to save her to the last toothsome morsel both the pain you're given and the pain you are giving back—in many ways it is a feast fit for a king. The chief drawback is that what you're wolfing down is yourself. The skeleton at the feast is you,” (Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking*, pg. 2).

Listening to God's people

Of whom are you envious?

What is missing from your life that they have that you don't?

Is your envy helping you meet your desires in life?