

DON'T GO QUIET

GM everybody ... & a 'hello' to those listening online ...

This is the last sermon in our Proverbs series ...

And today we are going to tackle the ugliness of envy.

This topic is very pertinent to me.

I confess that I struggle with envy ... A LOT. → [most days]

And I would venture a guess that we all do...

But just because its commonplace doesn't mean we
shouldn't take it seriously.

Proverbs shows us how insidious Envy is.

Proverbs 14:30

**A tranquil heart gives life to the flesh, but envy makes
the bones rot.**

Envy Slowly Destroys Us From The Inside Out

this verse gives a very descriptive picture ...

“Makes the bones ROT.”

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Rot ... slow decay over a long period of time.

That is what envy does to the marrow of life ...

It eats away inside of us, until we become a shell of a person.

And this slow decay is the great deception of Envy ...

It begins with a harmless thought → “I want what something I don’t have.”

No one really gets hurt.

Now, it is not evil to desire things.

But, that doesn’t mean everything we desire is good.

- Desiring breakfast ... GOOD
- Desiring your neighbors wife ... BAD

But even the good things we desire can run amuck in our hearts.

We can desire more knowledge, wisdom, talent, wealth.

But how much until we are satisfied?

That’s the native problem we all share...

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Our sinful nature turns good desires into further demands.

This is the pathway to envy.

At the root of envy is coveting ... a disordered over-impassioned yearning for what you don't have.

Today we call this FOMO.

Adam and Eve were the first to have FOMO!

They took the forbidden fruit B/C they didn't want to miss out.

But envy refocuses our FOMO onto the people around us.

It creates contempt and rivalries.

And this a very REAL way that envy destroys your life.

Envy Fills You With Contempt For Others

Envy isn't just wanting what others have ...

It's hating others for having what you want. [REPEAT]

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This destroys ...

- friendships
- families
- churches

Proverbs 27:4

Wrath is cruel, anger is overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy?

Wrath and anger can make us do cruel things ...

But an envious jealousy will produce a kind of anger and wrath that can't be rivaled.

Let's look at a story at the very beginning of the Bible.

If you want to understand the roots of sin ... you can't do better than starting at the beginning.

Adam and Eve's sin of coveting gave birth to jealous envy ... figuratively and literally in the person of Cain.

Genesis 4:1-5

Now Adam knew Eve his wife [PG], and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord." 2 And again, she bore his brother

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Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. 3 In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, 4 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, 5 but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell.

Cain's envy of Abel resulted in anger.

Cain didn't see Abel as a brother ... he saw him as a rival.

Abel had what Cain wanted.

Cain was consumed in his heart with envy and lost his ability to love his brother.

This envy slowly boiled in his heart like a pressure cooker.

Just like a pressure cooker needs a relief valve ... so does the envious heart.

Envy doesn't just make you think cruel thoughts, it will lead you to DO cruel things.

Envy Will Make You Do Cruel Things To Others

In Cain's case it was murder.

For many of us that relief valve is:

- Slander, gossip
- de-friending, ghosting
- physical, emotional abuse

These tactics have a **common end-goal ... hurting someone.**

The irony is that Envy creates a victim mentality.

It convinces you that you're the victim.

And as a victim, "I have the right to fight back."

So we act out of our own hurt in order to hurt others... (let out steam)

And man does that feel good in the moment.

Which gives us false hope ...

We think that letting out steam will be so satisfying.

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But that is where we are dead wrong.

See, there is a particular kind of cruelty to envy...

Proverbs 27:20

**Sheol & Abaddon are never satisfied, & never satisfied
are the eyes of man.**

Envy Is Never Satisfied

No matter how many times you “let the steam out of your envious heart” the envy never goes away.

**B/C like death & the grave ... the envious heart always
has room for more.**

It's always looking for the next thing to feed on.

So our hearts are never calm.

They are always restless, wandering around to find that elusive satisfaction.

And envy feeds itself on offenses.

It looks for problems, it looks for slights...

It looks for ways to feed contempt for people.

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That doesn't sound like the kind of heart anyone of us want, right?

Isn't it interesting that the judgment of God upon Cain for his envy was that he would "wander the earth"?

Cain sought satisfaction for his heart in murder.

Instead of the joy and peace he was hoping for ...

He became a "restless wanderer" / restless soul.

This is the great irony of sin, even the sin of envy:

It makes us believe that the problem is out there; all the while the problem is "in here" → 

So what needs to change in our hearts?

Is the answer to just stop desiring things ...

Become a Shaolin Monk detached from all wants, dead to all emotions.

You'll be great at Kung Fu, but it won't heal your heart.

Healing isn't having a tranquilized heart ... but a tranquil heart.

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Proverbs 14:30

“A tranquil heart gives life to the flesh, but envy makes the bones rot.

So the question we have to ask is ... “What makes the heart tranquil?”

1 Timothy 6:6-8

“Now there is great gain in godliness w/ contentment, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food & clothing, with these we will be content.

God's Cure For Envy Is Learning Contentment

This is so unnatural to us.

From the time we are kids... I don't want the toy I have ... I want the toy YOU have.

All the parents said ... AMEN.

For the rest of you ... go serve in Kid's Ministry and find out for yourself. :)

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And being a Christian doesn't make it magically go away.
We just learn to cover it up better.

Friend's new JEEP

But God gives us some tools for growing in contentment in these verses.

First ...

Contentment Grows When You Realize You Don't Deserve Anything.

1 Timothy 6:7

"For we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world."

Our grand entrance into the world is anything but grand.

[no bearing gifts, golf club for doc / poem 4 mum]

We're bloody, naked, and crying. → Pretty unimpressive.

And we go out unimpressively as well.

At the risk of sounding insensitive ... nobody looks impressive in a coffin.

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We come in unimpressive and go out unimpressive.

It's the middle part when we get full of ourselves.

But this humility of numbering our days can help us not to take ourselves seriously, ...

And it fights against entitlement.

When everything you have is seen as an undeserved blessing ... you are going to enjoy it a lot more.

And that's why it's a good habit to remind yourself of the blessings you have.

1 Timothy 6:8

But if we have food & clothing, with these we will be content.

Counting Your Blessings Increases Contentment

The envious heart burns for what it DOESN'T have; a thankful heart is CONTENT with what it DOES have.

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Notice he doesn't say, "If we have a big house, a nice car, lots of money ... with these we will be content."

His list is small and basic: food & clothing

You may not be eating Filet Mignon, but you can still be thankful for that Salisbury Steak microwave dinner.

When do you take time to stop and consider all the blessings you have?

Too often our eyes are fixed on screens & magazines that show all the things we don't have and want to have.

Every sinful desire starts with looking in the wrong place.

Adam and Eve ... looking at the wrong tree.

David ... looking outside his house at another man's wife ...

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What are your eyes feeding on every day?
Is it feasting on other people's blessings?

Here is an unshakeable truth...

Your habits will shape your heart.

And this brings me to one of the best habits you can
adopt ...

A Praying Life Builds Contentment

The Apostle Paul writes to his young apprentice, Timothy. He had left him in Ephesus to lead the church in that city. You know what his first order of biz was for this budding leader...

1 Timothy 2:1

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people,

Supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings ... all are types of prayers.

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Paul doesn't tack this on in the fine print ...

It isn't a drive-by comment.

FIRST OF ALL!!!

Just a few verses later ... Paul reiterates...

1 Timothy 2:8

**I desire then that in every place the men should pray,
lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling;**

Men & Women, what is God's desire for us?

**It ISN'T scrolling through Social Media hours on
end, filling our souls with pictures of what we
don't have; ...**

**blasting our opinions about everyone and
everything ... (take ourselves too seriously)**

**Two ways men hurt people ... with our mouths and with
our hands.**

We waste words on FB/Twitter/Instagram/Tik Tok ... **[can
we just pick 1 please]**

We raise our hands to do horrible things.

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What does God call us to do?

- Pray with our mouths ...
- Lift holy hands ... [act of surrender / peace / humility / dependence]

Instead of hating & hurting the people you envy ...

- Pray for them.
- Pray for their success.
- Pray for God to bless them more.

Envy rejoices when people suffer, and mourns when they rejoice.

But in prayer we practice rejoicing when they rejoice, and mourning when they suffer.

This is hard.

(BH taking over my job.)

- **Fought with prayer/confession ...**

What I learned in that season ... is that all those habits didn't work until I had one thing established.

Proverbs 23:17–18

Let not your heart envy sinners, but continue in the fear of the LORD all the day. Surely there is a future, and your hope will not be cut off.

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This is big stuff ...

Don't envy sinful man ... no matter how righteous they may seem.

Fix your eyes on God ...

In him there is a future and a hope that can't be taken away.

Contentment Is Only Possible When You Have The Assurance Of God's Love

Remember Cain's envy over His brother Abel having what he wanted to have ...

What did Abel have that Cain didn't?

Genesis 4:6-7

6 The Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted?"

Abel had God's acceptance.

He looked at Abel's sacrifice and was pleased with it.

But when he looked at Cain's it said he had no regard.

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Literally, he turned his face away.

Nothing in this world is going to satisfy you except the assurance of God's favor.

And you can't earn it by "doing the right things."

Cain offered sacrifices just like Abel.

But the problem of currying God's favor wasn't in the method...

It was in the motive.

Hebrews 11:4

By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts...

Abel brought his offering in faith and obedience.

- Firstfruits of his flock and the fat portions.

Firstfruits → God was first in his mind ...

Fat portions → God was worthy of his best ...

He wasn't coming to appease God or try to earn his love through religious duty.

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He was coming in sincere faith & worship.

Cain on the other hand was performing a religious duty.

[Brought “some of the lands produce”]

No faith ... just going through the motions.

The problem was “in here” not “out there.”

Whether or not you are a Christian, this is where we all need Jesus.

Your works mean nothing w/o faith.

Your habits will get you nowhere w/o faith.

At the end of the day we are all sinners, with envious hearts that deserve God's judgment.

We are all doomed to be restless wanderers.

But God intervened.

Jesus offered himself as the greater sacrifice ... better than Abel's.

He did it to break the power of sin over us.

We are not doomed to live under the power of envy.

We have totally new hearts ... filled with faith ...

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Filled with thankfulness... not in what you've done, BUT in what Jesus did for you.

Do you have faith in that?

Do you have faith that Jesus alone is enough?

NOT A CHRISTIAN:

- Repent and believe!
- ... Join us in the life of thanksgiving to our God who has given us the greatest blessing we can count ... HIMSELF.

CHRISTIAN:

- Communion is an act of "Counting Our Blessings" in Christ's salvation alone.
- He is all we REALLY need.
- He is what our hearts REALLY want.
-
- [Jesus took the bread ... Gave thanks ... Body Broken]
-
- [Jesus took the cup ... Gave thanks ... Blood shed for us ...]