

THE TWIN SINS OF ENVY & JEALOUSY

INTRO: Some time ago I was given a tract called, "Just Tracks". It dealt with the subject of jealousy and envy. The preacher from whose message this tract was written was Paul Weaver. The message was transcribed and edited by "Still Waters Ministries, Inc." In the introduction the tract said, "A devastating spirit is among us. Often we see tracks, the effects of this spirit, but we are unable to identify the real problem. It is a spirit that causes many church problems and many relationship problems." He gives the story of a fox hunt, and how they tracked the fox from one forested area to another, only to always find tracks out the other side. They could not get this fox. They were, as we would say, "outfoxed". From the tracks they knew for a fact the fox had been there, but they never did get him. And the speaker likened the sins of envy and jealousy to this fox. The picture he gave was that envy and jealousy leave tracks, though you can never seem to catch them. But, by the tracks you know the fox is about somewhere. So, by the tracks left by envy and jealousy, you can tell they have been somewhere about. But you can never seem to really get the confession of the one who carries that spirit.

The speaker of the message said, "I'm going to confront this evening, by God's grace, one of the most wicked spirits that I've seen working in churches. It seems you can never identify him. It seems whenever you think you have him, he somehow is gone. All we see is tracks. Often we could conclude that he is not there, but we see tracks. I think you would agree with me that if you see tracks of this spirit he must be somewhere. This spirit that is roaming in the churches today has damaged many people and many churches. No one wants to deal with him. That's the burden on my heart this evening. This spirit leaves tracks. It hides, it escapes identity, and when you think he's there, somehow he moves and he's gone or he changes into a different look. I have never heard a message preached on this subject."

Now I want to remind us of the gravity of these twin sins. It is worthy to note that both of these sins are found in the list of sins in Galatians 5 of which it says that those who live in such sins will not inherit the kingdom of God (read Galatians 5:16-21). The sins listed here are very serious sins. These are sins of such magnitude, that Paul

says those who live in them, that is do not seek the victory over them, they will not inherit the kingdom of God. Envy and jealousy are found in lists that include adultery and fornication. These are evil sins, evil revelations of one's heart. Yet, the writer of the tract I mentioned seems to be right, we very seldom if ever hear a message on them.

Let me add this here. When it lists the sins of the flesh, I believe the word 'flesh' refers to the sin nature and not to the body. If you wish a deeper understanding into this subject, let me recommend the series of messages I did dealing with the flesh. The series is called, "The Flesh". It is accessible on Sermon Audio.com. The reason I say this is because this list of sins of the flesh includes sins, I think, refer to sins of the spirit; but they are all sins of the sin nature, that fallen part of man.

Now I have called these two sins, twins. They are not identical twins, but they have large similarities. Also, to understand these sins we will be able to understand much about ourselves and possibly alert us to things that we need to change. It can also help us understand much about church strife, and how to avoid church strife.

I. DEFINITIONS OF THESE TWINS - What Envy Means

A. Definitions of Envy and Jealousy

So, we want to seek to define these two sins. Since these two words are so closely related and so hard to tell apart, we will define them together. The definitions of envy and jealousy, and how to explain the difference are incredibly difficult; so difficult that some wonder if such definitions can actually be achieved at all. But I think it is conceded that these are both emotions. The study of emotions and then moods, on the other hand, is also very complicated, but we will seek to do so briefly later somewhere.

Let me give you a few definitions from others before I give my own. Websters 1828 Dictionary defines envy as: "Pain, uneasiness, mortification or discontent excited by the sight of another's superiority or success, accompanied with some degree of hatred or malignity, and often or usually with a desire or an

effort to depreciate the person, and with pleasure in seeing him depressed. Envy springs from pride, ambition or love, mortified that another has obtained what one has a strong desire to possess."

Jealousy, on the other hand, this dictionary defines as, "That passion or peculiar uneasiness which arises from the fear that a rival may rob us of the affection of one whom we love, or the suspicion that he has already done it; or it is the uneasiness which arises from the fear that another does or will enjoy some advantage, which we desire for ourselves. A man's *jealousy* is excited by the attentions of a rival to his favorite lady. A woman's jealousy is roused by her husband's attentions to another woman. The candidate for office manifests a *jealousy* of others who seek the same office. The Jealousy of a student is awakened by the apprehension that his fellow will bear away the palm of praise. In short, *jealousy* is awakened by whatever may exalt others or give them pleasures and advantages which we desire for ourselves." Webster then goes on to seek to show the difference between jealousy and envy. He says under the same heading, "Jealousy is nearly allied to *envy*, for *jealousy*, before a good is lost by ourselves, is converted into envy, after it is obtained by others."

Vine's dictionary of the Greek words says of envy that it is, and I quote, "the feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the advantage or prosperity of others; this evil sense always attaches to this word (Matt. 27:18; Mark 15:10 etc...)". Of the difference between envy and jealousy he writes, "The distinction lies in this, that 'envy' desires to deprive another of what he has, 'jealousy' desires to have the same or the same sort of thing for itself."

After doing many, many hours of study on envy, I came all the way back around to accepting Vine's definition as the best one. I was not able to agree with him and studied further on my own, only to find the same thing he had found. So let me give his definition, piecing it together from the rest of his comments: *Envy is that feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the advantage or*

prosperity of others, causing one to desire to deprive the other of that advantage or prosperity.

Vine does not give a definition of jealousy, but I would construct it from the distinction he gives between these two as: "*Jealousy is that feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the advantage or prosperity of others, while one desires to have the same or the same sort of thing for itself.*"

When I had completed my own definition, I came to this: *To envy is to see someone who has or has the advantage of getting something or someone one does not wish that person to have and which causes one to have ill feelings towards that person or it aggravates still further ill feelings that were already there prior to this.*

So, let us consider envy for a moment. There are some basics to envy. One, it relates to another person or persons. It is relational. Second, that person has, or has a chance of getting something one does not want that person to have. One does not necessarily want whatever it is but one does not want that particular person to have it. Another basic to envy is ill feelings towards that other person. These ill feelings may grow so strong that it has caused the envious person to murder the other. Furthermore, envy is never good. Nor is there a good kind of envy. Sometimes we loosely use these words and then we may be led to think envy is good in some cases.

Now for evidence that a basic to envy is not wanting another to have something or wishing to deprive them of what they already have, let me give you what I found some others to say. I did what I teach students to do. Study and come up with your own answer first before you study others. But if I had known where to look, I might have cheated in this very difficult study as well. But when I had studied others I came across the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. And I want to give you a few statements from the article on envy I found in that dictionary: "Many, but not all, go on to add that envy involves a desire that the rival not have the good." And again, "Envy is pain at the good fortune of others" (Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, Bk

II, Chapter 10). And yet again, "Envy is a propensity to view the well-being of others with distress..." And yet once more, "Envy is that passion which views with malignant dislike the superiority of those who are really entitled to all the superiority they possess" (Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, p. 244). Vine's dictionary said that a basic distinction between envy and jealousy is that envy wants to deprive another of what he has or has the advantage of getting.

Now two key ingredients involved, I think, in all sins related to envy and jealousy, such as greed etc... is 1. *desire* and 2. *rights*. In the case of envy one desires that another be deprived of something or that he should not be able to obtain it. The person has a right to it, but one does not wish him to have it. So, let me give you an example. I have a business in town. I am doing OK. Now I hear of a new business coming. Oh, my goodness. They want to sell the same thing I am or it is something related to my business. And if I would enjoy seeing that come to naught before it got off the ground, that is envy. And if I should now desire to acquire that property they are looking at only to deprive the other of setting up his business, it is still envy. But let us say he has already purchased the property, envy will gladly find ways of depriving him of it, if it is possible, if it can be done in such a way no one will be able to trace it back to my envy.

When we come to defining jealousy, we find this quite different, though there are similarities. Now let me say this first, as I see this word. Jealousy can be used in a good sense and in a bad sense. Envy can never be used in a good sense, at least in its biblical meaning. Some argue in modern uses that envy may be used positively but I would question it even there. So, let us begin with the kind of jealousy that is bad. *To be jealous in a bad sense is to want something for oneself which another has or has the advantage of getting, causing one to have ill feelings towards that person.*

Let me give an example. A young man has become interested in a certain young lady. And then, along

comes another, and now he is showing interest in her. And what is worse, she seems to be growing an interest in the other person. Now jealousy finds its way into the first young man. Now this kind of jealousy produces feelings that will seek to bring to an end that other relationship, just as envy would do, but in this case, the first young man desperately wants the young lady for himself. And thus ill feelings will spring up in this first young man towards the other. This is bad jealousy. This kind of jealousy has tremendously dangerous potential.

The Song of Solomon is a love song. And in the final scene, the lover and his beloved are back together on good terms. And the wife says to her husband, "Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is as strong as death, jealousy as cruel as the grave; its flames are flames of fire, a most vehement flame."

But, there is a legitimate jealousy. This jealousy is the feeling of being wronged when another takes or is a threat to take, or one suspects he is a threat to take that which rightfully belongs to oneself, causing one to have vengeful feelings towards that person and also causing one to seek to safeguard that possession (2 Cor. 11:2). God can be said to be jealous in this sense (*Ex. 20:4-5; 34:14; Deut. 4:24; 5:9; 6:15).

There is another kind of good jealousy. It is when one seeks to improve another by provoking him to jealousy. This might more accurately be rendered by our word emulation. For example, one might cause someone to try to equal or surpass another in a good thing. God uses this measure to get people to live right (Rom. 10:19; 11:11; 11:14).

B. The Differences Between Envy and Jealousy

So, let us consider the difference between these two words; envy and jealousy. When I worked on defining these two words, I came to the point where I thought I would have to give up. When I wrote the paper in Bible School for the Bachelor of Theology degree, I wrote on the nature of man. And I studied the great theological debate whether man is a two or three part

being. It seemed beyond my ability at that time to come to a conclusive view. My due date for the paper was getting closer and closer and still I did not know which view to defend. I had had a view, but studying other theologians caused me to question what I had held to prior to that. I think I even began to write the paper just presenting both views with their strong and weak points, that is, giving the arguments against and arguments for each view. Thinking back, it was my great respect for words, and especially as given by God that brought me to the view that man is a three part being. That is about what happened to me in these studies. I spent many, many hours studying definitions and seeking to define these words myself. However, I have come to some conclusions on the matter, and I want to give those.

So, with regard to the differences between envy and jealousy, these distinctions are often clouded by a variety of things. For example, sometimes envy wants what the other has, which makes it seem like jealousy; but when envy only wants it in order to deprive the other of getting it, then it is still envy. We have all seen this. A child is playing in the toy box. He has all the toys to himself and when another comes and wants to play with one, he takes that one. He wants it. But when the other child leaves, the toy is left lying again. The distinctions between envy and jealousy are further clouded because we often use them interchangeably, without understanding the distinctions.

So, here are some of the distinctions. First, envy is always bad. The Stanford dictionary said this, "Most authors who address the issue seem to agree that envy is seldom advisable: insofar as one is able to control or influence one's emotions, it is best not to be envious, because envy harms those who feel it." Now that language is couched in friendly psychological terms that are 'un-judgmental' and 'undamaging psychologically' but the message is still there, envy is bad for you. The unsaved world recognizes that. Very few argue it. Jealousy, on the other hand, can be good or bad. Second, jealousy differs from envy in that while the envious person does not necessarily want what the other has,

jealousy desperately wants what the other has or has an advantage of getting.

But what makes it hard to distinguish envy from jealousy is that both have some of the very same ingredients. First, both envy and jealousy carry ill feelings towards the other person or the rival. Second, envy and jealousy, as I see it, are both sins of the spirit. We will talk about that later. And third, envy and jealousy always desperately seek to hide. These two sins hide so fiercely that very seldom will they come out into the open. The tract that caused me to study this subject indicated that the spirit of jealousy is so evasive that you can never seemingly catch it. Nobody easily confesses to envy or jealousy. Fourth, though these two sins hide themselves with utmost care, they both leave tracks. **(And both sets of tracks look the same?)** These tracks are the tell tale signs that envy or jealousy are or have been around somewhere. And so, though you can find the tracks of these two foxes, you can hardly ever catch them.

So the tract said this, "Let me ask you, brothers and sisters, have you ever seen church problems? Usually this spirit is alive and running. Every time you think you got him, he's out the door, and all you see is tracks. I have seen tracks all over our churches, but when you try to deal with it, it somehow changes into a different thing and it seems holy. It seems righteous. Oh it's a very divisive spirit!" (pgs. 9-10).

When we consider the Biblical cases of envy and jealousy, we will identify these tracks as we go.

II. THE SPHERES OF OPERATION OF THESE TWIN SINS

Now I want to deal a bit with the sphere in which these two sins operate. I have more than one reason for doing this. First, I believe that envy and jealousy are sins of the spirit, the spirit part of man. And second, various teachings are floating around here that I believe are not accurate. Let me just briefly share with you the makeup of man as I see it from many years of study in the Scriptures. I have concluded without apology, that man is made up

of three major components. These are body, soul and spirit (1 Thess. 5:13). I have told you earlier of my studies on this subject in Bible school.

It is always important to rightly divide the Word of truth because you never know how far reaching a point that does not seem all that important might be some years down the road. So, to me, there is no doubt that man is made up of three major components and they are body soul and spirit. The body is physical and the spirit and soul are non physical entities.

Now let me share briefly what happened to the teaching that man is a three part being. I understand the early church held the view that man is a being of three parts. It fell into various fanciful and erroneous teachings. So to combat that teaching, the view was put forth that man is a two part being. That view reigned from several hundred years after Christ until not too long ago, when people once more began to take the Scriptures more literally. Today, there is a view put forth by people like the Minrith & Meir Clinic. You might hear their names and hear talk shows done by them. They believe man is a one part being, and they are supposedly Christians.

Let me just share briefly how things developed in the modern world with regard to these three parts of man. The first area to undergo tremendous development in the modern world is the modern world of medicine which treats the body. The great change that came to the medical world began in the days of Florence Nightingale. The beginning of this great enlightenment that came to modern medicine happened a mere 200 years ago. In days prior to that there were things like bloodletting to cure people and having them swallow blood suckers. But when modern medicine entered, old methods, though they died hard, they died. Praise God they died! Modern medicine made incredible advances. Even today, great advances are being made. Today Israel is talking about the possibilities of curing cancer by vaccination.

But then about 100 years later, another area of concern entered health and well being. Medical science had been able to treat many ailments but there were some ailments that seemed to transcend the

body. Enter: men like Sigimund Shlomo Freud, followed by Burhust Frederick Skinner and modern psychology was born. Now you can tell from the word psychology, that it no longer is dealing with the body. Now modern man, apart from the Bible, was treating two parts of man, body and soul.

Now in the Encyclopedia Brittanica published in 1980, when psychology had not advanced anywhere near to where it is today it gives in the micropedia a long list of words beginning with pschee. It says that psychology is, and I quote, "the scientific discipline that deals with behaviour in man and other animals." Now I have told you before that the root word of psychology is psuchee, and which in the Bible is the soul. In psychology, secular pshychology that is, the effort is to deal with such things as the emotions, thinking, etc... You see, an alcoholic or an uncontrolled spender etc... have an illness. It is an illness that is affecting his behavior, and psychology will change behavior. No repentance necessary. Modern psychology has provided fertile soil for New Age thinking. Many psychologists give no thought to a soul, and yet call themselves psychologists. That is like an atheist calling himself a Christian.

Let me put in, by way of warning, that the modern North American church and Bible schools are loaded with secular psychology. And with that, let me take a brief moment to show you who the true psychologist is. Turn with me first to Hebrews 13. Let us read verse 17, "Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you." From that verse, what is the task of pastors? It is to watch for your souls. And what is somebody who watches for other people's souls? A psychologist, of course! As I mentioned earlier, psychology has to do with the soul. The Greek word for soul is psyche, from which we get words like psychology, psychiatry etc... Pastoral work is looking after souls. And amazingly the Apostle Peter says, "For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls" (1 Peter 2:25). Who is that? That is none other than

the Lord Jesus Christ. And He is the Overseer of overseers, and both care for souls!

So, when men such as Freud and Skinner came along, man had now entered a field of study that properly belonged to Scripture and to pastors, but through these men entered a field of study called in modern terminology, psychology. Such men introduced modern man to a field of study related to a part of man that is not physical and cannot be treated or diagnosed physically. Just read about modern studies of ADD and schitzophrenia and so on, and you will find what I have just said. And in the church, because we have not studied these areas and are not able to help in them, when we cannot handle someone with mental or emotional problems, we send them to secular psychologists or psychiatrists!

But modern man had so far only tapped into two parts of man's three parts. That left but one to go. Today, we are entering all three areas and we call it 'holistic health'. This is a fast growing field of study. Holistic health, it seems to me, basically says there is more to health than the body. So they try to treat people holistically. So, it is common to see somebody in a Yoga position picturing holistic health ideas. The person in the picture is spaced out. He or she is not here. They are in another world. But, mind you, this is a healthy world. Oh yes, you need to meditate. And in that sphere of meditation is a world of demons entering open doors!

And now, secular health ambitions have entered the spiritual part of man, the spirit. For some time I was involved in taking turns with others, going to the hospitals to preach there. We were invited by the health services. It took some time until I began to see what was happening. You see, I would come. The next time the Catholic priest would come and then another and another. Once I spoke and a women gave great consent to what I was saying and she was crossing herself the way Catholics do, and I said to myself, "What is going on here?"

But you see, to holistic health, religion was important. Now which religion, well that does not matter as long as it comforts patients and helps

their health. They were now, in my estimation, trying to reach out to that third aspect of man, the spirit. This is holistic health. It treats of people holistically. And these health folk will have regular pastoral meetings. And in these meetings, over there is the United Church lady pastor, and over there the Catholic priest, and over there is the Mennonite pastor, and over there is a pastor that needs cigarette break once in a while, and over there the Lutheran pastor, etc... Do you get the picture? And we are all one big happy family! Holistic health. Yessiree! Secular man is now recognizing man is more than simply a body, and is now seeking to tap into all three parts of man, and that, from a secular point of view; or is it, perhaps, New Age?

And why did I tell you all that? Well, one of the reason was to warn of modern errors in the teachings on the nature of man, which includes the Stutzman teaching. But mainly to say that as I see it, envy and jealousy are sins of the spirit. You see, sin as I see it, is committed by the self, the ego, the I, the person; and it is done in the soul. So Scripture says, "The soul that sins shall die" (Ez. 18:20). But the sins committed in the soul have their instrumentality through the body or through the spirit of man. And, as I see it, here are some sins of the flesh as related to the body; adultery, fornication, murder, stealing etc... And here are some sins of the spirit: bitterness, pride, envy, jealousy, etc...

And if we will obey the Scriptures to be pure and holy both in body and in spirit, we need to understand how to clean up the spirit. And getting rid of such sins as envy and jealousy is part of it. Now I have mentioned already that envy and jealousy are sins that want to hide. They will simply refuse to be exposed unless tremendous pressure is exerted. And because they are sins of the spirit, the invisible part of man, they are much easier to hide than sins or filthiness of the flesh.

Well, I have to close for this time, though I am not finished with this point. But I have a dual purpose for this point. First to warn about a very crucial area of modern teaching, and second, to get us to

some understanding of this third part of man, the spirit. The reason for this is that it is in this part of man that I see the sins of jealousy and envy at work.

CONCL: So, we conclude in the middle of a point so I do not keep you too long this morning, and Lord willing, we will pick up there next time. So, let us briefly conclude by reviewing the definitions of envy and jealousy. Here are my definitions: *To envy is to see someone who has or has the advantage of getting something or someone one does not wish that person to have and which causes one to have ill feelings towards that person or it aggravates still further ill feelings that were already there prior to this.*

Jealousy in a bad sense is to want something for oneself which another has or has the advantage of getting, causing one to have ill feelings towards that person.

And as I see it, these sins are sins of the spirit. That is we are induced from the spirit part of man to commit these sins.