

Works of the Flesh / Fruit of the Spirit

Part 15

Scripture: Galatians 5:16-26

Scripture Reading: James 4:1-4

INTRO:

Well we have finally made it out of verse 20 of Galatians chapter 5, and are now starting with verse 21, not an overall speedy process in looking at the verses from 16 - 26 but I hope more of an in-depth one for all of us. And by that I mean taking the time to really look at each of these sins listed by Paul and how they originate in our heart and, if they are left unchecked they would turn into outward sins of the flesh.

Well we are nearing the end of the works of the flesh and if all goes as planned and the Lord tarries, we will begin the fruits of the Spirit very shortly in the New Year. Giving us a more refreshing look at God's word with a fresh new start to the year in looking at the more positive side of these verses Paul gives us here in Galatians chapter 5.

But we are not there yet, today we have come to a sin which Paul calls envy.

Envy is one of these sins that is difficult to define and pin down because it is one of those sins that begins as an emotion just like jealousy.

And one of the things you may be thinking right now in your mind is if we previously covered jealousies in the list, is envy not the same thing? Do the two not go hand in hand with each other?

Well the sins of envy is often associated as a companion of jealousy in that they do go hand in hand together in some aspects, and there are times when they are almost indistinguishable from one another, both on the outside when seen by others or even on the inside by the person themselves. But there are still some differences between the two words, things that only apply to one and not the other.

And one thing I hope that you will see by the end of this message is that envy, at its root or at its core actually has just as much or even more things in common with murder than it does with jealousy.

And I will be showing and comparing envy and jealousy together in some parts of the message so that we are reminded of what jealousy is and to show how the two differ as we continue to look at envy in this message.

N. ENVY

And one of the first things I want to note to you even before we get into any definitions or illustrations is that envy is always bad, it is always evil, it is always a sin. Unlike jealousy which can be good or bad depending on the object and context, there is never anything good that comes with envy.

Now I know that is a blanket statement even before I give you any definitions or scripture. And I do it, not to color your mind before we get into the message, but rather to give you a heads up, a prequel to what I have found, so that your mind is already looking at it from that perspective and not be preoccupied with the thinking that it could be something else or that it could be something good in your life.

Unlike jealousy or even hatred, envy is always bad and never good. And I hope that by the time we get to the end of the message you will understand why those who practice this sin, or indulge in this sin, will not inherit the kingdom of God.

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So again, if we begin with this word that Paul uses in the verse it is the Greek word *phthonos* *fthon'-os* Strong's number 5355, and it is defined in the Online Bible Greek Lexicon as

1) Envy, for envy or prompted by envy.

Even though it is only used 9 times in the New Testament the Online Bible Greek Lexicon simply defines it as one thing and means only one thing, and that is envy.

Slide - 3 The Oxford 1964 dictionary says it is a;

Bitter or longing contemplation of another's better fortune or qualities,

And even here you should be able to see the touch of jealousy in their definition, a longing of another's better fortune, to have that which another person has is more of jealousy aspect than envy.

Slide - 4 The discovery bible commentary says that it is;

A strong feeling or desire that sours, due to the influence of sin; it is that miserable trait of being glad when someone experiences misfortune or pain,

And I think a good point to remember from this definition is the second half of the statement where it says; it is that miserable trait of being glad when someone experiences misfortune or pain.

The Theological dictionary of the New Testament notes that;

In secular Greek *phthonos fthon'-os* can mean to bear ill-will of a general kind, but more often it is used specifically to express the envy which makes one man grudge another *over* something which he himself desires, but does not possess.

But then it also says;

Frequently it appears with jealousy, but several classical writers are careful to distinguish between these two apparent synonyms. Aristotle, for example, defines *zelos zay'-los* as the desire to have what another man possesses, without necessarily bearing a grudge against him because he has it;

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while *phthonos fthon'-os* is concerned more to deprive the other man of the desired thing than to gain it.

It then concludes with a quote from the philosopher Xenophon *Zen-no-fin*

Slide - 6 which says;

“the envious are those who are annoyed only at their friends’ successes”

This definition is similar to that of the Vine’s dictionary as Vine’s gives us a longer definition and not only explains his view of envy but also adds jealousy to portray the difference. Vine’s says;

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Envy, is the feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the advantages or prosperity of others; this evil sense is always attached to this word.

And then he says;

zelos *dzay’-los*, zeal or jealousy is to be distinguished from phthonos *fthon’-os*, and apart from the meanings of “zeal” and “indignation,”

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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.

EOQ

And I think in my opinion this is the basic difference between the two sins of envy and jealousy. Envy does not want the other person to have a thing; jealousy wants to have it for itself.

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Pastor Phil noted in his messages on jealousy and envy that after much study he says he came to view of accepting vines view of being the best one for now and with that gives his own definition by saying;

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 which causes one to have ill feelings towards that person or it aggravates still further ill feelings that were already there prior to this.

Now since writing this he noted that he is still working on this topic to define it further with future study.

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Because the recurring theme of all of these definitions is that it centers around feelings of

Slide - 11 displeasure,

Slide - 12 of grudging,

Slide - 13 and of ill will, and what that feeling desires for the other person or to the thing at hand.

Now if we just note for a moment and look at jealousy and envy again together, we know they can appear similar on the outside and feel similar on the inside because yes, they do both begin as feelings until we put them into action as an outward work of the flesh.

And just as a side note to feelings....

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does anyone remember where feelings go in the faith facts feelings train... at the back,

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the caboose, it's the facts first, then faith, and then feelings, and most often with jealousy and always with envy we need to pull the hitch pin on that caboose and... leave it behind.

As one illustration I found noted...

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That the train does not need feelings to go forward.

And the note here is that we must always be careful of what we feel like, that we do not let feelings run the train. Emotions can be very powerful, and if let loose in the wrong direction it can be disastrous for not only your spiritual life but your physical life as well. Because if it is a sinful feeling such as envy that is let loose in our life, it will bring more sin and grow into what others would see as an outward workings of the flesh.

Now if I were to break it down into a simpler distinction between envy and jealousy it would be this,

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and it has to do with the yellow circle of contentions and jealousies, the yellow circle represented what... an object.

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If your remember, the object can be any person, or any material or immaterial object, and the same goes for this illustration.

If you remember that jealousy is the wanting of that object for yourself, and it can be something I have the right to, such as my wife, or something I am allowed to have but don't have at the moment, this would be a form of good jealousy.

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However if that object is something that does not rightfully belong to me or is something I am not legitimately supposed to have, such as my neighbors' wife, then that is a form of bad jealousy.

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The same person or thing can be the object of good and bad jealousy; if I am jealous of my wife it is good, if I am jealous for another man's wife that is bad. It is the context and my relation to that object that makes jealousy good or bad.

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Envy also centers around an object. Now remember envy is not the desire to have the object...

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That would be jealousy.

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Envy is to have ill feelings towards the other person, but it's not about me wanting to have the object for myself.

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but that I don't want the other person to have or enjoy that object. As pastor Phil noted, it is something or someone one does not wish the other person to have and it causes one to have ill feelings towards that person.

Jealousy wants that object in either a good or bad way, envy is not wanting the object but the desire for that other person not to have it or enjoy it either.

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Listen; Jealousy is that selfish desire for the object others have,

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Envy is that selfish disdain of the object others have.

It is the ill will over the other person's possession of the object. And this ill will, this envy is always bad. Envy is never good. And I'll try and show you why.

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And to illustrate just how bad envy can really be, I think we have to look deeper at where the word phthonos *fthon'-os* comes from.

Because in looking at many of these dictionaries, what you will find is that when you look up this word phthonos *fthon'-os*, it often notes that the word is perhaps akin to

Slide - 28 phtheiro *fth-a'-ro* Strong's 5351,

And I think, and this is my own thought and study, I think that this is possibly a key to understanding the word envy.

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The theological dictionary of the New Testament says that phtheiro *fth-a'-ro* in the general sense means;

To destroy, to perish it is often used for the words 'to kill; but may also mean 'to languish' as in prison, or even economic ruin.

Another sense it is 'to spoil' as with milk, or the loss of food or of animals.

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The dictionary then goes on to say it is used as defilement and destruction in the New Testament when it is used in 1 Corinthians 3:17 which says;

*If anyone **defiles** the temple of God, God will **destroy** him.
For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.*

And that Paul has in mind the destruction of the temple, not *just* inner corruption.

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It talks about 1 Corinthians 15:33 which says;

Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."

And

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in 2 Corinthians 11 verse 3 in the allusion to Eve shows that the thought of the Corinthians are subject to perversion.

by saying;

But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

These are all examples that the theological dictionary of the New Testament uses to illustrate the word *phtheiro fth-a'-ro*

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The Online Bible Greek Lexicon says it is;

To corrupt to destroy or to be destroyed or perish

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Vine's initial definition says;

Signifies to destroy by means of corrupting, and so bringing into a worse state...

All these are examples of *phtheiro fth-a'-ro* that idea to destroy, to spoil or to kill or have the loss of. And I think that this is some of the mind set to what some of the dictionaries are alluding to when it come to the definitions regarding envy.

Because if envy comes from this word and the Vine's dictionary says:

That envy desires to deprive another of what he has

and the discovery bible commentary says it is:

that miserable trait of being glad when someone experiences misfortune or pain.

and pastor Phil's definition says;

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...

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We have to stop and think what is the mind set of what is supposed to happen to the object one is envious about? When the definitions say it is the desire to deprive another of something or is something that we do not wish that person is to have. What is it that envy is really desiring? Think about it? What is the evil intent that envy wishes on that object that the other person has or is about to have?

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You see in pastor Phil's definition he says it is 'something or someone I do not wish that person to have' and I think he is right in the definition, but here is my thought, what is the deeper darker more evil feeling envy wishes on that object?

You see I can easily say or think ‘I wish that the other person didn’t have that or receive that’...

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...that it would just disappear, but you see things do not just disappear from our world. We may think it and we may wish it but the last time I checked things don’t just vanish or disappear.

Unless of course we are talking about teenagers and the doing of chorus, then people somehow seem to disappear.

But seriously

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What is the thinking behind envy when it comes from a word that means to destroy, to spoil or to kill or have the loss of?

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What is the real desire of envy over an object?

Well let me illustrate it with these examples and I think that we often do well when we have good illustrations or examples.

And as a side note, and I should have asked you to bring some flashlights for yourselves today, because the place we are going to, will probably be quite dark in looking at some of the very dark aspects of this things called envy.

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You see, what if my neighbor has just purchased a brand-new car, and I find within myself that I would love to have such a car for myself,

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And now... I don't mean that kind of new car because there is nothing envious about the first word in that slide...

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But I mean a real new car, with the new seats, lots of power, the nice rims, and new paint, and I wish I had such a car, well, that is jealousy.

Do I have the right to go and buy myself a new car? Yes. Would the finance company approve me for a new car, probably yes again.

Would it be wise for me to invest in such a purchase when I am financially on edge, probably not. And so I don't, but I would still really like a new car like that.

And here is where we have to be careful, this is where it becomes tricky, you see if I desire my neighbors' new car, or I want THAT car for myself, that is bad jealousy, and covetousness and we are commanded not to covet anything of our neighbors'.

However, if it is a general desire for any new car, any other car on the lot then it's not necessarily bad jealousy.

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Especially if I'm driving something like this at the moment.

Just as a humors side note, I had a high school class mate that went to bible school, and through all her years there she drove this little old dodge neon. After she finished her schooling I asked her if she actually drove that little old car all through her bible school years to which she responded; 'oh yah, those things are great for your prayer life.'

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But going back to our new car in the illustration, if my neighbor has his new car and I am filled with envy, what do our definitions say I want happen to that car... I desire to deprive the other man of his car, right.

I don't want him to have a new car, I have ill will feelings towards him because I don't want him to have a new car, that it would just...

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disappear, but you see things do not just disappear from our world. We may think it, and we may wish it, but the last time I checked things don't just vanish or disappear from our world.

What is it that envy truly desires, (anyone need this, flashlight?) if we take into consideration where the word possibly comes from?

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Envy wants to see that car destroyed, I don't want him to have it, or enjoy it any more, I want him to find some slippery spot on the road, take that new car into the ditch through a fence, into a hydro pole and over a good rocky cliff so that it is destroyed beyond all recognition or repair and deprave him of his new car and have that miserable trait of being glad when he experiences that misfortune or pain and to deprive our neighbor of what he has. Not that our neighbor would be killed, oh no, we wouldn't want that, but that the new car would be no longer in his possession is something we would be perfectly fine with, wouldn't we... if we are filled with envy.

Now tell me if I am wrong, in showing us this aspect of how dark and deep envy can really be. Because we really have to look down into our own hearts to see if this is true, because things don't just disappear in our world, I can easily say I wish he didn't have it, or that it would just disappear, but what is the real dark thought of our hearts we would wish upon that new car?

This is a serious sin, as serious as keeping you from the kingdom of heaven if you practice or harbor such thoughts in your heart.

Now, someone may say it's just a car, just some inanimate object, we all can get those feelings when someone else gets new stuff, and wish they didn't, that is true, but that is still envy and we are still not to excuse it, we still can't say it's ok to have these feelings. because what if I give you another example.

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What if your friend has a new friend.

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And that friend is of that special someone kind of friend, and we allow ourselves to become filled with envy, and remember I don't just mean that off the top thought of envy,

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where we just want that person to disappear, because as I said things just don't disappear.

What does that deep dark of envy then want to do to the other person to deprive them of that new friend? Think about it, what does this feeling of envy require of your thoughts and heart?

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Envy wants that relationship to be ruined doesn't it, it wants that friendship to be soured, spoiled, to parish or lost, and if we look really deep into the dark recesses of envy,

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we find that in fact we may even want the destruction of the person, so that there is no possible way for that relationship to be repaired or reunited, this is where the dark evil of envy goes more in hand with murder than with jealousy.

Because what does envy really want? What does envy really want you to feel? That the other person would just disappear, remember things don't just disappear.

You see if we let envy grow we begin to think things like ‘I wish that other person would get hit by a bus’, ‘I wish that they would succumb to some fatale dieses in the next 30 seconds’, I wish that they would be transported to some remote place in the world forever’, or how about ‘I wish that they were dead’.

Correct me if I am wrong, but is this not the deep dark end desire of envy in our heart if we let it go to its lengths?

Vine’s said that envy desires to deprive another of what he has, and it is up to mans vivid imagination that begins to imagine how to achieve it.

I think that envy, that phthonos *fthon’-os* possible comes form phtheiro *fth-a’-ro* because of the destructive intent it has to destroy, to ruin, that which the other person has or is about to receive, even to the point of murderous thoughts. Because remember things do not just disappear from our world.

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And to define into a definition it I would simply add to Pastor Phil’s definition where he says;

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 which causes one to have ill feelings towards that person or it aggravates still further ill feelings that were already there prior to this.

And out of my own study and from some of the other definitions would add this;

To the point where such feelings wish the destruction of the thing or even the death of that someone in order to deprive that person of what he has and have that miserable trait of being glad when that person experiences this misfortune or pain.

Now if I am wrong, I would gladly hear correction, but as I see it, this is the deep dark evil sin of envy and what it truly wants to do if left unchecked. This is the how far and how dark envy can go because as I said from the start, all these sins begin somewhere small in the heart, and if they are allowed to grow, they will grow into sin.

Now to give support for this thought, if we look at Gods word for a moment, there an account I want us to look at to show us just how evil envy is, what it does and what we are to do with it.

Turn in your bibles to Mark chapter 15, and we have the account of Jesus before Pilate and a really good picture of what envy looks like when it reveals itself on the outside of the person.

You see up to now I have only showed you my speculation of what it looks like on the inside. Here, in these verses we will see what it looks like when this sin is full grown and comes out of people on the outside. Mark chapter 15 starting in verse 1 it reads;

Immediately, in the morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council; and they bound Jesus, led Him away, and delivered Him to Pilate.

2 Then Pilate asked Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" He answered and said to him, "It is as you say."

3 And the chief priests accused Him of many things, but He answered nothing.

4 Then Pilate asked Him again, saying, "Do You answer nothing? See how many things they testify against You!"

5 But Jesus still answered nothing, so that Pilate marveled.

6 Now at the feast he was accustomed to releasing one prisoner to them, whomever they requested.

7 And there was one named Barabbas, who was chained with his fellow rebels; they had committed murder in the rebellion.

8 Then the multitude, crying aloud, began to ask him to do just as he had always done for them.

9 But Pilate answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?"

10 For he knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy.

phthonos fthon⁹-os

11 But the chief priests stirred up the crowd, so that he should rather release Barabbas to them.

12 Pilate answered and said to them again, "What then do you want me to do with Him whom you call the King of the Jews?"

13 So they cried out again, "Crucify Him!"

14 Then Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they cried out all the more, "Crucify Him!"

Now tell me, what emotions is it that the chief priests had in handing Jesus over to Pilate? Envy, and tell me is this envy causing them to desire?

Wishing that Jesus would disappear, that He would be simply be taken away from the people. No, what does verse 13 say?

So they cried out again, "Crucify Him!"

And when Pilate asked why? What evil has He done? Verse 14;

...they cried out all the more, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

Now was the desire of this envy simply to deprave the people of Christ, to have him disappear along with His ministry He was preaching and leading here on earth? No, this was the deepest and darkest raw form of envy coming out of people. They wanted to kill Jesus! Crucify Him, crucify Him is what their enraged hearts were shouting and as the text says because of what reason, what emotion? Envy.

Verses 10 says they handed Jesus over because of envy, and this envy at its deepest darkest of its roots has in mind murder.

Crucify Him, kill Him, destroy Him were the shouts of these envious people, kill the one we want done away with, were the desires of these envious priests. And listen if it was in the priests, and in the Jews, and in the ordinary people of the day... it can be in me and you as well.

We are not immune to this thing of envy, but when we see it in its raw form as an outward work of the flesh as with the priests it should become something we want no part of in our life. This is why Paul say that envy is that part of the old man that we are to get rid of in our sanctification, Paul uses it in Titus chapter 3 verse 3 that;

For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.

Envy is classed in the same category of hating one another and if you remember what is the one thing we are not to hate in this world... anyone remember... people, we are not to hate people doesn't matter if they are unbelievers or Christians whether they are our friends or our enemies, we are not to hate people. And we are not to be envious, why, because envy can lead to hate, hate that can lead to thoughts of murder, and that is why I believe that envy is placed next to murder in Paul's list and not next to jealousy.

The chief priest and those with him were filled with envy, an envy so powerful it filled them with the desire for murder.

This is why Peter says in 1 Peter chapter 2 verse 1;

Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking,

And James also in chapter 3 starting in verse 14 gives us the explanation of where envy comes from, he says;

But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth.

15 This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic.

16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.

Now here in James it is actually the word *zelos zay'-los* the word used often for jealousy, and sometimes translated envy, but here in the verse it is clearly shown that there is nothing good that comes from this form of jealousy or envy. It is earthly, it is sensual, and it is demonic and where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. Evil things such as murder and we should be able to see why murder comes next in Paul's list.

Just like the Jews who were bent on handing Jesus over to Pilate to be crucified, we can begin to have thoughts of murdered of other people if we all the feelings of envy to continue.

Now with all of that, I really hope, and I pray that each one of us can come to this word see it for what it really is, check it off and say nope doesn't apply to me, and read on, I hope that each one of us can take the flashlight to our heart and say; nope, no envy here.

Because we can all be susceptible to the things of envy, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:3 saying;

for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?

Oh that we would have put envy off with the old man, that we would have overcome this carnal fleshly emotion that can consume Christians and that we would be as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13 verse 4 by saying;

Love... is kind and love does not envy;

Because if we look at Proverbs 14 verse 30, it says;

A sound heart is life to the body, But envy is rottenness to the bones.

And why does it do this? Why is envy rottenness to the bones, because it is envy that wishes destruction on those things we are envious about and it all begins with us on the inside. It all starts in the recesses of our soul and it will pollute everything in our hearts with this evil wicked sin.

And so in conclusion, we have looked at this word envy, its definitions and descriptions, and how Vine's says it is;

...the feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the advantages or prosperity of others; this evil sense always attaches to this word.

...envy desires to deprive another of what he has, *where as* jealousy desires to have the same or the same sort of thing for itself.

And as pastor Phil defined it

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 which causes one to have ill feelings towards that person or it aggravates still further ill feelings that were already there prior to this.

To which I might add that it can go;

To the point where such feelings wish the destruction of the thing or even the death of that someone to deprive that person of what he has and have that miserable trait of being glad when that person experiences this misfortune or pain.

And I say that because of what some dictionary presume where this word comes from and how we see that portrayed in the New Testament of the chief priest and Pharisees in their desire to crucify Jesus. ‘crucify Him, Crucify Him were the shouts of the people as they handed Jesus over because of envy.

Envy, if you let it grow, it will seek the destruction of anything or anyone including the wishing of death of a person if left to its own evil ways.

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Envy, often associated with walking hand in hand with jealousy but in my estimation it can have almost a closer walk with murder when it comes to the deeper darker side of things, and this is possible why Paul puts them together side by side in his list.

And as a reminder, if we find ourselves being moved or filled with envy, get rid of it, pull the hitch pin on that felling and push it off the tracks and leave it behind, because if you don't, it will fill your mind and thoughts of the most evil intentions known to man, even to the point of murder. Like Cain with Able, and the Pharisees with Christ, because one thing we need to remember is that there is no evil to great in satisfying envy.

Well may the Lord give us strength to overcome these sins of the flesh and the and the wisdom from God's Word to do so.