

## Proverbs of Solomon – Proverbs 23:17-18

I need to do more research on this, but hasn't the **expression** of **envy changed** over the last hundred years? Just think about it – **150 years** ago **advertising**, as we know it, **didn't exist**, making **envy** a bit **different**. **A shop keeper** might put up a **sign** in his window saying that he **had some new product to sell**. But there **wasn't the media**, **repeating** over and over again, **"You need this new product."** **Everyone** was getting along **fine without it**, and they didn't know any better. **Why** do so many people want the **newest cell phone or tablet**? **Not** because we **need it**, but because we are **repeatedly TOLD** that we **need it**. And then we **see others** using that latest technology, making our mouths water – **creating envy**.

Of course, **envy** has been around **from the beginning** of time. **Lucifer** was **envious of Jehovah**. He was **foolishly JEALOUS** of the Lord. And his **first temptation of man** was **empowered with envy** – **"God has it; don't you want it? Aren't you just a little jealous?"** **But since then** – until recently – hasn't **most envy** involved **important things** – life sustaining things? **The poor man envied** the rich man's **big, full barn**, or his **plow-pulling ox**. **In Abraham's day** there may not have been **much envy** over a **string of pearls** or a **fancier tent**. Was **Achan's desire** for the **Babylonian clothes** and wedge of **gold common** – or was it **an aberration**?

As I say, I need to do **more research** on this. **Whether** or **not** our **problem** with greed, jealousy and envy is **more refined** or **out of control**, envy has been here **from the beginning**. And the **Holy Spirit knows** that we need to be **rebuked** and **warned** from time to time. And this is the purpose of these two, easily diagrammed, sentences.

### **Our HEARTS are the heart of the matter.**

**Sunday I said** that when we **hear the word "name"** we can **substitute** the **person** attached to that name. **"In the NAME of Jesus Christ, rise and walk,"** means, **"In the AUTHORITY of Christ, arise."** In that case **the name** is **the same** as the person. And coming **from a different direction**, we can say that a **man's heart** is essentially **that man**. **Earlier** in this chapter Solomon said, **"As he thinketh in his heart, so is he."** In fact, **Solomon referred** to the **heart several times** in this chapter, and in each case he **reached** the **heart** of the **matter**. **Proverbs 23:12** – **"Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge."**

Applying one's head, memorizing instruction, will not be as helpful as applying ones heart to it. **Proverbs 23:15** – **"My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine."** **Proverbs 23:17** – **"Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long."** **Proverbs 23:19** – **"Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way."** If your **heart is pointed** in the **right direction**, your **feet will follow**, and so will your **eyes** and **ears**. **Proverbs 23:26** – **"My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways."** And in **chapter 4** he said, **"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for OUT OF IT are the issues of life."** And then there are the **words** of the **Lord Jesus** – **"Are ye also yet without understanding? Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies."** And **we might add**, it is the **heart which envies** and **lusts** for things which it, and the body, do not have. **"Let not thine heart envy sinner: but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long."** **Hands** and **feet don't envy** – and even though it might seem so, **taste buds** don't envy either. **Christians need**, by the grace and power of God, to **control their hearts** – for the glory of the Lord.

### **Let not thine heart ENVY.**

**We know** what it is to **envy**, don't we? **Strong** says that this **Hebrew word** is translated **"envy" 9 times**, and **"jealous" or "jealousy" 15 times**. For some people, making that **substitution gives** them more **clarity** – **"Don't be jealous of the sinner."** Here is **Webster's 1828 definition** of **"envy."** **"To feel uneasiness, mortification or discontent, at the sight of superior excellence, reputation or happiness enjoyed by another."** **Don't permit yourself** to get **down** because that other man got the job you were wanting. **Let not discontent fill thine heart** because you can only afford a flip phone.

**I should probably save Psalm 37** for later use in this message, but I won't. **"FRET not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou ENVIOUS against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart."**

### **Solomon says, "Let not thine heart envy SINNERS."**

**"For surely there is an end, and thine expectation shall not be cut off."**

**But for** the unrepentant **sinner**, all their **expectations SHALL be cut off**, and all the gadgets they have amassed

throughout their lives will be lost. As **Christ** told us, *“The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully.”* Then he said to his soul – his heart – *“Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?”* If **envy** made any sense at all, it would make **NO sense to envy** the man whose **body and soul** will suffer under the **wrath of God for eternity**.

But does it make **any more sense** to envy **the righteous**? I know that this *isn't Solomon's subject*, because he wants to compare the end of the saint and the end of the wicked. But again, is **envy or jealousy of some saint** of God **a good thing**? I don't know what **color arsenic** is, but let's say that it is **clear**. If someone comes along and makes it **cherry red**, is that arsenic **any less dangerous** to drink? **Greed, jealousy and envy** are **dangerous** in themselves, no matter where the heart might aim them.

**“Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the FEAR of the LORD all the day long.”**

It is **not quite the opposite**, but we have **“fear of the Lord”** placed in contrast to **envy** of the **sinner**. As almost always, the **“fear of the Lord”** refers to **respect** and **awe** of the Lord. Then it moves on to **love and worship** – the fear of the Lord is a Christian principle. When our **heart's relationship** to the **Saviour** is as it **should be** there should be **no room for envy**.

This takes us back to **Psalm 37** again – *“Fret not thyself because of evildoers... Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.”* **Oops...** **“the desires of thine heart”** – doesn't that **mean** God will **satisfy my wants, envies and jealousies**? No. Because **when we delight ourselves** with the Lord, we'll find our **hearts conform to Him**. He will **give us** the **desires** of our **hearts**, but those desires will **not the same** as they once were – worldly. We will find that **our desires match perfectly** with the Lord's **“desires.”**

**What about that phrase “all the day long”?**

**“Let not thine heart envy sinner: but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.” Does it simply mean what it says?**

Well if it means what it says, **isn't it unnecessary** or even **redundant** for Solomon to mention it? Not at all.

It is **relatively easy** to get up in the morning with **plans** to **love** and **serve God** throughout the day. We are **refreshed** and **strong** – ready to face anything; we've **not battled** any temptations yet. But then the **day goes haywire**; by noon we are **exhausted**, and by evening we are **battered** and **bruised**. It is **more difficult** to remember the Lord in **awe** and **love** when we have been **beaten down**. After a hard day it is **far more easy to envy the sinner**. It **looks to you** from down on the floor that the **sinner's day** has been **easy** – and **full**. But remember.....

**Surely there is an END, and thine EXPECTATION shall not be cut off.**

The word **“surely”** means essentially – **“it is guaranteed.”** **What is guaranteed?** The end of all this. The end of **our trials** in this world, with its **temptations** and **problems**. There will be an **end** to our **poverty**, our **ignorance**, our **weakness**. There will be an end – guaranteed. **“We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”**

I am getting ahead of myself, but do you **see the word “expectation”** in **verse 17**? That same word is found in the next chapter. **Proverbs 24:13-14** – *“My son, eat thou honey, because it is good; and the honeycomb which is sweet to thy taste. So shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul: when thou hast found it, then there shall be a reward, and thy EXPECTATION shall not be cut off.”* We aren't surprised that the word **“expectation”** is **more often translated “hope.”** Christian, **your hope in Christ** with all His **promises** and **rewards**, **is guaranteed** – it will not be cut off.

A secondary **reason** I wanted you to look at **Proverbs 24:14** is to point to the **word “reward.”** That is the **same word** as **“end”** here in our text. So **Proverbs 23:18** could be **understood to mean**, **“For surely there is a reward; and your hope shall not be cut off.”** There are **earthly** and **eternal blessings** for **curbing** our **appetites** and **envyings**.

The point is – there is **no reason whatsoever to envy the sinner**. We have a **hope in Christ** which is **guaranteed**. When the final trumpet blows and time will be swallowed up in eternity, **we will have far more** than any sinner ever had while on earth. We will be **so filled with Christ** and His blessings that **what we lack today** will **never return** to our minds. The Lord has guaranteed it. He said in **Jeremiah 29:11** – *“I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an EXPECTED end.”*