



VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH
SUGAR GROVE CAMPUS

Hey Jealousy

Proverbs: Search for Wisdom, Part 8

Tim Badal | September 7, 2014 |

Proverbs 27:4



So far in our series, we have seen that the Book of Proverbs is incredibly down to earth. It's easy to relate to. It is the place we need to turn when we're struggling, when we're dealing with issues that keep us from following Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. In his commentary on Proverbs, [Derek Kidner](#) says that the Book of Proverbs is "intensely practical, distinctly uncomfortable and immensely profitable." I hope this study has been practical for your life. These proverbs are sayings that you can use on an everyday basis. I hope this study has made you uncomfortable and has caused you to squirm, thinking, "Man, that hits a little too close to home." I hope and pray that amidst that discomfort, this has been immensely profitable for you; that you've been able to learn and understand the book of Proverbs better, applying it to your everyday life.

We learned last week that the Book of Proverbs is theology in workman's clothes. This week, I want to look at a sin that is easily hidden, kept in the dark of your own thoughts and feelings. Let us examine what [Proverbs 27:4](#) says about jealousy and envy. From the hand of Solomon and the heart of our God and Father in heaven:

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

Father God, You know the struggles that each person here has with envy and jealousy. Lord, may Your Spirit point out areas in our lives where we're jealous or envious. Oh Lord, this sin has caused many of us to stumble. It has caused many broken relationships. Lord, may we, Your people, say, "We don't want this to be part of our lives anymore." But we need Your Spirit and we need Your Word so Lord, impress upon our hearts the truth of Your Scriptures so that we may walk in its light. We thank You for Your Word, Lord. May our speech and actions give You glory and honor. In Christ's Name. Amen and amen.

In a short, little, pithy statement, Solomon utters an absolute mouthful. What is Solomon saying in this verse? He paints a picture of taking on an adversary or an enemy. You don't want to fight someone who's angry or wrathful. Solomon says, "I would rather fight an angry person than someone who is fighting for their husband or wife – someone jealous for the affection of their spouse." That's the worst kind of fight you can get yourself in to. In [Proverbs 6:34-35](#), when addressing the consequences of pursuing an adulterous relationship, Solomon says, "Watch out because their spouse will get a hold of you. They will be merciless in destroying you."

Jealousy is that formidable opponent. Jealousy is that green monster deep within you. That monster decimates friendships. It can bring a budding relationship to a crashing halt. It can impact those who have been married for some time. Jealousy has been the source of many divorces. Jealousy divides churches. It destroys and dissolves families. Jealousy is running rampant in our society both inside and outside the church. It is a sin that you can experience without moving a limb or saying a word. Right now some of you are having jealous and envious thoughts and no one knows. You can sit back and cultivate those feelings in the quietness of your heart.

In the New Testament, Jesus teaches that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" ([Matthew 12:34](#)). The problem with the human condition is that whatever is in the heart inevitably comes out. It comes out in words and it comes out in deeds. We need to nip it in the bud. I love watching [ESPN Sports Center](#) where they highlight the day's best athletic plays in a couple of minutes. Jealousy has a highlight reel as well. Jealousy is at the core of some of the biggest sins in all of Scripture.

If you rewind all the way back to the beginning, you will see that jealousy was the root of the devil's fall ([Isaiah 14:12-20](#)). You see the devil, God's archangel, look at God's power and say, "I want that." And then pride wells up in his heart and he says, "I can get that." It was jealousy that thrust a third of the angels out of heaven. Jealousy to be God and to have what God owns.

In the Garden of Eden ([Genesis 3](#)), a place of total perfection, the devil comes to Adam and Eve and says, "You know what? You can be like God, too." And they looked at what God has as the Creator and Commander of all things in this world, both seen and unseen, and they say, "I want that. I want to be like Him. God is telling me that He doesn't want me to be like Him and so I can't eat of that fruit on that tree, but if I do, I can be just like Him." Jealousy is the sin that plunges humanity into turmoil.

Jealousy shows its ugly head in the second generation of people ([Genesis 4](#)). Cain and Abel are presenting their offerings to the Lord. Cain has his fruits and vegetables on one altar. Abel has his unblemished lamb on the other altar. What happens? God is pleased with Abel's sacrifice but not with Cain's, because Cain has not given his best. And what happens? Cain is jealous of God's approval of Abel. God warns Cain, "Get a hold of your jealousy before it ruins your life! Sin is crouching at your door." But instead of getting jealousy under control, Cain does the unthinkable. Out in the field, where he thinks no one else can see, Cain kills his brother in jealousy. Jealousy is everywhere. It causes you to do insane things.

In English, understanding what jealousy means is difficult. When we see someone who has something we want, we say, "I'm jealous of you!" That term isn't quite right, so I want to help define what jealousy is by looking at jealousy's friend: envy. Envy is an open-handed emotion or feeling. It is the displeasure you feel when you don't have something you want and someone else already possesses it. When you say, "I'm envious," what you're saying is, "You've got something I want and I don't have it. I'm yearning for it. I want to pursue that. I want to have that as my own." Jealousy is a closed-handed feeling. It's the displeasure you feel when someone tries to take something that you already possess. This is how Biblical language uses envy and jealousy:

- Envy—"I want something and you've got it."
- Jealousy—"I have something and I don't want you to have it, so I'm going to keep it for myself."

Jealousy and envy are two sides of the same coin. When speaking of jealousy and envy in James 3:14, the NIV translators understood this aspect of a two-sided coin. They described jealousy and envy in [James 3:14](#) as, "*bitter envy...in your hearts.*" Bitter envy is this two-sided definition of jealousy and envy combined.

Jealousy in the Scriptures is almost always a condemnable thing, meaning it's a sin. However, jealousy is something commendable as well. The Scriptures tell us that our God is a Jealous God. God knows He's the best. God knows that there are none like Him. God knows that He is the Alpha and Omega, the Creator of all things. God knows He is preeminent over all things. He is holy. He is set apart. God is also jealous for His people.

On a human level, that same, righteous jealousy comes within marital relationships if someone tries to break up a marriage to get one of the spouses. That is a legitimate jealousy. It would be wrong if I thought it was okay that another man flirts with my wife. I should be jealous in that circumstance. God has built that within me.

This week, we're going to address the condemnable side of jealousy by looking at three things:

1. What are the characteristics of jealousy?
2. What are the consequences of jealousy?
3. What is the cure for this malady?

1. The Characteristics of Jealousy

Jealousy begins with a coveting heart

How do we identify jealousy? Notice it begins with a coveting heart. "I want something and you have it." There's no better way to exegete this part of the sermon than to go on a field trip. Walk down the hallway, take a left to our nursery and give one of the kids in the nursery a brand new truck. Watch what happens when the other children aren't given anything. There will be a lot of crying, maybe even some punches. Even at a young age, people are selfish and jealous.

Though we move out of the nursery, our jealousy never does. It's always there with us. We are just jealous over bigger trucks, bigger dolls and bigger issues. It's all the same stuff that we're dealing with. Babies show us envy and jealousy. James writes this

in [James 4:1-2](#), *"What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask."*

Exodus reminds us that there is much to covet. In [Exodus 20:17](#), Moses tells the children of Israel, *"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's."* In modern day language God says, "Don't covet anything." [John Calvin](#) once said that the human heart is a factory of idols. Coveting makes an idol out of something by saying, "I have to have that. If I don't have it, I'm going to die. Because you have it, a fury of envy and jealousy burns in me."

Jealousy can't celebrate when others succeed

When you covet, you will not be able to celebrate with those who succeed. You know you struggle with the sin of jealousy and envy when you find yourself unhappy when others have a victory.

Turn in your Bible to [Luke 15:11-32](#). Who can't celebrate with somebody when they win? The best example of it is found in the story of the prodigal son. The prodigal, remember, was living as if his dad had already died. He says to his father, "Give me my inheritance. I want to go live on my own." And the prodigal son leaves the home, lives a reckless and sinful life, and is doing great until the money dries up and famine enters the land. Then he finds himself in a pigsty, fighting with pigs over their food. He remembers, "I didn't have to eat this way at my father's house. Even as a servant I can eat and live better than I'm living now." He goes back and his father sees his son coming from far away. He runs to the son, embraces the son and announces to all the household, "Kill the fattened calf; get the best shoes and the best robe. Get the ring from my dresser; let's put it on his finger. That which was lost is now found!" And everybody celebrates, "This is wonderful! That which was lost has now been found." Except for one person: the older brother. Remember the story?

²⁵ "Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. ²⁷ And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.'"

You would think that the son would say, "Alright! Junior's back! This is exciting that Dad's throwing a party. My friends are in there. I'm going to go have a good time." You would think that's the natural response, but notice the text says:

²⁸ But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, ²⁹ but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' ³¹ And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"

Do you find yourself feeling like the older brother in that story? In moments when you should be celebrating, when you should be excited for another, are you only filled with anger? Do you struggle when someone buys a new car? When someone comes into an inheritance? When someone receives a reward? Look out! Jealousy isn't far away.

Jealousy causes cruelty towards others

For a while, you might be able to contain your jealousy, but eventually you'll go even farther than refusing to celebrate with them and you'll be cruel toward them. Last week I gave my son, Joshua, one of my old phones that we had put some music on. Well, his younger brother Luke likes listening to music, too. Luke decided to take Josh's phone to share the music with the neighbor kids. Josh was unaware of what was taking place and when he went over to the neighbor house and saw that Luke was showcasing the music on the phone, a brawl began. Joshua grabbed Luke's feet and said, "I will break your toes if you don't give me my phone back!" That's jealousy! That's that displeasure you feel when someone takes something that is yours. You can take that illustration one of two ways.

1. You can see the absolute chaos of the Badal family's lives.
2. You could see how dumb people act when given over to jealousy.

I hope you take the latter, for Amanda's sake, because jealousy will cause you to do all kinds of things like utter threats against one another. The passion within the human soul causes you to do incredibly evil things, and this is demonstrated all over the Bible.

In [Genesis 37](#), Joseph is one of 12 brothers. Joseph's dad gives him a coat of many colors. He affirms his favoritism for Joseph over the other brothers and the older brothers get angry. There's a two-step process to their anger:

1. They do not speak well of him. That's where it starts. Just start speaking badly of the person that you're jealous of.
2. They say, "Here comes the loved one, the favored one. Let's kill him." You don't think jealousy will lead you to do harmful things? Well, they think better of that and say, "Let's not kill him. We don't need the guilt on our hearts for that. Let's just sell him into slavery." And that's exactly what they do. They lie to their father and they move on.

In [Daniel 6](#), Daniel is working up the corporate ladder in Babylon. The king is loving what he's seeing in young Hebrew Daniel and elevates him over and over again—promotion after promotion. What do the [satraps](#) say in Daniel 6? "We've got to get rid of this guy! This guy's getting all the power and we're getting nothing." Then they look at Daniel's life and say, "Well, there's nothing to do, nothing to get him in trouble with. Oh, yes there is, there's one thing: let's connect him with his God and we'll get him in trouble." They catch him praying after an edict has been given and they throw him into a lion's den. They plot to cause an innocent man harm because of their jealousy. We know that Daniel doesn't die in the lion's den because God stops the lions from devouring him.

Finally, the very thing that put our Lord and Savior to death was the jealousy of the Pharisees. All the people were following Jesus. Crowds flocked to Him and wanted to make Jesus their King. The Pharisees then hung an innocent man on a cross, all out of jealousy ([John 12:19](#); [Matthew 21:15-16](#)). You don't think that jealousy and envy can get the best of you?

Jealousy causes us to be critical of God's sovereignty

Your jealousy isn't an issue with someone else here on earth. It isn't that girl who wears all the great clothes. It isn't that guy with all the personality and charisma. It isn't that person who got the promotion. Your jealousy has nothing to do with them and everything to do with God. If God is completely sovereign over all things – if God has created you, made you who you are, placed you in the situation you're in, given you all that you have – then your issue is with God.

What you're saying when you are jealous is, "God, we've got a problem. You haven't given me what I want. I want to look like Brad Pitt and you didn't do it, so I'm angry with You. I'm mad that he's got all the good looks and You've given me this mug. Why does my neighbor have a bigger house than I do? He doesn't even go to church! God, what's Your problem? God, didn't You get the memo that followers of Jesus Christ should be healthy, wealthy and wise? Didn't you get that, God?"

Your jealousy is an affront to God. You are pointing at Him and saying, "You blew it! You missed it, God! And I know what's better." God responds to this in [Romans 9:20-21](#), "Who do you think you are, old lump of clay, to tell the potter how to make things? I'm the Potter. You're the clay. I will make you how I will make you and you better shut your mouth and do what you're supposed to do. Stop being jealous of all the other clay pottery in the room because I've built you and I've created you for a purpose." God does what He does, and He does all things well.

2. The Consequences of Jealousy

Jealousy destroys the body

Proverbs says that jealousy destroys the body. In [Proverbs 14:30](#) Solomon says, "*A tranquil heart gives life to the flesh, but envy makes the bones rot.*" The [New Living Translation](#) says that jealousy is "*cancer to the bones.*" Jealousy is a little thing that starts out really small, maybe even begins benign. That little tumor has a little malignancy in it so it grows ever so slowly, little by little. Day after day it gets bigger and it's growing. Before you know it, it starts affecting other organs in your body. Then it has consumed all of who you are. Some of you are so utterly consumed by the lives and good fortunes of others that it has affected your health and your joy. It has robbed you of happiness and stolen your contentment. It rots the organs.

Jealousy deepens your suspicion of others

When you're jealous of others, you start looking at that girl in your class who has the new, good looking boyfriend and you assume she must be easy because that's the only way that kind of girl would get that kind of guy. Or that guy on the other side of the office gets the promotion and you say, "What shady deal did he do to get the job done?" Maybe your friends bought a new house and right away you tell your wife, "They must not be giving to the Lord. They must be doing something to their taxes

because I know what he makes and he can't afford a house like that. I bet you they're upside down on that mortgage." Instead of celebrating, you try to find devious reasons for people's good fortune. We assume the worst instead of believing the best.

In **1 Kings 18:6-16**, when Saul was the leader of Israel, there was a parade and people were chanting, "Saul kills thousands..." and Saul was happy. But when the David float came by they said, "David kills tens of thousands!" Oh boy. From that moment on Saul was consumed by jealousy because there was a guy who got more press than he did.

David was one of the greatest assets in Saul's kingdom at that time. Saul could have said, "You're right! My great general, my great soldier, David, does kill ten thousands for his nation, for his God. Let's get together and I'll be the first one to cheer him on! Isn't that great?" Any good press about Israel and victories should be good press about a king, right? But Saul hunts down his greatest asset. Out of jealousy he goes and fights a war to try and get press for himself. Then later, he loses his life, his son loses his life and David is given his throne. Jealousy causes us to be suspicious.

Jealousy develops a critical spirit

Do you struggle with envy? Instead of being at peace with what God is doing in your life, you're in a corner pouting and complaining because someone else has gotten something that you want. That is unbecoming for a child of God. In **1 Corinthians 13:7** we are told that love hopes for all things, not that it is critical of all things. You are called to love your rivals and your enemies, yet you can't even love your friend because your jealous spirit has gotten a hold of you. You'll never be able to share the gospel of grace with someone when you're vying with him or her. You'll never be able to share the gospel of Jesus Christ if you're fighting them over something they have, whether in the heart or in the physical realm.

Jealousy diminishes your appetite for God's Word

First Peter 2:1-3 says that like newborn babies, you need to crave spiritual milk. You need to taste and see that the Lord is good (**Psalm 34:8**). In order for us to taste and see that the Lord is good, the text says, "*So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.*" So you can't study God's Word and you can't pray right prayers if you are filled with envy. You will never pursue the things of God if you're too busy whetting your appetite on the things that someone else has. If you want the things of God, focus on the things of God and don't be worried about what everybody else has. Either you're going to devote yourself to the Word of God and to a relationship with Christ, being content in Him, or you're going to pursue the things that the world has, or what your neighbor has, or what your friend has.

3. The Cure for Jealousy

How do you rid yourself of jealousy? There are five things that must be a part of your life in order to get rid of jealousy. Through them you'll be able to sit under the Lordship of Christ and serve Him for your own good and for His glory.

Renounce your jealousy as sin

Are you man enough, are you woman enough, to say this morning, "My envy and jealousy are vile sins before God"? These are sins for which Jesus went to the cross to pay. Are you willing to acknowledge that insidious issue is a disease that's robbing your bones? Do you realize jealousy is an affront to God? Are you willing to repent of that and say, "No more! Today is the day that that jealous streak is defeated once and for all"? It begins by renouncing jealousy as a sin in your life.

Reflect the attitude of Christ

Our attitudes should be that of Christ Jesus in **Philippians 2:6-8**:

⁶Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Theologically speaking, Jesus had every right to be jealous of His position as the second Person of the Trinity. God the Father said to Him, "Humanity is going to hell in a hand basket and We are going to need to do something." Before the foundations of the earth, the Son said, "I will go and set all My prerogatives aside in order to become a man. For the sake of others I will open My hands so they may receive redemption."

When you are jealous, you promote self. However, when you humble yourself as Christ did, your actions become about others. It's not about your positions. It's not about your desires. It's not about your prerogatives or your preferences. It is about others.

That's why Paul says in **Philippians 2:3** to do nothing out of vain conceit or rivalry. Serve others; humble yourself so that others may be lifted up. Look to their interests and not to your own. When you reflect the attitude of Christ, instead of selfishly desiring things that others have, you're going to remember your rivals in prayer.

Matthew 5:44 says that we are to love our enemies and pray for them. When you see someone who has something you want, instead of letting that sin get the best of you, stop and pray, "Lord, thank You for that blessing in his life. Lord, I pray that that won't become an issue for him in the days to come but that it will really be a blessing to him. That new house, that new car, Lord, that new promotion, thank You. Lord, keep him humble."

Reacquainting yourself with God's blessings

When you are jealous or envious, the only thing you see is other people's things. When jealousy comes, you need to put the DVD in the DVD player and replay the highlights of **God's mercy that is new every morning** for each and every one of us. "God, You have been so good to me. You have been so good to my family. Why would I be jealous over someone else? God, You have been so gracious to me."

This is the crazy thing. This is how crazy a believer who's jealous of an unbeliever can be. You may have everything in this world that will burn on the Day of Judgment, but you have salvation. You've got an eternity in glory. What's 70 years in poverty when you've got a mansion in glory for eternity? You need to recognize what God has done in your lives and rewind that over, and over, and over again as an antidote to jealousy.

Rekindling God's love in your heart

First Corinthians 13:4 says that love does not envy. We're called to love God and we're called to love others. We will never be a church that loves Jesus to the point of transformation if we're envious. We will not be a church that loves one another to the point of sacrifice if we're jealous of others. We will not be able to love our neighbors to the point of action if we're too busy looking at the stuff in their garage instead of the heart that needs the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jealousy will keep every Christian from fulfilling his or her mission. If we're so worried about what every other church is doing, the numbers they're bringing in and the big buildings that they're building, then we'll never do what God has called us to do.

Thanks be to God that we have a Savior Who fulfilled His vision and mission, Who came so that He might die for the jealousy that we have. The Cross pays for the jealousy and envy in our lives and all the penalties for it. As you leave this place, live in the power of the Cross and by the power of the Spirit. Rid yourself of all envy, malice and jealousy by the grace of God and for the glory of God. Do so in a Biblical way that will honor Him.

Let's pray.

Father God, we come before You and pray that as we interact with others we would deal with this issue according to Your instructions. Jealousy rots our bones and we know that's not what You want in our lives. It causes us to be cruel toward others. Lord, we don't want that. It keeps us from seeing You as the gracious and glorious God that You are. Lord, rid us of this insidious disease so we may honor You in all that we do. Send us from this place in the peace of the Lord, in the fellowship of our brothers and sisters in Christ, that we may honor You in all that we say and do. In Christ's Name we pray. Amen.