**Smoke Signals**

**Envy’s Dirty Little Secrets- Week 2**

**Small Group Notes**

**October 17 and 20**

**Main Point:** Envy can be destructive not just to our emotions but also to our relationships with others and with Christ.

**Introduction:** Read the following quotes:

Whenever a friend succeeds, a little something in me dies…it is not enough to succeed. Others must fail. (Gore Vidal)

Envy is ugly. Envy is resenting God’s goodness in other people’s lives and ignoring God’s goodness in your own. (Craig Groeschel)

Ask:

Have you ever had someone to get a promotion or job that you wanted and thought they didn’t deserve? Have you ever seen something posted on social media of someone’s failure or problem and you cheered in your heart? (maybe a politician failed, or a public figure got caught doing something illegal)

Just as these quotes show us, envy is something that is a smoke signal to a deeper issue within our lives that can cause issues if not properly understood in Scripture.

**Discuss:**

1. Read 1 Corinthians 3:1-3

**What did Paul *want* to call the people in Corinth? What did Paul call the people of Corinth? (verse 1)**

**What would be an example of milk in the church today? (the gospel, fundamental truths of the faith, taking steps of faith)**

**How were the people acting as spiritual babies? (There was jealousy and envy) Has there been a time when you struggled with envy or jealousy? How did it impact your walk with Christ?**

**What do you think God expects of Christians when it comes to growing in Christ?**

Transition: Paul showed the people in Corinth how much envy and jealousy was impacting their ability to function as a body of believers. If we aren’t careful, we can allow jealousy of others to take the place of desiring to minister to others. As we will see in the next passage, there are effects to jealousy.

2. Read Genesis 16:1-6

**What motivated Sarah to ask Abraham to have a child with their servant, Hagar? What does this request tell us about the state of Sarah and Abraham’s faith?**

**Have you ever tried to take matters into your own hands rather than trusting and waiting on God? What happened as a result?**

**How did Sarah’s jealousy affect Hagar and Ishmael? What effects have you seen in your life and the lives of those around you when you’ve given into jealousy?**

Transition: Read Proverbs 14:30 and Ecclesiastes 4:4. These verse who us that even when we think we are succeeding, if we allow envy to remain in our hearts, then the result is pain with others in our relationships or we will seek to step ahead of God.

3. Read James 3:14-16.

**How does wisdom bring order instead of chaos? How do selfish ambition and envy bring disorder to a community?**

**What do you think James means by “such wisdom” being “demonic”? What do you think he means by it being “earthly”? What is the difference in earthly wisdom and heavenly wisdom?**

Transition: We live in a world that tells us to get all we can get and if you make a mistake it is someone else’s fault that you didn’t succeed. However, wisdom shows us that God is still in control of our lives and sees us even in our moments of pain or when we think we have been treated unfairly.

**Dig Deeper:**

***1 Corinthians 3:1-3 (ESV)***

***But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. 2I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, 3for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way?***

* Envy reveals a self-centered life.

What are ways that you have tried to battle being self-centered in your life?

What are ways that you have been tempted the most towards being self-centered? How can social media fuel our envy?

How can overcoming envy be an evidence of spiritual growth?

***Genesis 16:1-6***

***16 Now Sarai, Abram’s wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian slave named Hagar; 2so she said to Abram, “The Lord has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave; perhaps I can build a family through her.”***

***Abram agreed to what Sarai said. 3So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian slave Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. 4He slept with Hagar, and she conceived.***

***When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress. 5Then Sarai said to Abram, “You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my slave in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the Lord judge between you and me.”***

***6“Your slave is in your hands,” Abram said. “Do with her whatever you think best.” Then Sarai mistreated Hagar; so she fled from her.***

* Envy will rot your soul (Proverbs 14:30)
* Envy is an organizational cancer.

How can envy impact a family? Church? Team?

How has envy shown itself to be a threat to tension and a loss of focus?

***James 3:14–16 (NIV)***

***But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. 15Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. 16For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.***

* Envy says God, you made a mistake with my life.

How does listening to the enemy’s message about envy impact our identity in Christ? How have you seen it impact others?

Why is it important to remember how God created us (Psalm 139:14) in times of envy?

**Do:**

**What causes you to lose sight of the grace of God in your life? How can we maintain our focus on God’s grace when life is difficult? What about when life is good?**

**How do we demonstrate faith in the gospel when we rejoice with those who rejoice (Rom. 12:15)? What are some practical measures we could take to respond joyfully to the grace of God in the lives of those around us?**

**What promises of God could you hold on to this week as you seek to cultivate a heart of gratitude to God? What might it look like for you not only acknowledge God’s grace but also savor it?**