

## Enemies of the Heart – Part 4

### Jealousy

**Proverbs 4:23** says, “Keep your heart with all diligence,  
For out of it spring the issues of life. (NKJV)

How are things with your heart?

Are you getting a few things out during this series? Is God healing you?

Today we are going to talk about the enemy of jealousy.

#### **Introduction -**

Each of the enemies of the heart we’re discussing is energized by the idea that somebody owes something.

Guilt says, “I owe you.”

Anger is fueled by the notion that you owe me.

Greed is kept alive by the assumption that I owe me.

This fourth heart issue is no different. Jealousy says, “God owes me.”

When we think about jealousy or envy, we immediately think of the things others have that we lack. It could be looks, skills, opportunities, health, height, money, inheritance, etc.

We assume our problem is with the person who possesses what we lack. But let’s face it; God could have fixed all of that for us.

**Neighbor’s Car:** Whatever he gave your neighbor, he could have given you too. And besides, you don’t really want your neighbor’s car; you want one like it. You don’t mind the fact that God provided him with one. The problem is that, while passing out new cars, God skipped you!

**Sister’s Size 3:** The fact that your sister can fit comfortably into a size 3 pair of jeans is okay with you. The problem is that you can’t. You find yourself staring at her when she’s not looking, thinking, Gee, she looks so good and that’s disgusting. You know you shouldn’t feel this way, and you try not to let it get in the way of the relationship. You may even tell your sister how good she looks. But it’s always there. You’re continually reminded that she has something you don’t.

For me, it was **church buildings**.

### **1. Who do I blame?**

A. Let's face it; most of us believe on some level that if God had taken as good care of us as he has some people we know, our lives would be richer.

- a. If he hadn't made you quite so wide.
- b. If he hadn't allowed male-pattern baldness to run in your DNA.
- c. If as a teen you'd been as attractive as some of your classmates.
- d. If you could have excelled at sports, your chances would have been better.
- e. If God had made you smarter.
- f. If you were a more dynamic public speaker.
- h. If I could have just had children.
- i. What was God thinking? What God did for one he could have done for you too. But for some reason he didn't. Your problem isn't with the person who has what you don't; it's with your Creator. He owes you.

B. Yet our jealousy rarely surfaces in our interaction with God.

If we're aware of it at all, we might confess it as a sin. But even then we think of our jealousy as an issue between family, friends, co-workers, or neighbors.

1. It doesn't register as a grudge we're holding against God. But that's exactly what it is.
2. The irony is that the people we're jealous of can't do anything to remedy the situation.

C. Who has the power to make this emotional issue go away?

Can your brother the all-star make you a better athlete?

Can your Harvard-bound sister make you brighter?

Can your best friend make you skinnier?

Would it really help if your neighbor bought you a car like his?

Not really. That would actually make things worse. (Guilt)

D. The thing none of us want to admit.

There's something satisfying about watching someone you envy lose something you wish you had.

Be honest. Have you ever derived pleasure from watching someone who pulled ahead of you financially suffer a minor setback?

Did you feel a twinge of satisfaction when you noticed that your sister-in-law put on weight?

Have you grin at the ding on your neighbor's car door?

No? Me neither. But I've heard of people who did.

E. The reason the people you envy can do nothing to remedy your feelings is that they are not your problem. Their losses, setbacks, failures, and extra poundage only serve to temporarily alleviate, not eradicate, your pain. Because they are not really your problem.

F. Jealousy and relationships.

Cain was jealous of Abel.

Esau was jealous of Jacob.

Joseph's brothers were jealous of their younger brother's relationship with Dad.

Rome - Commodus was jealous of Maximus.

And even now, Sheriff Woody was jealous of Buzz Lightyear.

## 2. How did the enemy of jealousy get into my heart?

### James 4:1-3 NIV

**1** What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? **2** You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. **3** When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

A. **1** What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from

## **your desires that battle within you?**

1. “What causes fights and quarrels among you?” – The Question  
Wherever you work, whichever church you attend, whatever kind of family you grew up in, if there are continual disagreements in your life with others, I can help you find the common denominator: **MAYBE** the only person in all of those arguments was **YOU**.

a. Notice how many times James says the word **YOU** in these 3 verses.

## **B. 2 You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God.**

1. The driving force behind jealousy is really the driving force behind every single relational struggle you’ll encounter in your life.  
From marriage problems to personnel problems in the office, all of them can be reduced down to one common issue, “I didn’t get what I wanted.”

### **2. You Can’t Always Get What You Want**

James comes right out and states it plainly: You want something but don’t get it. There it is. The source of every conflict you and I will ever experience.

a. When you hear your children arguing, you know instinctively that the real issue isn’t the toy, the DVD, or who gets to sit in which seat; the real issue is that two people want their way, and one’s not getting it.

3. James uses another interesting term in this passage: “covet.” This word, as used here, means to hotly pursue or to strive after. The picture is of someone who’s constantly trying to meet a need that can’t ever seem to be met. But in the end, “you cannot get what you want.”

4. James is looking beneath the surface at the desires that are constantly swirling around our hearts like hungers that are never fully satisfied.

No matter how full you feel after a meal, you keep eating until you are satisfied.

5. It doesn't mean that you don't have enough, but rather you are not satisfied with what you have. This issue, is not about needing things, it's about wanting things. Ask yourself the question right now, "Do I have enough?"
6. Our God is a good God and the Bible says, he will supply all of your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.
  - a. Maybe God has given you everything you need and when you need more, He will give you more.
  - b.
- C. Jealousy is dangerous.

It's dangerous because it shapes our attitudes toward other people. It's harder to love, submit and serve with this in your heart. Before long it takes over our attitudes toward life. He causes us to slip into self-pity.

  1. If not dealt with, it becomes resentment.

Resentment needs justification, so we go looking until we find it and we justify our feelings.
  2. It has the power to sour our attitudes toward entire categories of people. Rich people, supermodels, bodybuilders, megachurch pastors, stay-at-home moms, career women, big-haired women, men with hair, people with nice cars. It's suddenly easy to write off an entire swath of the human race.
  3. Who are you jealous of? Nobody, you say? Maybe.

What category of people do you secretly enjoy watching them struggle?  
Professionals? Performers? Company executives? Marrieds?  
Singles? Children? Retirees?

### **3. What is The Solution?**

What do you do with desires and appetites that can never be fully and

finally satisfied? James says you take them to the one who created them in the first place. You do not have because you do not ask God.

**James 4:2b-3 (NIV)**

**You do not have because you do not ask God. 3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.**

A. James is instructing us to bring our deepest desires and unmet needs to the Father. He's giving us permission to pour out our hearts in an unfiltered conversation with our Creator.

1. Peter echoes this sentiment when he writes, "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7).

B. You need to know and believe that everything that is important to you is important to God.

C. James has more to say on this subject in chapter 1:

**Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. (James 1:17)**

D. **4 STEP exercise to rid your heart of jealousy:**

1. Make a list of all the things you want and didn't get.
2. Take the list to God and have an open conversation.  
Go ahead and tell him how unhappy you've been with the way He's Made you and treated you. He can handle it. Tell him that you feel justified in your feelings, after all, He did it for other people.  
Then summarize it this way. "Lord, I think you owe me."
3. Now make another list of the things God HAS given you.
4. Openly and out loud, THANK God for the things He has given you.