



JANUARY 18, 2024 THURSDAY - DAY 11

PRAY THAT WE WOULD NOT ENVY ONE ANOTHER

GALATIANS 5:26

Having discussed the fruit that defines a Spirit filled life, Paul now lists some things that detract from it, one of which was “provoking one another.” The second is “envying one another.” “Envy” refers to feelings of jealousy. In the previous chapter, we learned that an epidemic of conceit (“vain glory”) in the body results in people “provoking one another.” A second result of rampant pride is the equally odious sin of envy.

ENVY AS AN ATTITUDE

Envy is the effluvia that oozes from the constant comparison of one self to others. Envy was one of the medieval “Seven Deadly Sins,” so recognized because they were seminal to a host of subsequent sins. Some of the fruits of envy are backbiting, gossip, slander, bigotry, and vanity. One is vainglorious when he brags of his situation in life. Such an attitude provokes others.

Those who desire to succeed, to be more than they are, are easily irritated by such provocation. The natural response is jealousy, or “envy.” Someone who desires to be first cannot stand the success of another.

As persons are provoked, they become envious. Each cannot tolerate the attitude of the other. Non essentials are treated as matters of life and death and become proof that one is superior to the other. Competition not motivated by love, the chief fruit of the Spirit ensues. In fact, attitudes of provocation and envy cause one to lose perspective and balance. Persons lose sight of love, joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control and ultimately walk in the flesh, rather than in the spirit. Where the fruit of the spirit is manifested, provocation and envy cannot dwell.

A conceited, vainglorious person is liable to be envious of those who receive the attention and respect that he imagines to be due to him.

The Bible has much to say about envy.

- Proverbs 14:30 - “Envy is rottenness to the bones.”
- Proverbs 27:4 - “Wrath is cruel and anger a torrent, but who is able to stand before jealousy?”
- Genesis 37:11 - It was jealousy that prompted Joseph’s brothers to sell him into slavery.
- Matthew 27:18 - The Pharisees handed Jesus over “because of envy.”

ENVY IN SOCIETY

We live in a competitive society where everyone is striving to “look out for number one.” We are generation that cultivates power lunches and power ties. Mariabelle Stewart, the “Queen of Courtesy,” has developed a new seminar to teach the “Manners of Power People.” Major “power failures” occur if one should ever violate these edicts:

- Never mash or stir your food.
- Never read the menu carefully. You are not here to eat, but to do business.
- Never, ever hand your plate to the waiter.
- Never stoop down to pick up dropped silverware.



JANUARY 18, 2024 THURSDAY - DAY 11

PRAY THAT WE WOULD NOT ENVY ONE ANOTHER

GALATIANS 5:26

In this society of one upmanship, envy spills over into our churches. Pastors get caught playing the "Numbers Game." We measure the greatness of a church by the size of its buildings, budget, and busses. Who has the largest choir? The most state of the art computer systems? The most television ads? Or at least the biggest spot in the Yellow Pages? A spirit of competition and envy causes factions both within churches and between churches. And the only real winner is the devil himself. We become obsessed with inconsequential trivia that serves to divide the body.

How did she get the solo in the musical?
Why didn't anyone ask me about the color of the carpet in the nursery?
Why isn't my daughter asked to give her testimony?
Why does his pneumonia merit public prayer and not my gall bladder?

Legend has it the Envy and Greed were walking down a road together when they were confronted by an angel who offered to grant them whatever they desired so long as their companion received twice as much. Finally, Envy spoke up. "I ask that you give me one blind eye." Envy can infiltrate the heart of even the most spiritually mature of us. The demons were unsuccessfully trying to tempt a holy hermit who lived in the Libyan desert. Try as they might, they could not get him to succumb. Temptations of the flesh, doubts, and fears left him unaffected. Finally, Lucifer himself was called in. "Your methods are too crude and uncreative," he berated. "Just watch." Then he whispered into the holy man's ear, "Your brother was just made Bishop of Alexandria." Slowly, a malignant scowl crept across the hermit's visage. "Envy," boasted Satan, "is our final weapon against the holiest of saints." Pray that we would not envy one another.

**Let us not become conceited,
Provoking one another,
Envyng one another.
Gal. 5:26**

PRAYING FOR ONE ANOTHER

1. Pray that God would deliver our churches of the spirit of competition and envy.
2. Pray that we might be "plagued" with an epidemic of praise and gratitude for one another both within our churches and between churches.
3. Ask God to show you how you might bless a church other than your own.
4. Pray that God would show you ways you might compliment at least three people every day for the next week. Then do it.

**We all sin and thus need to bear
Another's burdens that come as
A result of our sins, even as
Another bears our burdens.**

**Only the unconditional acceptance of God
As fleshed out in the body of Christ can
Help us bear these crushing burdens.**

**When someone shares a burden with us,
We are on holy ground and carry a sacred trust.**