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# Words of Truth

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## The Spirit That Dwelleth In Us Lusteth To Envy

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James wrote this: *“From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up”* (James 4:1-10).

There is much to consider in the Scriptures you just read. For the sake of our study, in this particular article, we are going to focus on the internal lust to envy. Envy has long been a problem amongst humanity. Envy existed in early days of life on this earth (Genesis 4:1-10 and I John 3:11-12). Envy has caused not only murder, but the rejection of the Gospel (Acts 13:45-51). Since God has told us that it is in man to envy, we must do more than just consider this subject matter. We have to understand it and conquer the envious nature that is in mankind.

### Understanding Envy

Envy is defined, as it is used in James 4:5, in this way: “ill- will (as detraction), i. e. jealousy” (Strong’s # 5355). The same word is used in Galatians 5:21 and is translated there as “envyings”. In that particular context (Galatians 5:19-21) we see that envy is a work of the flesh, which is a contrast of spiritual minded work (Galatians 5:22-23).

The Scripture says: *“Again, I considered all travail, and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbour. This is also vanity and vexation of spirit”* (Ecclesiastes 4:4). What sense does it make that a man would envy another for right works? It doesn’t make sense does it? Yet, as we’ve discussed briefly already, Cain did this to his brother Abel. When Joseph was preferred over his brethren and dreamed prophetically, his brethren envied him and hated him (Genesis 37:1-11). Through envy, Joseph’s brothers sold him into slavery (Acts 7:9). It doesn’t make sense, but it is what happened.

Envy is not sensible. The Savior of the world (John 4:42) was delivered to death because of envy (Matthew 27:11-18). No one whom envied Jesus could have understood who He was/is or what His mission was/is. How could you have ill will motivated by jealousy over

God in the flesh (Romans 9:1-5) for any reason? This is especially true when you consider that those whom envied Jesus did so despite the fact that He was only working to help them (Matthew 18:11 and Luke 19:10).

We can see that envy is carnally motivated (I Corinthians 3:3). We have seen that envy doesn't make any sense. We have seen that envy causes people to do things that are purely evil to good people (Abel, Joseph, and Jesus being victims of envy). In addition to those things we have learned, there are a few other things to consider before we move on.

We need to understand that envy will eat you up inside (Proverbs 14:30). Envy will lead to your demise (Job 5:2-3). *“Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy”* (Proverbs 27:4)? God has given up on those of the past whom were filled with envy (Romans 1:28-32). Envy is rooted in disobedience to the words of our Lord (I Timothy 6:3-4). Envy is a key ingredient to every evil work (James 3:14-16). Having an understanding of these things, let's discuss how we can fight against and conquer envy.

### Conquering Envy

While envy may be inside of us, that doesn't mean we cannot rid ourselves of it. Notice: *“Wherefore **laying aside** all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and **envies**, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby”* (I Peter 2:1-2). We just read that we can choose to lay aside envy. Therefore, we must understand this battle can be won.

This battle is one that must be won. Consider this command: *“Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof”* (Romans 13:13-14). The key to victory over evil was just stated by the inspired Apostle Paul. That key is “make no provision for the flesh”.

We addressed earlier in our study how that envy is a work of the flesh (Galatians 5:21). In that same context, notice what we read concerning the works of the flesh: *“And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another”* (Galatians 5:24-26). Just because we are alive in the flesh, we do not need to live after the flesh (Romans 8:12-13). Like all other fleshly desires, envy is conquered by not giving into the fleshly desire to be envious. Make up your mind and choose to bring any thought that might lead to envy into captivity to the obedience of Christ (II Corinthians 10:5).

### Conclusion

You do NOT have a sinful nature. You were NOT created to be a sinner (Ecclesiastes 7:29). Yet, we have learned that the spirit of man within us might strongly desire to be envious of others. The world has taught us to be such. That doesn't mean we cannot control those thoughts and prevent envious actions from occurring. We've learned that. We know we have an enemy with us when it comes to envy. If you haven't already, grab that enemy and purge it from your being. Live now so that the sinfulness of envy is part of the past you, not the present you (Titus 3:3).