

Sermon Study Guide



#6: Envy & Jealousy

HOME: Finding Redemption in the Messiness of Life

March 8, 2020 | Dr. Stephen G. Tan

In this series we look at the life of Jacob to help us identify the sin issues that causes messiness in life and dysfunction in the family, and how we can find redemption in these messes.

Reflect

Envy and jealousy are oftentimes interchanged, but there is actually a distinct difference between the two. Envy is the emotion of coveting something that belongs to someone else, whereas jealousy is the emotion of fearing someone or something you already own or possess will be taken away by someone else. Envy is a reaction to a lack of something, while jealousy is a reaction to the threat of losing someone/something. Have you ever experienced being envious and/or jealous? Share how you dealt with it.

Read and Discuss

Scripture

Genesis 29:31-30:24

Discussion Questions

Envy and jealousy both come into play to destroy and divide families, as we see in Jacob's life. As in his agreement with Laban, Jacob married Rachel seven days after marrying Leah, and then started working off the seven years he has promised to Laban. To be clear, Jacob should have not married Rachel because he was already married to Leah. God built marriage between one man and one woman only. Through having multiple wives was a practice in Jacob's culture during that time, God never approved of it. This human intervention to what God has willed resulted in messiness in Jacob's married life. We learn from this passage important principles about envy and jealousy:

1. **Unchecked envy drives people to unhealthy competition (v. 29: 31-35).** It was obvious to both Leah and Rachel that Jacob loved Rachel

more than Leah. The Bible tells us that God saw this, and so He blessed Leah with children. How did Leah respond to God's blessings? What are the results when you try to compete with someone with whom you feel envious? Discuss how you should react when God compensates your lack of something with something else.

2. **Unbridled jealousy often results in unjustified sin and misguided theology (v. 30:1-8).** Rachel was envious that she is unable to give Jacob children. What did she declare because of her jealousy and why was what she said wrong? What did Rachel do in reaction to her uncontrolled jealousy? Was what she did acceptable? Did God approve of that practice? Discuss how even Christians react with misguided theology because of envy or jealousy.
3. **Senseless rivalry causes one to follow other's sinful ways (v. 9-13).** After Rachel had children, Leah was worried that Jacob would love Rachel even more deeply. Envy had turned into a rivalry of who had more kids. What did Leah do that showed how she stooped down to Rachel's level of pettiness? Discuss how rivalry could cause someone to pursue something that is sinful just to be level with the person he/she is competing with.
4. **When one accepts the prerogative of God to give and bless as He chooses, then envy and jealousy have no place in our lives (v. 14-24).** Both Leah and Rachel had more kids, not because of any manipulation on their part, but because God gave and blessed them with kids. How are both children and adults affected by rivalries, jealousies, and manipulations in the family? On the other hand, how does accepting that it is God who chooses to give and bless as He sees fit would give you a better perspective on how God works? Why is being thankful an antidote to envy and jealousy?

Respond

In Walk: Envy and jealousy have no place in the Christian life. If you are going through these emotions, discuss with the group what you can do to overcome them.

In Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for teaching me that envy and jealousy have no place in my life. May you help me to walk in trust of You, instead of trying to control my situation because there is no way that I can manipulate You and Your will for my life. Help me to seek your will and honor Your choices for my life instead of being envious of others who may have what I don't. Lord, please give me contentment and thankful heart. In Jesus' name. Amen.