

What is jealousy?

We oftentimes have a negative connotation of the word jealousy; however, in the Bible we find that there is such thing as righteous jealousy. So before we get into the effects of sinful jealousy (the envious or covetous kind) and how to have victory over it, we'll examine some different types of jealousy.

1. God is jealous. (Exodus 34:14) He has a right--there is no God but Him. Christians are wedded to Him and we should not go a whoring after other gods.

Too often our English language makes "jealous OF" the default meaning for "jealousy"--instead of the biblical "jealous FOR". The "jealous OF" meaning is tantamount to envy and is NEVER ascribed to God. The "jealous FOR" (which seems odd to us users of modern parlance) is essentially the same in meaning as "zealous for protecting/maintaining our enjoyable and fruitful relationship of intimacy". The "jealous FOR" (in the context of His love for His people) usage is the one used predominantly of God

2. A man with a suspected unfaithful spouse is jealous. (Numbers 5:12) He has a right to know if his beloved is being faithful or adulterous.

3. A man jealous for the Lord. (1 Kings 19:10) This person gives his exclusive loyalty to God.

4. A man with godly jealousy. (2 Corinthians 11:2) This person has lead someone to Christ and wants them to stay on track with Jesus. It could also be a Christian worker who wants to see those he helps stay with Jesus.

5. A man's jealousy because he is resentfully envious. (Song of Solomon 8:6) It can consume and cripple your walk with Jesus. It is sin and, unsurprisingly, the world in large measure, operates on this.

In this discussion, we will concentrate on the fifth type of jealousy, the envious kind. So when I say jealous, I'm referring to an unrighteous envy.

The Sin of Jealousy

Jealousy provokes us to anger. – For jealousy is the rage of a man... (Proverbs 6:34)

No good can come from such anger. – James 1:20 ...the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

Jealousy can affect many areas of our Christian life. Some results of unbridled jealousy include:

- Robbing God. When we are overcome with any sin, we are robbing God of His time and the good fruits that we are supposed to be bearing and instead are concentrating on our response to another person.
- Interrupted fellowship with God. (Matthew 5:22-24) Jesus commands that we make peace with those we are angry with before coming to God with a gift. If you are jealous and angry you are not coming to God with a clean heart.

- Jealousy can cause hatred. That is like committing murder. (I John 3:15, I John 4:20)
- Jealousy is oftentimes tied to the sins of envy (feeling of discontent because of another's advantage) and/or covetousness (to ardently desire something that someone else has). When we nurse jealousy, and don't rebuke it, we willingly sin. (James 4:17)
- Jealousy is consuming and can become an idol. The mind thinks on it, sometimes we may try to "outdo" the object of our jealousy, and our relationship with God suffers. Our fixation should be on Jesus, not another human being.

How to Overcome – Practical Tips

Christians are already overcomers because of what Christ did when He made an open show of the dark powers and principalities of this world. You no longer have to be subject to your flesh, the devil, or the world. Victory is in your hands just reach out and take it. (1 Corinthians 15:57)

1. Submit yourself to God by stepping up your Bible reading. Try Proverbs which has a lot of practical everyday wisdom on how we should behave wisely. Remember God is speaking to you through His word. Follow what it says.
2. Fast for the problem and look for God's answer. It's coming.
3. Pray fervently for humility, meekness, contrite heart, and charity.
4. Take it one day at a time (Matthew 6:34) and one transaction at a time. When a circumstance comes up where you might get jealous, begin to pray to God silently. You can say, "God loves this person, Jesus loves this person, I love this person." You can even quote scripture. Anything right to keep your mind clean.
5. During prayer, tell God, out loud, that you love the person you are jealous of and to make it so in your heart. He commanded us to love. Love is not emotion, it is an act of the will. We make the decision to love. As time goes on, this decision becomes heartfelt love through God.
6. Through reading the Bible, understand who you are in Christ and how all things are yours. Our sense of worth is defined by what we are in Christ, not by what we are in this world or the eyes of other people.
7. Take all of your deepest feelings to the Lord in prayer. Humble yourself by getting down on your knees. Talk to the Lord out loud. Don't be embarrassed--He already knows your feelings and wants you to share with Him. Cast all your care upon Him for he careth for you (I Peter 5:7).
8. Determine, like Paul, that you will not be brought under the power of anything (I Corinthians 6:12) and that you will keep your body under subjection (I Corinthians 9:27).
9. If you do not currently have a ministry for the Lord, get one and work. Serving other people minimizes your own problems and gives you honor by being a fellow laborer with the Lord.
10. Meditate on the word of God continually. This has a cleansing effect.
11. Disassociate yourself with ungodly things or people that feed your jealousy.