

**Living in the Overflow of God's Love**  
**Love does not envy**

For once in her glamorous life, Patrizia Reggiani was not dressed for the occasion. At 5 a.m. on January 31, [1997], police swarmed into her eighteenth century penthouse on Milan's Corso Venezia and arrested the 49-year-old socialite for the murder of her former husband, fashion heir Maurizio Gucci.

When Patrizia Reggiani Martinelli was convicted for the murder of her ex-husband, stories like this riveted Italian society. Consumed by insatiable jealousy over their separation, she took a contract out on his life and ended it in 1995.

Gucci was the last family member to hold shares of the company his grandfather founded in Florence in 1906. Although the company still bears the Gucci name, dissension, envy, and greed have destroyed all connections the family had with the Gucci empire.

The tragedy of the Gucci family played itself out in the twentieth century, but it is an age-old story. Cain killed his brother for the same reason Patrizia killed Maurizio. Joseph's brothers made a similar attempt. Jacob and Esau, Sarah and Hagar, David and Saul – the Bible is filled with stories of envy and strife.

**Envy (n)** : A feeling of discontent, resentment or covetousness with regard to another's advantages, success, possessions, etc. A longing to possess something awarded to or achieved by another.

**Webster's Unabridged Dictionary**

"Envy is the art of counting the other fellow's blessings instead of your own."

**Harold Coffin**

Most precious. Must have it. We wants it, we wants it, we wants it!

**Gollum, in Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings"**

The spectator-buyer is meant to envy herself as she will become if she buys the product. She is meant to imagine herself transformed by the product into an object of envy for others, an envy which will then justify her loving herself.

**John Berger**

Hatred is active, and envy passive dislike; there is but one step from envy to hate.

**Johann Wolfgang von Goethe**

**Cure for Envy**

**By C.H. Spurgeon**

Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long. For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cast off. (Proverbs 23:17-18)

When we see the wicked prosper we are apt to envy them. When we hear the noise of their mirth and our own spirit is heavy, we half think that they have the best of it. This is foolish and sinful. If we knew them better, and specially if we remembered their end, we should pity them.

The cure for envy lies in living under a constant sense of the divine presence, worshiping God and communing with Him all the day long, however long the day may seem. True religion lifts the soul into a higher region, where the judgment becomes more clear and the desires are more elevated. The more of heaven there is in our lives, the less of earth we shall covet. The fear of God casts out envy of men.

The deathblow of envy is a calm consideration of the future. The wealth and glory of the ungodly are a vain show. This pompous appearance flashes out for an hour and then is extinguished. What is the prosperous sinner the better for his prosperity when judgment overtakes him? As for the godly man, his end is peace and blessedness, and none can rob him of his joy; wherefore, let him forgo envy and be filled with sweet content.

#### Max Lucado-

Speaks of a single woman who had to cope with envy. Not anger, Not red-hot jealousy. Certainly not hatred. Just envy. A flicker of resentment toward women who have what she doesn't. And she's concerned.

Well she should be. For what is a flicker today can turn into a fire tomorrow.

Suppose you spotted a flame in your house...

1. Not a big flame... just a little one.
2. What would you do? (whatever you had to do, right?)
3. Why? (we know what fire does)

So we would put the fire out!

- Throw water on it
- Stamp it out

For the sake of your house you'd do whatever it takes.

#### And you know... it's the same thing for your heart as well.

A. A fire in the heart left unchecked can burst into destructive flames.

1. Solomon tells us the name of that fire (Song of Solomon 8:6)

Set me as a seal upon your heart, As a seal upon your arm; For love is as strong as death, Jealousy as cruel as the grave; Its flames are flames of fire, A most vehement flame.

2. Paul was explicit in his description of love as well. (1 Cor. 13:4- Love does not envy)

- No doubt that he had read and new the results of unmanaged jealousy.

3. Look at Joseph's brothers

- Innocent teasing of Joseph
- Just a flicker of flame
- Then the consuming fire

**All because of envy (Gen. 37:11)**

4. Or what about the Pharisees

- Were these evil men?
- Or criminals?
- Or thugs?

No! • They were pious • the ministers and pastors of their day

**But look at what they did to Jesus**

**Matt. 27:18-** For he (Pilate) knew it was out of envy that they had handed Jesus over to him.

#### Welsh Fairy Stories- Envy Burns Itself

Talharian, a learned and wise bard, had a son named Tanwyn, who, when he arrived at a man's estate, was desirous of leaving his father's house and seeking his fortune in the world. Talharian said to him, "My son, I have neither gold nor silver to give thee, but I have instructed thee in all useful learning and becoming conduct. There is no need to give thee further counsel except what I now say to thee, namely, 'Pass not by any man who preaches God's word without stopping to listen.'"

After receiving his father's blessing, Tanwyn departed. After travelling a considerable way, he came to a long and even beach by the seaside, and with the point of his staff he wrote on the sand, "Whoso wishes evil to his neighbour, to himself will it come."

After he had passed on his way, it chanced that a wealthy and powerful nobleman saw the writing on the sand. He overtook Tanwyn and asked him, "Was it thou that didst write on the sand?" "Yes," answered Tanwyn. "Let me," said the nobleman, "see thee writing again." "I will do so," said Tanwyn, and he wrote, "Man's best candle is discretion."

"Whither art thou going?" asked the nobleman. "Into the world to earn my livelihood" said Tanwyn. "Thou art the man I want," said the nobleman; "wilt thou come with me and be my steward, to manage my household and my property?" "I will," said Tanwyn, and he went to live with the nobleman.

He performed his duties with such wisdom and good will and justice that all who came to visit the nobleman praised the new steward greatly. In the course of time Tanwyn's fame for discretion and honourable dealing aroused his master's envy. The more men lauded Tanwyn, the more envious did the nobleman become, until he at last took counsel with his lady about putting him to death. She in her love for her lord bethought her of a way to compass Tanwyn's destruction.

The nobleman had on his estate some lime-burners: the lady went to them and promised them a great sum of money if they would throw into the kiln the first man who should come to them with a vessel of mead. She told her lord of her stratagem, and the two, filling a large vessel with mead, ordered Tanwyn to take it to the lime-burners. Tanwyn took the vessel and carried it towards the kiln. On the way he heard in a house the voice of an old and godly man preaching the word of God, and according to his father's instruction turned into the house and listened for a considerable time to the preacher's words.

Meanwhile, the nobleman concluding that by that time Tanwyn must be reduced to ashes, proceeded to the kiln with another vessel of mead as a reward to the lime-burners. When he arrived there, he was seized by the lime-burners and thrown into the fire, where he perished miserably. Thus did envy burn itself.

B. Don't forget me... If we're going to listen to the people who struggle with jealousy, I guess you have to put my name of the list.

1. But before you judge me too harshly, perhaps you need to get your name on the list as well.
2. Envy enters our lives quietly. It begins with being discontent with your own circumstances in life. Envy hides in a variety of our emotions.
  - Maybe there's a time in your life when someone you knew received more material blessings than you did (whether the deserved it or not)
  - Or the person that had a more loving spouse than you did.
  - Or the parents that had those impeccably behaved kids

**You fill in the blank...**

## The problem of Envy

A. The problem is not trusting **Read Psa. 37:1-4**

*Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of those who do wrong;*

*2 for like the grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away.*

*3 Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.*

*4 Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.*

B. The cure for jealousy is **TRUST**-- the cause of jealousy is **DISTRUST**

1. Jacob's sons had no trust that God would meet their needs.

2. The Pharisees didn't trust God enough to solve their problems

3. And I don't always trust God enough to deal with my jealousies

4. Solomon says- Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy? (**Prov. 27:4 KJV**)

**Prov. 14:30 (KJV)** A sound (healthy) heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones.

**Prov. 6:34a (NASV)** For jealousy enrages a man...

C. If you've experienced envy, stop listing what you want, and start trusting God to be your provider.

### A quote from Max:

God withholds what we desire in order to give us what we need. You desire a spouse, he gives you himself. You seek a larger church, he prefers a stronger church. You want to be healed so you can serve. He wants you confined so you can pray.

**A quote from Scot-** The most significant times of my life have been in times of struggle. For it is in our struggles that we learn to TRUST GOD!

Jenny loved her pearls (even though they were fake). They made her feel dressed up and grown up. She wore them everywhere--Sunday school, kindergarten, even to bed.

Jenny had a very loving daddy and every night when she was ready for bed, he would stop whatever he was doing and come upstairs to read her a story. One night when he finished the story, he asked Jenny, "Do you love me?"

"Oh yes, Daddy. You know that I love you."

"Then may I have your pearls?"

"Oh, Daddy, not my pearls. But you can have Princess--the white horse from my collection. The one with the pink tail. Remember, Daddy? The one you gave me. She's my favorite."

"That's okay, honey. Daddy loves you. Good night." And he kissed her.

About a week later, after the story time, Jenny's daddy asked again, "Do you love me?"

"Daddy, you know I love you."

"Then will you give me your pearls?"

"Oh, Daddy, not my pearls. But you can have my baby doll. The brand new one I got for my birthday. She is so beautiful and you can have the yellow blanket that matches her sleeper."

"That's okay, Honey. Sleep well. God bless you, little one. Daddy loves you." And as always, he'd give her a gentle kiss. A few nights later when her daddy came in, Jenny was sitting on her bed with her legs crossed Indian-style. As he came close, he noticed her chin was trembling and one silent tear rolled down her cheek.

"What is it, Jenny? What's the matter?"

Jenny didn't say anything but lifted her little hand up to her daddy. When she opened it, there was her little pearl necklace. With a little quiver, she finally said, "Here, Daddy. It's for you." With tears gathering in his own eyes, Jenny's kind daddy reached out with one hand to take the prized necklace. With the other hand he reached into his pocket and pulled out a blue velvet case and handed to Jenny and told her, "Thank you for giving me your most prized possession. Here Honey, I have this for you also. I wanted to trade you..."

As Jenny pried open the blue velvet box, so nice a thing itself she'd never known, the glistening white sheen of the rich genuine pearls struck her teary eyes.

Do you suppose that your Father wants to give you some pearls as well?

A. What He offers you today is real love.

1. And his devotion is the real thing.
2. But you need to know this: He won't give you the genuine until you give up the imitations.

B. This morning's question is:

1. What pearls is he hoping you'll release today?
2. Would you exchange the lesser gifts for the higher gift of knowing God?
3. If you would, then your envy will pass.
  - Jealousy has no fire when authentic love is received.

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