

The Green Eyed Monster

1 Timothy 6:6-10

➤ Introduction

What is the “Green Eyed Monster?” Shakespeare calls it the “green sickness.” It is a major problem in our society today among just about everyone. Christians are not exempt and in some cases Christians are the most affected by it. What is the “Green Eyed Monster?” It is Envy.

Read Scripture 1 Timothy 6:6-10

⁶But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. ⁷For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. ⁸If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. ⁹But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. 1 Timothy 6:6-10 NAS

Prayer

➤ Introducing the Green Eyed Monster

Illus: After a long illness, a woman died and arrived at the Gates of Heaven. The gatekeeper came by and the woman said to him, “This is such a wonderful place! How do I get in?”

“You have to spell a word,” the gatekeeper told her.

“Which word?” the woman asked.

“Love” he answered.

The woman correctly spelled “Love” and the gatekeeper welcomed her into Heaven.

About six months later, the gatekeeper asked the woman to watch the Gates of Heaven for him that day. While the woman was guarding the Gates of Heaven, her husband arrived.

“I’m surprised to see you,” the woman said. “How have you been?”

“Oh, I’ve been doing very well since you died,” her husband responded. “I married that beautiful young nurse who took care of you while you were ill. And then I won the lottery. I sold the little house you and I lived in and bought a mansion. And my wife and I traveled all around the world seeing all sorts of exotic places. We were on vacation and I was water skiing today. I fell, the ski hit my head and here I am. By the way, how do I get in?”

“You have to spell a word,” the woman told him.

“Which word?” her husband asked.

“Czechoslovakia,” she answered.

Needless to say, this lady was filled with envy real quick. It didn’t take long for her envy to find a way to strike back.

God’s word has some very strong things to say about Envy. Today we will take a close look at exactly what is envy, the consequences of envy, the difference between envy and ambition, and the cure for envy.

1. What is Envy?

Envy is being jealous of someone else’s success or happiness.

Envy is being happy over some else’s downfall or misfortune.

Envy is being discontent with what you have and feeling like you deserve more.

Envy is comparing yourself to others rather than who God wants you to be.

Envy is obsession with wealth and possessions.

Envy is a temptation of the strongest kind.

Envy is sin closely associated with evil.

Listen to just a few of the things God's word says about Envy.

Jesus said, ²⁰“*What comes out of a man is what makes him ‘unclean.’*” ²¹*For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery,* ²²*greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly.* ²³*All these evils come from inside and make a man ‘unclean.’”* Mark 7:20-23 NIV

James wrote: ¹⁴*But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth.* ¹⁵*Such ‘wisdom’ does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil.* ¹⁶*For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.”* James 3:14-16

Galatians 5:19-21 puts envy in the category with *sexual immorality, impurity, hatred, idolatry and many others and says those who live like that will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

Clearly, the Bible has some very harsh things to say about Envy and associates it along side some of the most disgusting of mankind's sin.

At the heart of Envy is the belief that we deserve better than we've received.

Illus: I recently read a story about South West Airlines. After the tragedy of 9-11, South West has been the only big carrier to still be making money although they are making about ½ what they did the year before. All of the other airlines are swimming in red ink and have either declared bankruptcy or giving it consideration. So, in an atmosphere where most airlines are struggling to survive, South West employees have relative job security. And yet, some of their workers in one of its unions were threatening to strike for higher wages. Why? Because some comparable employees in one of those failing airlines were making more money per hour than them.

Do you get the insanity of that? The union workers were not content because somebody else in a failing airline who's jobs are in question was getting more. They could not see their good fortune because they were green with envy. Envy is blinding of common sense and thankfulness.

Envy is desire out of control.

Envy is ambition without thanksgiving.

Envy is selfish ambition!

2. What are the consequences of Envy?

Envy doesn't usually make our short list of sins. It is not normally taken that seriously by Christians. Because of this, it often goes unnoticed until the damage is done. Envy has a way of sneaking up on us. Envy knows no age barriers. Young people envy other's good looks, popularity, talents, cars & trucks, etc. Adults of all ages envy other's homes, jobs, success and recognition.

But envy has many drastic consequences that should not be overlooked.

Envy destroys marriages and relationships.

“Love is patient, love is kind. Love does not envy.” 1 Cor 13.

Envy causes us to stoop to new lows finding ourselves saying and doing things we said we would never do.

Envy leads to shortcuts and cheating.

Envy creates a heart always wanting more and more to the point that we will do anything to get what we want.

When is enough, enough? Never, says envy.

Advertisers know the power of envy. They carefully craft their ads to appeal to the envy and greed in each of us.

Illus: At the Amoco station at the corner of CR 6 and Hwy 59, you can purchase the "Scent of Pleasure." Yes, that is right. In the men's restroom there is a machine that dispenses the "Scent of Pleasure." It includes a picture of a man and woman romantically kissing and the caption says, "The Scent of Pleasure." Now, it is nothing but a quick blast of cheap cologne but apparently it will bring you some serious romance.

I've been thinking about trying it but I am afraid Pam would attack me when I got home.

Because of today's TV advertisers and mass media, Americans no longer compare themselves with their neighbors but they now compare their lifestyles to what they see on TV which includes the rich, famous and outlandish.

Envy causes financial problems as we incur excessive debt to live beyond our means.

Envy causes adultery, anorexia, bitterness and much more.

Most importantly, Envy causes spiritual problems as we turn from serving God.

Envy causes us to seek our own selfish desires and ignore God's purposes. What a tragedy since He wants what is best for us.

Envy destroys happiness because we are never happy with what we have or what we had to do to get what we have.

Envy causes our life to fly by and we wake up one day to realize we missed the things that really mattered.

Satan himself was envious and envy was Satan's downfall.

Envy will be the downfall of you and I if we allow it.

"A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones." Proverbs 14:30 NIV

3. What is the difference between Envy and Ambition?

Illus: Leonard Bernstein the famous symphony conductor was asked what instrument was the most difficult to play. And he responded, "Second Fiddle." Nobody likes being second fiddle or second best. Much of the American culture is built on envy.

We live in a capitalistic society where virtually everything evolves around ambition, competition and envy. Supply and demand are the foundations of our economy. It is all about keeping the demand strong.

So, is it wrong to work to better ourselves? Is it wrong to try to provide for our families, drive a better car, build a larger home? When does good ole American ambition turn into envy and become sin for a Christian? Is it a sin to have wealth or work to better ourselves?

There is a way to tell the difference between envy and ambition. There is an important threefold test that can be applied to determine if you are pursuing something out of unselfish ambition or envy. But, I should warn you, that you must be honest with yourself as you consider this threefold test. It will be difficult and envy itself will encourage you to distort your answers.

a. What are the real motives behind my goals?

Why do you really want the things for which you are working so hard? Is it so you can use it to serve God? Is it something that will further your spiritual life or service to God? Is it something that will truly be helpful to your family and cause them to better discover God's purposes for their lives?

Or, is it something you want because you want the prestige, recognition or power that comes from it. Is it for others or God? Or, is it all about you?

Ask yourself what is the real motive behind my desires?

b. What are the means being used to accomplish my goals.

How are you going about accomplishing your goals? Are you helping others in the process? Do you provide a service to others or better yet to God? Is God glorified through your efforts?

Or, does it take you further away from God? Does it require you to miss worship and to neglect Bible study? Does it require you to neglect your family and spouse? Worse yet, does it cause you to have to commit acts, participate in things or go places that you know you should not?

Ask yourself, is God pleased with the things I must do to accomplish my desires?

c. What are the results of my accomplished goals?

What have you done with the profits of your accomplishments so far? Do you give a generous portion of your earnings and profits back to God? Do you support and help others? Do you thank God for what He has given you and demonstrate your gratefulness?

Or, do you hold on to everything hoarding it with greed? It's all mine, all mine. Do you rationalize that later you will give to God but now you cannot?

I know what you are thinking, "Oh boy, the preacher has gotten around to preaching on tithing." Well, this is not a sermon on tithing. A sermon on tithing will come and when it does, you will know it. There will not be any beating around the bush about the rewards of generously giving to God.

But, do not miss this important question. What do you do with the fruits of your labor and your good fortune?

Please understand this divine principle. God gives to those who are faithful to His work, faithful in thanksgiving and faithful in returning back to Him.

What you give to God is the true measure of your motives and your heart.

Is your ambition selfish or unselfish?

4. What is the cure for Envy?

a. Understand who you are and who's you are.

The cure for envy must begin with the realization that God has created you differently from everyone else. Stop comparing your looks, talents and everything else to others. Make up your mind you will not be a part of the comparison trap.

Envy is the result of being insecure. It means we are not comfortable with who we are.

You must understand that you are the unique creation of God. And, God has great plans for you. He has a purpose for you.

"I praise God because I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Psalm 139:14

The sooner you get about the business of being who God wants you to be the sooner you will like who you have become.

b. Focus on the things of God.

Praise God for what you do have. Stop wanting more stuff and desire to do more for your Lord.

Refocus your ambitions to purposes that serve the Lord and others, and watch God open the doors of opportunity.

God will bless those who desire to return their profits to His work.

If you have the green eyed monster of envy on your back, it is because you are searching after worldly things instead of God.

The problem isn't that we want things too much. The problem is that we do not want God enough.

“Set your mind on things above, not earthly things.” Col. 3:2

The sooner you get about doing the things God wants you to do, the sooner you will discover real happiness.

c. Evaluate and adjust your ambitions.

When we have motives and means that serve the kingdom of God, He honors them.

When we use the fruits and profits to honor Him, he rewards us with more opportunity.

Put your faith into action and trust God for opportunities that will accomplish your good goals and honor Him in the process.

Conclusion

Illus: I was visiting with a 94 year old woman this week and I had a wonderful visit. When she told me her age, I responded by saying that she has surely seen a lot of change in her lifetime. She said, “Yes I have and for the worse.” I just knew I would hear a sermon on how much she hated to see Baldwin County grow and change but I had to ask the question. I said, “How have the changes been for the worse?” Her response hit me square in the face. She said, “Nobody loves anybody anymore. All anyone cares about anymore is money.” And then she added, “And no one takes marriage serious anymore.”

Her words of wisdom parallel God’s Word. We are all consumed with envy and selfish ambition.

Illus: Dale Evans became a Christian later in life, and was quoted as saying, “All my life I searched for the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, but then I found all I really needed at the foot of the cross.”

Invitation

The Green Eyed Monster

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1. Envy is being discontent with what you have and feeling like you deserve more.
2. Envy is sin closely associated with evil.
3. Envy is selfish ambition.

II. What are the consequences of Envy?

1. Envy destroys marriages and relationships.
2. Envy leads to shortcuts and cheating.
3. Envy causes us to seek selfish desires and ignore God's purposes.

III. What is the difference between Envy and Ambition?

1. What are the real motives behind my goals?
2. What are the means being used to accomplish my goals?
3. What are the results of my accomplished goals?

IV. What is the cure for Envy?

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2. Focus on the things of God.
3. Evaluate and adjust your ambitions.