

# Green Eyed Monster

1 Timothy 6:6-10

## Preface

What is the “Green Eyed Monster?” Shakespeare called it the “green sickness.” It is a major problem in our society today among just about everyone. Christians are no exception. I am speaking of envy of course.

## Read Scripture 1 Timothy 6:6-10

*<sup>6</sup>But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. <sup>7</sup>For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. <sup>8</sup>If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. <sup>9</sup>But 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. <sup>10</sup>For 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

### Introduction

God’s word has some very strong things to say about Envy. Today we will take a close look at exactly what envy is, 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 resenting what someone else has and the fact that you don’t have it.

Envy is being discontent with what you have and feeling like you have been cheated or deprived.

Envy is obsession with wealth and possessions.

Envy is a sin with temptation of the strongest kind.

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

James wrote: *“<sup>14</sup> But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. <sup>15</sup>Such ‘wisdom’ does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil.” James 3:14-15*

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

Clearly, the Bible has some very harsh things to say about Envy and associates it with some of the most disgusting of mankind’s sin including sexual immorality, adultery, murder, slander and theft.

Illus: I remember after 9-11, South West Airlines was the only big carrier remotely profitable. All of the other airlines were swimming in red ink and declaring bankruptcy. South West employees had relative job security. And yet, some of their workers in one of its unions were threatening to strike for higher wages. They wanted more money because some employees in one of the failing airlines were making more money per hour.

Do you get the insanity of that? The workers were not content because somebody else in a failing airline whose jobs were in question was getting more money. **They could not see their good fortune because they were green with envy.**

That is the sin of envy. It blinds us to common sense and thankfulness.

Envy is desire out of control.

Envy is ambition without thanksgiving.

Envy is ambition for selfish reasons!

## 2. What are the consequences of Envy?

Too often envy is not taken seriously by Christians until it has already led them into its trap. Envy has a way of sneaking up on us and goes unnoticed until the damage is done.

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, health, 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: I recall going to the rest room at the BP station located at the corner of CR 6 and Hwy 59. There in the rest room 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. That exemplifies just how foolish advertisements can be.

I thought about trying it but I was 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 to seeking our own selfish desires.

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

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 can be your downfall if you 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.

Much of the American culture is built on envy. We live in a capitalistic society where virtually everything evolves around ambition, competition and envy.

So, is it wrong to work to better ourselves?

Is it wrong to try to provide for our families, drive a better car or 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 are ways to tell the difference between envy and ambition. But, I should warn you, that you must be honest with yourself. It will be difficult and envy will coax 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, power or pleasure that comes from it. Is it for others or God? Or, is it just for you?

Ask yourself what is the real motive behind my desires?

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

<sup>23</sup> *All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty. Proverbs 14:23 NIV*

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 work?

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 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?

Do not miss this important question. How do you invest 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.

<sup>38</sup> *Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." Matthew 6:38 NIV*

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

Is your ambition selfish or unselfish? If it is selfish, it is envy.

**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*

Illus: I remember in Junior High I could never be first chair trombone. Kenneth Hamilton always beat me out no matter how hard I tried. But being a great trombone player was not what God had planned for me anyway. God had uniquely made me and my task is to be the person he has made me.

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.

*“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 of our labor 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 a few years ago. 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 was about to 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 too 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.”**

Everything your soul longs for can be found at the foot of the cross.