

Study Guide

Monday June 27. Read Proverbs 27:4. Anger. Fury. Jealousy. Envy. These are ugly words, which bring up pictures of ugly things. When we are in the grip of anger, we hurt others. Envy is inward, but it can result in the same kind of destructive lashing out. Anger and envy often occur together. We want what others have and become angry when we can't have it. We somehow blame others for our discontent and lack of what we think we need. A person who has a problem with envy will cause destruction wherever he or she goes. Anger is a hot emotion that is often short lived. However, envy is something that has to be cultivated. It settles in and takes over a life, and then that life becomes a destructive force. Of whom or what have you felt envious? Is this envy still being cultivated in your life, or have you dealt with it?

Tuesday, June 28– Read Proverbs 14:30. It is true that envy and jealousy will often make us lash out and hurt those we envy. But envy is also destructive to the person who harbors it. Even if you never express your envy through your words or actions, if you have envy in your heart it will hurt you. Envy will make you discontented, insecure, and unhappy. An envious heart is never at peace, and a heart never at peace makes for an uncomfortable life. Envy tears us down, rather than building us up. It wants to make everyone else just as miserable or poor or sinful as it is. It breeds bitterness, selfishness, and sin. It will “rot” our character and make us slowly go bad inside. Have you ever smelled something really rotten? The stench can be overpowering. That is what God says envy will do to us if we keep it around. It's like dropping a stink bomb into our lives. Is your heart at peace, or do you smell your “bones rotting”? What do you think might be contributing to the lack of peace in your heart?

Wednesday, June 29 – Read Galatians 5:25-26. Envy is a sin related to both pride and anger. It is usually rooted in the conceited “me-first” attitude of pride. We are so busy thinking about Number One, that we think any good thing should be ours by right. We think everyone else should put us first, too! Frustrated envy then often leads to anger. We are jealous of others' accomplishments, possession, or blessings; instead of being glad that they are happy, we want to take it away. We begin to resent those who have what we want, and resentment leads to picking fights with them or trying to bring them down to our level. When we belong to Christ, we are marching hand-in-hand with the Holy Spirit. Our old pattern of conceit, envy, and quarreling is out of step. When we march this way, we are constantly pulling in the wrong direction. We can't be at peace. Instead, we need to stop and listen to the Holy Spirit's rhythm. We need to learn to march to a different tune, as we follow our leader – Jesus Christ. Are you in step with the Holy Spirit – which leads to peace – or are you offbeat? What needs to change to get you in step with God?

Thursday, June 30 – Read Romans 12:10. When a poisonous snake bites someone, the doctors will give that person an antidote for the poison. The antidote neutralizes the action of the snake's venom, and keeps the person from dying. Envy is like a poisonous snake to our spiritual lives. It will inject its bitter venom and eventually make us ineffective – unhappy, unproductive, and destructive to others. Envy is a serious poison. The antidote to the poison of envy is an attitude of love and humility. Instead of selfishly thinking of our own desires, God wants us to be caring and considerate of others. This isn't something that we can manufacture on our own. Only the power of God at work in our hearts will make us able to put envy's antidote into practice. What are some practical ways you could show love and humility to people in your life right now?

Friday, July 1 – Read Romans 12:15. When we envy others, we can't be glad for the blessings in their lives. If we can't have the things we want, we don't want anyone else to have them either. Envy is grouchy when others are blessed, and gloats when their misfortunes bring them down. This isn't God's way, and it isn't His plan for His children either. When we find ourselves dissatisfied and wishing that we could have what God has given to someone else, then it is time to turn the tables on ourselves. Self has to come last, and sympathy for others first. When others are blessed, we are to be happy for them, even if we are miserable ourselves. When others are experiencing sorrow, we are to comfort them and be sorry for their pain, even if we thought they brought it on themselves. God wants us to be tenderhearted toward one another, loving and caring. There is no room for envy in God's system. **Read 1 Corinthians 13** and *replace the word “love” with your own*. How do you measure up? What does this tell you about the areas you need to work on in order to love God's way?

Saturday, July 2 - Read Psalm 90:14. Envy really comes from a basic dissatisfaction. We have the lingering feeling that God is trying to deprive us of something, and that He treats other people better than He treats us. As long as we are not satisfied with who God is and what He gives us, we are going to struggle with envying other people. Even when we get the things we envied, we won't feel content. Someone else will always have something better. There is always something else to want, something else about which to feel dissatisfied. The only One who can give us real satisfactions is God. Are you relaxed and at peace with God, or are you restless and dissatisfied? Stop to analyze your dissatisfaction. Where is this coming from? What are you going to do about it?