

[Faith, Hope & Love_Part15](#)

How have you done this week processing the truth about your selfishness? Do you see it? Do you feel it? Do you know it is there? Have you settled with the fact that your selfishness is a stealthy thief and has stolen from you: life, love, intimacy, relationship, and joy? Have you gotten angry about it? Have you started to hate it? Are you sick of the loneliness and all the victim related issues that well up because of your selfishness and self-love? Have you started to make any different decisions when it comes to giving yourself away and letting people in behind the walls of self-protection which you have raised? Have you been contemplating the costs of true freedom and thought through what it actually means to deny yourself and to take up your cross and willingly choose to obey the command to follow Him? These are all hard questions and they are based on some very hard truths we studied last week in ***Matthew 16:24-28; Luke 6:38-40; and Luke 14:25-33.***

The cost? It is everything! Jesus asks us to dig down deep into our soul and make a decision to hate everything and everyone in our lives (including ourselves and all our coping mechanisms) that we have put in front of Him. He wants us to loath it, despise it, abhor it, and reject it; and turn to Him and to Him alone to be our provision for this life. Do you hate your “self” this way? Jesus is our **Jehovah Jireh** and He is our **Jehovah Qanna**—our jealous God—and He wants us to experience Him, and only Him, as our complete provision for everything that we need for life and godliness. And keep in mind, if you don’t walk this pathway of death and denial, He won’t let you be His disciple. It does not matter what you think about your relationship with God, it does not matter how convinced you are that it is good and wonderful, and it most definitely does not matter how much you “do” for God; if

you don't hate your "self" and everything else in this way, you cannot be His disciple because He won't let you be. He simply won't make a disciple out of your flesh.

Consider also **Matthew 7:13-14** where Jesus said, "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it." This verse is traditionally spun as the broad road to hell versus the narrow road to heaven. But Jesus is not talking about the future. With the exception of "enter," which is in the *aorist* tense (meaning we must always enter the narrow gate as a way of life; it is not a one-time decision), the entire passage is in the *present* tense. It deals with our now. In the now, few people find life; most people walk down the broad path and find ruin, loss or waste. When we live in our selfishness, ruin, loss or waste is our lot, even as believers.

You have all experienced it and many of you are drenched in this way of living and it defines your life in Christ. Whereas, the life you hope to have, the life you dream you should have, and the abundant life that Jesus promised you has become nothing more than a fiction, a tall-tale, another "Bible story;" and your experience is want instead of abundance. As a result, the deepest form of loneliness courses through your veins. And it does not matter how many people you surround yourself with, it does not matter how busy you are or how much you serve God, you are perpetually, and undeniably lonely. But your belief in your own goodness and your pride keeps you in that place instead of turning to Jesus and only to Him.

The pathway to life is extremely narrow because it is the pathway of death; the pathway of denying and hating yourself. Jesus requires that you discard everything in your life that comes before Him, especially your pride, insecurity, fear,

selfishness (self-protection), your goodness, victim mentality, failure and shame, envy and hate, and all the coping mechanisms that come with these evils. And, as we discussed two weeks ago, our motivation for walking this narrow pathway is Jesus and who we are in Him, which is nothing short of phenomenal. For those of you who have dived into these truths and clothed yourselves with them, you will know His abundant life; it will be yours, it is just a matter of time. You see, Jesus is our motivation. He is our' everything—our **Yahweh** (our “I Am”). What comes with Him and what comes from Him are all the thing we need for this life and for godliness; and He fully satisfies. But He alone is the source of it all; He alone is our **Jehovah Jireh**—the Lord our Provider.

Tonight, we are going to discuss the way in which **Jehovah Jireh** is our provider for our envy and hate. Envy is an interesting enemy and it is so closely tied to the victim mentality, our pride, insecurity, our justice issues, and to our personal goodness. Envy, and the hate which spews from this enemy, is intertwined with pretty much every other enemy in our soul. This makes it very hard to eliminate. We must go after the heads of each of the other enemies and chop them off in order to get a clean shot at taking down and destroying envy.

Envy is rooted in two main lies: 1) the belief that we know better what we need for our lives than does our God; and 2) our acceptance in this world defines our worth. These are two very powerful lies that eat us alive from the inside out. Envy and the sin of covetousness, which the Bible speaks a lot about, are very similar, they are both based on desiring what others have. Envy however takes it one step further and it adds a touch of hate over the fact that the other person(s) have something you want. Thus, envy consumes your emotions, your thoughts, and you

can feel it move in and through your body and it pours out on others. Envy is hell bent on evil towards others who have done nothing to you. But for some reason you find that you resent them, think bad things about them, and ascribe all sorts of awful motivations to their words, actions, and relationships when in reality you actually know nothing about what is really going on in them. Envy and hate invades and corrupts so many areas of our lives.

For example, envy is focused on what someone else does and how they do it, what they say and how they say it, how they look, what they wear, their style and swagger, what they have, the money they enjoy, the places they go, the friends, family, and lover they have, their job, the positions and titles, and responsibility they have, the forums they operate within, the smarts they have, their humor, their body, their athletic, artistic, musical, or other abilities, the public attention, respect, and admiration they receive, and on and on and on it goes. Envy has no bounds because it is rooted in a lack of personal identity and a lack of understanding one's purpose; thus, anything that anyone has that you think would add to your identity in this world becomes a potential victim of envy. Let's do a little envy test and see if this enemy is rooted in your soul:

- Do you operate out of hierarchical relational framework?
- Do you desire to be constantly affirmed by those you consider to be "above" you or more important than you? Do you look for them to affirm you and do you desire so badly to be noticed by them?
- Do you focus on positions, titles, roles, and desire in return to receive respect, admiration, attention, and glory?
- Are you quick to criticize others especially those you think are above you

in your social circles? Do you find yourself getting easily angered at them?

- Are you quick to criticize yourself?
- Do complain about things not being fair and others getting preferred treatment to you?
- Do you obsess on others, who they are, what they have, who they are with, what they are doing, and so on?
- Do you constantly watch others, aware of all they do?
- Are you jealous of those to whom they give attention?
- Are you constantly trying to manage your status or perception in the eyes of others?

If the answer to any of these is “yes,” then I am afraid this enemy is tightly entrenched in your soul and the Lord wants Him killed. In the ESV, **Proverbs 14:30** says, “A tranquil heart gives life to the flesh, but envy makes the bones rot.” Envy literally eats you alive from the inside out; it consumes you. In **Mark 7:20-23** Jesus says that this evil of envy resides in the heart of man and as it finds its way out it defiles a man. This is why **1 Peter 2:1** tells us that, as a way of life, we are to always be digging down deep in to our soul and continually be making the choice to lay aside, or put off, envy (“put off” is in the *aorist* tense, *middle* voice, and it is a *participle*). Envy is to have no part in the life of a believer, but its removal is a life-style decision and something that we have to continually engage in or else it will take root and will eat us alive.

Furthermore, **Galatians 5:26** and **Romans 1:29** makes it clear that envy is the fruit of the flesh and of a depraved mind. I want us to think for a moment about this concept of a depraved mind. The depraved mind is a corrupted mind that twists

the things of God, distorts reality, and distorts intentions in order to take a hold of and blanket our minds with darkness. For example, a depraved mind consumed by envy is unwilling to appreciate the fact that God loves both diversity and inequality; yes, that is what I said, God loves both diversity and inequality. The depraved mind tends to think that diversity and inequality—at least when it views things through the lens of its corrupted identity and what it doesn't have—is somehow bad or evil and most definitely unfair. But by God's very design He made things diverse and unequal and He did it for a reason; such diversity and inequality creates a beautiful balance of mutual dependency across all of creation. In fact, the animal world, the insect world, the nations, the races, the genders, and even the construct of the family proves out that God loves both diversity and inequality.

There is a beautiful passage in **1 Corinthians** that deals with the body of Christ and the different ways God chooses, in His wisdom, to position people within the body (with some having more intense roles than others) and to gift people within the body. If you struggle with envy, then I am sure that this passage will annoy you. You will probably roll your eyes and breathe a big sigh thinking that is easy for me to say these things because I am the one up here and everyone is watching me and listening to me. But this is your opportunity to lay aside your victim mentality, justice issues, and your arrogant pride and AGREE with God when He says, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts" (**Isaiah 55:8-9**). It is time to relent of your pride and say, "not my will but Your will be done." Relent to His wisdom for your life; it's time.

1 Corinthians 12:4-26

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.

The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit. Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. If the foot says, "I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand," that does not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear says, "I am not part of the body because I am not an eye," would that make it any less a part of the body? If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything? But our bodies have

many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it.

How strange a body would be if it had only one part! Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. The eye can never say to the hand, "I don't need you." The head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you." In fact, some parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are actually the most necessary. And the parts we regard as less honorable are those we clothe with the greatest care. So we carefully protect those parts that should not be seen, while the more honorable parts do not require this special care. So God has put the body together such that extra honor and care are given to those parts that have less dignity. This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad.

In God's wisdom, diversity and functional inequality makes for harmony among all, so that all will care for one another. He reiterates this philosophy in **Romans 12:6**; and **1 Peter 4:10**. If we ever hope to dwell in the Kingdom of God and know His rest, His peace, and His joy, we must begin to see our lives through this lens. For example, when one part of the body suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad. No we are not the same and we are not likely ever going to be the same. We have been made differently and we have been gifted differently; however, we are each so unique and we have each been given different assignments in this body. But that does not mean that anyone of us is less important to the body. If I hurt and suffer, we all suffer; and the same goes for you. I know that as a victim you don't believe me and you are probably rolling your eyes

once again. You believe that “we” only hurt when the “important people” suffer, but that is sick and twisted thinking; and it actually makes me mad. You have no idea how much agony and pain I feel on a daily basis; Sarah feels it too. The whole leadership in this body feels deep pain and agonizes when you continually choose to love yourself and embrace your selfishness instead of making the choice to agree with God and give yourself to us. It hurts us as we see you struggle with such basic things as who you are in Christ and who He is to you; in fact, it kills us. It hurts us so deeply when you choose to love and protect the enemies in your soul, and your’ myriad of coping mechanisms, over us and over Christ. And few of you know, much less have appreciated, how much we grieve and agonize over your lives.

But we would not hurt or grieve in this way if you were not important and if you did not matter; but you do! You are important and you matter to us and to the overall functioning of this body. So lay aside your victim thinking, your justice issues, and your prideful demands upon God and let Him have His way with you. Stop with the rolling of your eyes and notice the way God does things and fall in line with His plans for your life, for who can straighten out what He has made crooked (***Ecclesiastes 7:13***). Stop arguing with God wishing you were like this person or that person, or had this assignment or that assignment, or had this gift or that gift. Understand who you are in Him (which as we have studied is pretty phenomenal), understand how He has gifted you, and then unselfishly give yourself to those in this body so we can all be built up, edified, exhorted, and encouraged by who you are and how God loves to work within you. Stop hoarding this beautiful part of you because you are so blind to the truth and wrapped up in envy and hate just wishing things were different.

Ephesians 4:11-16

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, *from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.*

Yes, there are apostles, evangelists, pastors and teachers, but still what every joint supplies and the proper working of each part causes the growth of the body; every piece is critical for our body to grow in love. Without the joints working properly, the more prominent parts of the body would be worthless. You are critical just as God has designed you and fastened you in this temple. Thus, you can lay aside your envy, stop looking at others, and focus on what God has designed you to do and be in this body. Embrace it and enjoy what He has for you. Agree with God in the humility of truth that you are critical; and in the confidence of faith focus on what He has called you to do not on what He has called others to do.

Surprisingly, you will find that you will be filled with joy and contentment. I know it does not seem that way, since you think only “those” people get the fun; but God designed you to be fulfilled and content in Him. Trust in this truth!

I want to discuss further the way God made things so diverse and unequal. Some of it is hard to swallow and some of it is absolutely beautiful. For instance, Jesus said there would always be the poor amongst us (**Matthew 26:11**)—there was not going to be monetary equality. There will be rich, those with enough, and there will be poor. He actually sets up this inequality to give those who are rich an opportunity to care for those who are poor and be blessed by God. Paul even said that some were destined to be slaves and some were destined to be masters; and that is just how it is. Paul did not try and change this complex relationship; rather, he instructed believers to change their attitude toward this type of relationship. He instructed slaves to continue in their position and joyfully and faithfully serve their masters. Similarly, He encouraged masters to be gentle and merciful to their slaves (**Ephesians 6:5; Colossians 3:22; 4:21; 1 Timothy 6:1; and 1 Corinthians 7:22-24**).

Furthermore, the Father gives people different assignments, each with different levels of responsibilities; yet, He expects each one to perform accordingly to their capability (**Matthew 25:14-18**). Therefore, we must stop letting envy get the best of us. God has, in His wisdom, made you the way He made you, gifted you the way He gifted you, and given you the assignments that He believed were appropriate for you knowing full well what will please you. Please understand, when you let this enemy of envy dominate your life you deny your own uniqueness and the beautiful and diverse ways God chose to design you. David understood this and he rejoiced.

Psalm 139:13-16

For You formed my inward parts; you wove me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them.

Like David, you were fearfully and wonderfully made; and wonderful are His works. Yes, you are wonderful! Your soul is to know this as a matter of fundamental innate truth and it is to inspire worship in your being. In fact, ***Ephesians 2:10*** declares that you are the Lord's masterpiece, a wonderful work of art. Now once again, in your envy, which is held-up on the back of the victim mentality, you are probably sitting there angry wishing that in His infinite wisdom He made you more like him or her or this or that. You wish He was a little more creative with His artistry. But that is the very darkness of envy that has consumed your mind and it is an enemy that must go.

This mindset does not take into account the reason God made you the way He did nor the wonderful works that God has ordained specifically for you to fulfill. John the Baptist made it clear in ***John 3:27*** that the work that he was assigned was given to Him from God. He said, no one can receive anything unless God gives it from heaven. This means that John's work was unique to him, unique to how God designed him, unique to his personality, and so on. God made John exactly how He wanted and needed John to be in order that he might carry out His work of the

Lord's "best man" and prepare the way for the coming of the bridegroom.

And that is the same for you. If you are still bemoaning who you are and how you have been made in this world, you do not realize what He has made you for, equipped you for, and called you to do. Do you realize that according to ***Ephesians 2:10*** you were created in Christ Jesus for "good" works, which God prepared beforehand so that you would walk in them? These "good" works are works of the Spirit, His works, and they will be uniquely fulfilled through you if you let Him have His way with you. They have been set aside specifically for you. You must understand what a privilege this is. His good works which are to be done through you is one of the reasons why you were created just as you are. But your envy has taken your mind away from what God wants to do with you and has put your thoughts and emotions on what God is doing with everyone else. What a waste of time and energy. Envy seduces you to believe that you know better what you need in your life than does your God. Envy keeps your eyes on all those things that you are convinced would make you or your life better. But that is foolish.

God's ways are good and perfect. In fact, His will for your life (the way He made, designed, equipped, and called you, and the tasks He has set before you) are unquestionably good, pleasing and perfect. Thus, you must be transformed and let your mind be renewed with this truth about who God is and who you to Him and what He wants to do with you so you may always prove out, as a way of life, the will of God which by definition is good, pleasing, and perfect (***Romans 12:2***). When you understand this truth, your body will burst forth not with envy and hate but with pure unadulterated joy. The fact that Jesus uniquely created you, gifted you, and tasked you is your provision for both envy and the hatred that spews from this

sick and twisted enemy.

Remember, Jesus promises that He knows you and He will guide you along the best pathways for your life (***Psalm 32:8***). This is something you cannot do. No matter how much you think you know all things about yourself and what is best for you, the truth is that your prideful arrogance is *impotent* and can do nothing for you. You don't know what tomorrow brings, you can't change one hair on your head from white to black; in fact, you can't accomplish anything that God does not allow you to accomplish (***Matthew 5:36; 6:31-34***). So give up the fight and learn to glory in the unique way He has designed you to fulfill the very special works that He has set aside for you.

Besides, God declares something fantastic about your life. In ***Jeremiah 29:11*** He says, "For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the Lord. Plans for welfare and not for calamity, to give you a future and a hope." That is what your **Jehovah Jireh** has planned for you—welfare, a future, and a hope. Others should envy your life, you should not envy others. Welfare, a future, and a hope; that is a wonderful trifecta. This is reemphasized in ***Proverbs 23:17-18*** which says, "Do not let your heart *envy* sinners, but live in the fear of the Lord always. Surely there is a future, and your hope will not be cut off."

What beautiful and wonderful promises the Lord has given us. But this welfare, future, and hope is all found down the pathway of denying yourself in order that Jesus can fulfill all of these things in you and through you. Death and denial is the pathway of true salvation. Once again, His life for yours is the best exchange possible.

Titus 3:1-8

Remind the believers to submit to the government and its officers. They should be obedient, always ready to do what is good. They must not slander anyone and must avoid quarreling. Instead, they should be gentle and show true humility to everyone. Once we, too, were foolish and disobedient. We were misled and became slaves to many lusts and pleasures. Our lives were full of evil and envy, and we hated each other. But—When God our Savior revealed his kindness and love, he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit. He generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior. Because of his grace he declared us righteous and gave us confidence that we will inherit eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying, and I want you to insist on these teachings so that all who trust in God will devote themselves to doing good. These teachings are good and beneficial for everyone.

Let go of your envy and hate; that belongs to your old life. God has poured out His kindness, love, and mercy on you and He has given you new life—a new birth—through the Holy Spirit. In fact, the Spirit has been generously poured out on you. And to each one of us, God has given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good (**1 Corinthians 12:7**). He has done this for you and for others. Think about it; He has given you His Spirit and evidences which prove it. He is your Provision, your **Jehovah Jireh** for this new life. And even though He loves diversity and inequality, by the same Spirit who works all these things, He has gifted each and every one of us individually just as He wills (**1 Corinthians 12:11**). And He did this so that there

may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another (**1 Corinthians 12:25**). So His beautiful diversity and inequality is all about UNITY—our UNITY. It is not to put you down and elevate another. That is the thinking of those who love this world and think that this world defines their identity; it is the thinking of one who is consumed by envy and hate. Embrace your role in building up this body, embrace your identity in Him, let go of the enemy of envy and let it course through your veins no longer. This is a trustworthy saying, and I want you to insist on these teachings so that all who trust in God will devote themselves to doing good.

Let's Pray