

# Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

**Date** : 19 Feb 2023

**Sermon Title** : Love is not Envious

**Speaker** : Rev Shannon Chan

**Text** : 1 Corinthians 13:4

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## INTRODUCTION

In the previous sermons, we were taught that love is patient and love is kind, which are positives. Today, we cover a negative, or something we are not to do, which is 'to envy'. The Greek word for "envy" is "zeloo", which is related to "zeal". Paul uses this word both in a positive way (to earnestly desire the greater gifts (1 Cor 12:31)) and a negative way (to not envy, which indicates a strong resentment against someone (1 Cor 13:4)).

1 Cor 13 is placed between 2 chapters where Paul deals with the use and abuse of certain gifts of the spirit, such as speaking in tongues and prophecy. This suggests that some in the Corinthian church who did not have gifts might have envied those who did. It also suggests a church affected by party strife and divisions caused by church politics and factions. This was an environment that was ripe for envy.

## Difference between envy and jealousy

While it is used interchangeably, envy and jealousy mean different things:

<b>Envy</b>	<b>Jealousy</b>
A feeling that occurs when you do not have something that another person has...	A feeling that has to do with something that you have, but you see that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Another has more of it</li><li>• What you have is threatened by another party.</li></ul>
<u>Example:</u> Someone has good looks or good grades which you do not have	<u>Example:</u> King Saul was a popular king but became jealous when David became more popular.

## Envy's prevalence and effect

Rivalry and competition are common. People often feel everyone is competing against them for promotions, recognition and prominence. This impacts both the secular and sacred world. From the standpoint of Christian ministry, Ajith Fernando has no doubt that "if we were able to uncover the reason for many of the crises in the average church, a large number of them would begin with the sin of envy".

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*For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7*

# **Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion**

Envy and jealousy allow others to gain power over you. Often, those we envy have no idea that we are enslaved by them, but envy comes at you relentlessly, stealing your focus from what you freely have and punishing you to desire what God has allowed another.

## **Envy's chequered past**

Julius Caesar was a Roman General during the 60's B.C. Under his leadership most of Europe fell under control of Rome. When he was ordered home to face a corrupt Senate, he brought his army and took control of the government. He immediately began reforms to unify the country and put down corruption. His popular reforms for the common citizens angered elites. After he was assassinated, the Roman Empire made a major shift. Who knows what it might have been had he lived? But he didn't and the world changed, why? Because Cassius and Brutus were envious of Caesar and killed him.

The Bible provides many examples of how envy can destroy:

- King David had Uriah, one of his soldiers, killed because he was envious of his wife, Bathsheba.
- Cain, the eldest son of Adam and Eve, killed his brother Abel because he envied God's acceptance of Abel's sacrifice.
- Lucifer's story is the worst expression of envy. Lucifer was called a morning star. He was magnificent in beauty and this gave him pride, which led to dissatisfaction and discontent. This led Lucifer to incite one third of the angels to rebel against God and resulted in him being cast out of heaven. Lucifer, also known as satan, continues to deceive, entice and incite human beings to sin, including the sin and bondage of envy – we must not let Satan get a foothold into our lives.

## **Antidote to envy**

### 1) Stop comparing!

Count your blessings. Do not think about what you have in comparison to others. Life is a journey, not a competition. Learn to love "enough". Comparing and competition is an endless cycle that will never lead to happiness. It has led to much sinful discontent and disorder, both in the world and in the church. To love is to stop comparing (Bernard Grasset).

- The Holy Spirit will prompt you when you have the sin of envy. To overcome it, choose to show honour to the person you are tempted to envy instead of embracing envy.

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- When you stop comparing and choose to pray, bless, and celebrate the other person, you are less prone to envy. That is when you are choosing to love well and it will be a source of joy for you.

## 2) Learn contentment.

In his book "Respectable Sins", Jerry Bridges wrote that whatever the situation that tempts us to be discontent and however severe it is, we need to recognise that discontentment is sin. Discontentment is no little matter. It tells us much about our attitudes towards God and implies the things of the world are far more important to us.

A story was told of missionary, Dr Henry Morrison, who was returning to the U.S. after visiting many countries, preaching the gospel to thousands. Coincidentally, on the same ship, President Roosevelt was also returning from a vacation. At the harbour, there was a grand reception for the President's return. But no one had bothered to greet Dr Morrison. He remembers the discontentment, bitter and envy that began welling up within his heart. He thought: "God privileged and had me to win thousands of souls to Christ, yet there I was, without a soul to meet me." He felt the injustice of it all. Then he suddenly stopped. A new glorious truth laid hold of him: "maybe I am not home yet!"

- When we are tempted to lament that we are not recognised, properly rewarded or well affirmed, or when sinful discontent and bitterness take root in our hearts, we must remember that a life of love may seem to be a waste of energy, but it will not fail to lead to long term and eternal rewards.
- We may not be recognised on earth, nor "receive acclaim or honour in this life, but this life is not the end of the journey" (Ajith Fernando). Where is home? Look ahead, look up, look with spiritual eyes beyond the horizon.

## **CONCLUSION**

Let us capture a fresh vision of the Lord, so that when the test of envy comes, we can stop ourselves, refocus and reject envy in Jesus' name. May the Lord always be the true vision of our hearts and minds; and be enough as our exceedingly great reward.

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## **A. Review Sermon Application**

***Purpose: Reflect on how you have been embodying God's truth.***

- 1a. How successful have you been in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do for the last FaithWalk?
- 1b. What were some challenges you faced and what would you like to celebrate?

2. Appoint someone to read 1 Corinthians 13:4 aloud slowly.

- a. In which area(s) of your life do you find:
  - (i) contentment?
  - (ii) discontentment?

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## **B. Relate Sermon Content**

***Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.***

- 3a. How has knowing envy's effect on king David, Cain and Lucifer impacted you?
  - 3b. What are some challenges you will face in practising the following to overcome envy?
    - (i) Stop comparing
    - (ii) Learn contentment
  - 3c. How can looking towards Jesus help you overcome envy?
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- 4a. Has there been a situation where you wanted what someone else had?
    - (i) How did it make you feel?
    - (ii) How did it affect your relationship with God?
  - 4b. Is there a person that you envy now?
    - (i) What is one thing you can do to overcome envy and love this person genuinely?
    - (ii) How can your group members help or encourage you to overcome envy?

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## **C. Testimonies, Prayers and Action**

***Purpose: Give glory to God, seek Him and embody His Word.***

5. Share your personal testimony on how God helped you overcome envy recently. Include how your relationship with God changed following this episode.

OR

Give thanks to God for His promise that following Him will lead to eternal rewards in our eternal home with Him.

6. With a prayer partner, bring all that have been shared in 4b (i) and (ii) to God, asking the Holy Spirit to prompt you when you have the sin of envy and help you overcome it by looking towards Jesus.

Pray for your members, group and our church to stop comparing and be contented with what God has blessed us with, so we may overcome envy and love people genuinely

### Optional items:

Suggested worship songs:

1. Be Thou My Vision – [\(91\) Be Thou My Vision by 4Him -Lyrics \(Celtic Version\) - YouTube](#)
2. Who You Say I Am – Hillsong [\(91\) Who You Say I Am \(Lyric Video\) - Hillsong Worship - YouTube](#)
3. How Deep The Father's Love For Us – Stuart Townend [\(91\) How Deep The Father's Love For Us - Stuart Townend \(Lyrics\) - YouTube](#)

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