

Let Go of Envy

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Envy is a sin (Rom. 1:29) and is related to covetousness, greediness, or jealousy, but it is not the same as those. Envy happens after a person contrasts himself to another person, and thinks the other person is superior to him. It could be in the areas of wealth, talent, popularity, spiritual maturity, and the like. Envy is when you see what someone has, and you know that you were not able to get that yourself, and so you hate that person and yourself. Numerous examples are given in the Bible. One of them is when the Philistines envied Isaac because he was the only one who prospered during a famine (Gen. 26). They could have stolen from Isaac, but greediness was not the issue. They had envy which meant they felt low of themselves because they could not prosper with their own hard work. Isaac obtained something that they could not, and it made them look inferior. So, they stopped up his wells and told him to get out.

Envy is forbidden under the Christian age and leads to punishment (Rom. 1:29-32). When envy finds its way into the church, it is because we let it in. It would be good to remember that envy put Jesus on the cross. The chief priests handed Him over because of envy (Mark 15:10). But even when you have envy towards someone else, that is another sin that put Jesus on the cross. Envy can happen over the simplest things in life and towards anyone you know. What is the solution for envy? Let God instruct you to love. He commands to “. . . love your neighbor as yourself” (Jam. 2:8). But in order for you to love correctly, you have to deny yourself (Mark 8:34). When you let go of self, you no longer follow any standard you make. Therefore, you should not make up your own standard of self-worth; e.g., a new Christian may be tempted to think that experienced Christians are worthier to God. But God teaches He loves both just the same and both are worthy to Him. God wants all people to be saved (2 Pet. 3:10). God shows no partiality (Acts 10:34-35). Of course, you still need to grow in knowledge and the work for God. But you can have peace knowing that whatever stage of Christian maturity you are in, the fact that you are growing pleases God. Let go of envy.