

Reading: Genesis 4:1-16

***“A sound heart is life to the body,
but envy is rottenness to the bones” (Prov 14:30)***

Many people are not aware that jealousy is dormant in them. It shows up, for example, when a sudden fortune strikes a neighbour and he buys a house or a new car.

The unhappy feeling that one gets when someone rises to a better status results in jealousy. It is the root of “confusion and every evil work” (Js 3:16). It is a sign of carnality (1 Cor 3:3). It is a fruit of devilish and not divine knowledge (Js 3:14-17). It is more cruel than wrath and anger (Prov 27:4). It is a work of darkness (Rom 13:13; Gal 5:21). Jealousy causes physical sickness (Prov 14:30) and also hinders spiritual growth (1 Pet 2:1,2).

In the Bible we read of jealousy among brothers and sisters. When God respected Abel and his offering, his brother Cain became jealous (Gen 4:4,5). Joseph’s brothers envied him when God blessed him (Gen 37:5,11). Rachel envied her sister (Gen 30:1). When one distinguishes himself in his secular employment there is jealousy (Dan 6:3,4). In religious circles jealousy arises when God uses a particular person significantly (1 Sam 18:6-9) and he has signs and wonders in his ministry (Mk 9:38,39; Lk 9:49,50). Even Jesus was subject to such onslaught by people with jealousy (Mk 15:10).

We should be content with God’s allotment and provision to us. Then we will have no jealousy (Mt 20:11-15). When God promotes someone higher than us, we need not have a sense of fear or insecurity as King Saul had (1 Sam 18:8,9; Jn 12:19). Another cause of jealousy is the failure to realise that it matters not who does it as long as the victory is to the Lord and the gains go to His Kingdom (1 Cor 3:5-9).

When arrows of jealousy are aimed at us, we must not be puffed up but commit ourselves to God and allow His Word to refine us as Joseph did (Psa 105:19; Acts 7:9). When Pilate released Barabas instead of Jesus due to jealousy, Jesus committed Himself patiently and wholly to His Father (Mk 15:9,10; 1 Pet 2:19-23). When Daniel came under professional jealousy, he continued to maintain honesty and sincerity in all areas of life (Dan 6:3,4). He who is righteous let him be righteous still!

*Envy can ruin reputations, split churches, and cause murders.
Envy can shrink our circle of friends, ruin our business,
and dwarf our souls. I have seen hundreds cursed by it! (Billy Graham)*

*Reading: Gen 4:1-16**Memorising: Prov 14:30*

God our heavenly Father, we worship You for Your immeasurable love and exceeding generosity. There's no partiality with You. You make Your sun rise on the evil and on the good, and send rain on the just and on the unjust. What perfection of character!

Father God, Your Word says that Your calling and gifts are unchanging and irrevocable. We acknowledge Your sovereignty in the distribution of gifts and talents to us. Forgive us, Lord, for the spirit of envy that overtakes us when others fare better than us, or preferred to us. Who are we to question You, O God? Because You are the Potter and all of us are clay in Your hand, don't You have power to decide on the size and shape of the vessel? Forgive us, Lord, our foolishness of comparing ourselves with one another, and harbouring secret pride or envy.

Help me, O Father, to stay put with contentment on Your calling, and not lust for another. Let me be myself under Your grace and guidance. Let me not copy another person, but imitate Your Son only. Father God, forgive my ego which hesitates to appreciate others, but depreciates their accomplishment though genuine and exemplary.

Father God, teach us to rejoice with those who rejoice over their victories. We are what we are by Your sheer grace. There's nothing inherently good in us, O Lord. Whatever we have is what we have received from You. Help us, O God, to stay broken with this constant realisation. Help us to esteem others better than ourselves, and not be conceited by what we know or do.

Dear Lord, Your Word says that love does not envy. Deliver us from the sin of envying any of our family members or colleagues or fellow-students or neighbours or the preachers. Enlarge our hearts so we may not be narrowminded, but embrace those who fare better than us.

We pray for those of us who are in the ministry of the Gospel. Help us, O God, to encourage one another and never envy another. Let us keep our spirit sweet all the time. Let us rejoice over the fruits of the other servants of Yours, and never, even secretly, rejoice over their failures. Let us abound in love towards one another.

In the Holy Name of Jesus, we pray! Amen!

*(Jl 1:5; Eph 3:18,19; Rom 2:11; Mt 5:45,48; Rom 11:29; Mt 25:15; 1 Cor 12:11; Rom 9:19-21;
2 Cor 7:20,24; Rom 12:15; 1 Cor 15:10; Rom 7:18; 1 Cor 13:4; 1 Pet 4:8)*