

An Obstacle to Fruitfulness



David Wilkerson (1931-2011) October 8, 2020

James said, "If you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth" (James 3:14).

As messengers of Christ's gospel, we simply cannot hold onto jealousy or envy. James makes it clear that this will hinder us from having a testimony with spiritual authority because we are living a lie.

In plain terms, the sin of jealousy or envy is a bitter poison. King Saul provides the clearest example of this in all of scripture. In 1 Samuel 18, we find David returning from a battle in which he slaughtered the Philistines. As he and King Saul rode into Jerusalem, the women of Israel came out to celebrate David's victories, dancing and singing, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands" (1 Samuel 18:7).

Saul was wounded by this joyous celebration, thinking to himself, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed only thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?" (18:8). Immediately, Saul was consumed by a spirit of jealousy. In the very next verse, we read the deadly effect it had on him. "Saul eyed [envied] David from that day forward" (18:9).

Saul seethed, pouting in self-pity. He probably thought, "I've worked so hard, giving up everything to serve these people, and now they turn on me. They're singing the praises of my assistant minister while they ignore me."

Tragically, after this, "Saul became David's enemy continually" (18:29). The truth of this story is that, no matter how loudly the people cheered for David, God's Spirit was still upon Saul and Israel still loved him. The Lord's promise to build him an everlasting house was clearly still in place. Had Saul acknowledged his envy and drawn near to the Lord, God would have heaped honors on him; and David, his loyal captain, would have gladly secured the kingdom for Saul with his military skills. But Saul would not humble himself; and as a result, the Spirit of the Lord departed from him (see 18:12).

In these troubling days, our first priority should be to draw near to Jesus. Spend time in prayer, make him the most important work in your life, and he will show you his heart. By his Spirit, he will remove from you all that is unlike Christ, and he will pour out his spiritual anointing on you.

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