

# Don't Let Envy Colour Your Thoughts

**Matthew 21:8-9, 15** [New King James] *“And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: ‘Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! Hosanna in the highest!’” ... “But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David!’ they were indignant”*

Jesus Christ was adored by the crowd, many of whom knew personally the many healing and loving acts He had done for so many people.

Yet from the shadows of the adjacent buildings the religious leaders looked on with mounting displeasure.

After all, no crowd had ever greeted them in such a spectacular way.

During the next few days they did little to hide their feeling.

Their vehement dislike for Jesus Christ was evident in all their actions.

When the religious leaders had arrested Jesus Christ in the middle of the night, for fear of what the crowd would do. They eventually brought Jesus Christ before Pontius Pilate in order to have Him eliminated.

Pilate found no reason for Jesus Christ to be put to death, [**John 19:4**].

**Matthew 27:17-18** [New King James] *“Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, ‘Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?’ For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy.”*

**It was very obvious to Pilate that envy was behind the religious leaders’ desire to eliminate Jesus Christ.**

**Envy, a painful or resentful awareness of an advantage enjoyed by another person, has been around since the beginning of human history.**

**Genesis 4:2-8** [New King James] *“Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. So the LORD said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.’ Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.”*

**The first recorded murder occurred as a direct result of Cain’s resentment for his brother Abel.**

**Years later, Joseph found himself in Egyptian slavery because of his brother’s envy, [Genesis 37:3-4, 18-20, 26-28].**

**1 Samuel 18:6-9** [New King James] *“Now it had happened as they were coming home, when David was returning from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women had come out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with musical instruments. So the women sang as they danced, and said: ‘Saul has slain his thousands, and David*

*his ten thousands.’ Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him; and he said, ‘They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed only thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?’ So Saul eyed David from that day forward.”*

**From these few Biblical examples we can see how highly destructive envy is in nature.**

**Romans 1:28-32** [New King James] *“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; **full of envy**, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.”*

**Envy is listed in the same category as murder and sexual immorality, sins that in one way or another destroy both character and body.**

**1 Peter 2:1** [New King James] *“Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking,”*

**Obviously therefore, envy is an attitude that must be eliminated from the Christian life.**

**Galatians 5:19-21** [New King James] *“Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”*

**Envy is, however, an integral part of the makeup of the natural human mind, it is among “the works of the flesh.”**

**James 4:4-6** [Amplified Bible] *“You are like unfaithful wives, having illicit love affairs with the world and breaking your marriage vow to God! Do you not know that being the world’s friend is being God’s enemy? So whoever chooses to be a friend of the world takes his stand as an enemy of God. Or do you suppose that the scripture is speaking to no purpose that says, the Spirit Whom He has caused to dwell in us yearns over us and He yearns for the Spirit to be welcome with a jealous [zealous] love?” [Hosea 2:19]*

**The Holy Spirit within a Christian actively seeks to bring us out of this world with all its envy and pride to develop within us the very characteristics of our Creator God, [Galatians 5:22-23].**

It really is then a strong test of our yielding to the work of the Holy Spirit in us to overcome this carnal propensity of our human nature and the world in which we live.

Without the close intimacy with the Holy Spirit this transformation will **not** happen.

**Resentment and the subsequent envy often germinate from a feeling of having been slighted in some way.**

Another person may have received more acclaim than we have. Or perhaps we were overlooked for a promotion we thought we deserved. Or we may feel that others should not own the wealth and physical possessions that they do.

**But whatever the reason, once we allow negative thoughts about the blessings of others to creep into our minds, then we are on the way to becoming envious.**

The time to overcome envy, therefore, is before it takes hold.

**Romans 12:15** [New King James] *“Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.”*

**In fact our approach should be one of helping the individual towards success by encouraging them.**

**If we meditate on the reason for our being envious we will realise that pride is the basis and motivating force.**

**Isaiah 14:12-14** [New King James] *“How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.”*

What was in Lucifer’s [Satan’s] heart [v13] was envy of the Creator God’s power and position.

**Ezekiel 28:12-15** [New King James] *“Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created. You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you.’”*

The Hebrew word translated “iniquity” is “*evel*” a prime root word meaning to destroy morally or deal unjustly.

**In spite of a wonderful and powerful position Lucifer, presented symbolically as the King of Tyre, he was envious of the Creator God because of his pride, [verse 17] that corrupts his wisdom.**

Satan persuaded one third of God’s created angels to follow him in rebellion against the Creator God, [Revelation 12:4].

Satan and his angels [demons] are now ruling the earth, [2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 John 5:19] and has deceived the whole world, [Revelation 12:9].

**Satan, if we let him, will cause us to follow his example of allowing pride to cause us to envy others.** This potential to envy will only end at physical death, [Ecclesiastes 9:6] or if we crucify our old life, [Romans 6:2-6] then offer our new life to the Creator God as a “*living sacrifice*” to be re-educated by Him, [Romans 12:1-2], we will receive the gift of eternal life.

**Philippians 2:1-4** [New King James] *“Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfil my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”*

**Such a humble approach to life will make it very difficult, if not impossible, to envy others.**

**Philippians 2:5-8** [New King James] *“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”*

**In having this attitude of mind we will be following the example of our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ.**

**John the Baptist was a good example of this humble approach to life.**

People came from miles around to hear him preach, [Matthew 3:5; Mark 1:5]. Some even thought that John may have been the expected Christ, [Luke 3:15].

If John had merely been seeking the recognition of people, then he had a good reason to be satisfied.

But notice what happened as soon as Jesus Christ arrived on the scene.

**John 1:25-27** [New King James] *“And they asked him, saying, ‘Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?’ John answered them, saying, ‘I baptize with water, but there stands One among you whom you do not know. It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose.’”*

**John directed the focus of people away from himself onto Jesus Christ the One he was preparing the way to accomplish the work of God the Father.**

**John 3:30** [New King James] *“He must increase, but I must decrease.”*

John recognised that while he was preaching alone he had a major role in the work of God. But he knew that as soon as another person was appointed to fill a far more important position, then he should gladly submit to and offer to help that individual.

**Another example we should look at is Saul’s son Jonathan.**

Jonathan reacted to David in a manner totally unlike his father Saul.

Jonathan could have expected to be the next King of Israel, but somehow he must have known that David was to receive that position.

Jonathan handed David his robe, sword and bow, almost as symbols of the authority being passed to the already anointed son of Jesse, [1 Samuel 18:4].

Probably from their first encounter, a great friendship developed between the two young men.

**Each was willing to serve the other with no thought of personal gain.**

Humanly speaking, Prince Jonathan could have been envious of this ex-shepherd boy, but he wasn't.

Jonathan's example of encouragement and help for the one who was to receive promotion and honour is something we should emulate.

It is well to remember that an opportunity or higher office may be given to an individual in order to stretch that person's ability.

By going through the testing that a new position offers to help them mature.

**Consider this** – It might be that you have already matured in that particular aspect of life and God has another job for you to do!

**Also bear this in mind, we are *not* all equal.**

**While the overall goal is to be part of the Kingdom of God, individual potentials within that framework are diverse.**

**Luke 12:48** [Amplified Bible] *“... for every one to whom much is given, of him shall much be required ...”*

The Creator God will always give to us the gifts of the Holy Spirit to fit the job He wants us to do, [1 Corinthians 12:4-11].

[Please download and study the three-part article, 'Finding Our Place In The Christian Church' listed under 'Christian Living' for a fuller explanation of this subject.]

**Then humbly ask ourselves, “Am I certain I have the gifts needed for that job so I could have seen the assignment through?”**

**Proverbs 14:30** [New King James] *“A sound heart is life to the body, but envy is rottenness to the bones.”*

**Having an envious attitude towards another person is like having bone cancer, which will eat away at our body and mind, giving us a distorted view of the attributes of others and ourselves.**

**Psalms 73:3, 7, 13** [New King James] *“For I was envious of the boastful, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.” ... “Their eyes bulge with abundance; they have more than heart could wish.” ... “Surely I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocence.”*

These envious thoughts lasted in David’s mind but a short while, [Psalms 73:17-19].

People in this world have **no** possessions that will last, so why be envious of them?

**1 Corinthians 13:4** [New King James] *“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up;”*

**The antidote for envy is love and such love comes only from the active presence of the Holy Spirit producing the “fruits” that are the very character of the Creator God in our life, [Galatians 5:2-23].**

**1 Corinthians 10:24** [New King James] *“Let no one seek his own, but each one the other’s well-being.”*

This is in the end self-protection for envy will lead to hate.

Hate takes the happiness out of life and makes us miserable and embittered.

Even more important, hate is an attitude that will keep us out of the Kingdom of God which is based on love and peace.

**Romans 13:13-14** [New King James] *“Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil its lusts.”*

**With the help of the Holy Spirit this is life we can live free completely of any envy.**