

Jealousy

Jealousy may seem normal in a human being but it can be dangerous.

Two brothers –

Cain and Abel were the first two brothers on earth.

Cain was oldest and a farmer, Abel his brother a shepherd.

Genesis 4:3-5 [New King James] *“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.”*

The story we are to examine begins with both brothers wanting to make a peace offering with the Creator God that their parents knew well.

They did not want to be rejected because of rebellion as their parents had been.

Abel offered a lamb, which was symbolic of the future Saviour of all humanity, Jesus Christ the Lamb of God, [John 1:29, 35-36].

Undoubtedly both boys had been told about the lamb skins that God had given their parents to cover the shame of their rebellious sin, [Genesis 3:21].

The offering of Abel was accepted by God.

Cain, however, did not have a flock of sheep from which he could offer a lamb.

To do this he would have to humbly go to his brother and purchase a lamb, this obviously went against his nature!

When God did **not** accept Cain’s offering because it was the work of his own hands, **not** depending on a blood sacrifice of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, Cain boiled over with jealous rage.

God at that moment of rejection asked Cain a question.

Genesis 4:6-7 [New King James] *“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.’”*

This was both a question and a warning.

Cain’s jealousy was nearly out of control.

God was warning Cain to look at his attitude and do something about his jealousy before it was too late.

Unfortunately, Cain did not heed this warning.

Soon after this talk with the Creator God, Cain murdered his brother Abel, [Genesis 4:8].

Jealousy is destructive –

Most jealousy is **not** as extreme as Cain's but is still destructive in the area of relationships with God and other human beings.

Some people may respond to the feeling of jealousy by wanting to plot revenge against the person who is being honoured, when your efforts have been ignored.

You may make false statements about the other person and spread them through gossip, or just ignore them all together as if they did not exist.

Yet this revengeful response will only make you feel worse.

After Cain killed his brother, he became a fugitive, a man with no friends, [Genesis 4:9-16].

Jealousy also convinces us that we are of little value, as it did Cain. We compare ourselves with our other friends and lose self-respect and self-esteem.

We start to really believe that the only way to lift ourselves up is to bring others down, but this will never work.

Overcoming jealousy –

To overcome jealousy we need to end negative thinking.

Take a good look at any past achievements.

Remember God told Cain, *“If you do well you will be accepted,”* the same goes for all of us.

Steps to overcome jealousy –

- 1 **Be among the first to offer congratulations.** Praise your friend for their talents and achievement.
- 2 **Admit to yourself that you are jealous,** for this is essential if you want to overcome it.
- 3 **Think about all the work and effort your friend put in to get this reward.**
- 4 **Put yourself in your friend's shoes.** How would you want your friends to respond?
- 5 **Focus on your own talents and abilities and be thankful to your Creator God for them.**
- 6 **Ask the Creator God to help you show outgoing concern for your honoured friend and any others.**
- 7 **Remember, the opportunities that pass you by now to be honoured will be replaced by greater opportunities in the future if you learn to control jealousy.**
- 8 **The greatest honour and opportunity in the future will be to serve other people within the soon-coming Kingdom of God.**

Matthew 20:20-21, 24-28 [New King James] *“Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him. And He said to her, ‘What do you wish?’ She said to Him, ‘Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom.’” ... “And when the ten heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to Himself and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave, just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.’”*

The jealousy expressed by the ten disciples was blunted and redirected by Jesus Christ's statement and personal example.

Jesus Christ was showing the antidote to jealousy, to love and serve other human beings.

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 love that is referred to in this scripture is the translation of the Greek word “*agapé*” meaning a spontaneous love irrespective of the “*rights*” or response of the recipient, [**Romans 5:8**], a sacrificial love [**John 3:16-17**] that puts aside personal desires, [**Philippians 2:5-8**] to love the object of that love.

A person with such a love for other people could never be jealous.

Such a love can only come from the Creator God through the active indwelling of the Holy Spirit, for this love is one of the “*fruits*” of the Holy Spirit, [Galatians 5:22-25].

The Holy Spirit is only active in our lives on certain conditions.

Given only to those who obey the Creator God, [Acts 5:32].

We must ask for Him, [Luke 11:13].

For Him to remain we must not grieve Him, [Ephesians 4:30], note context!

Also we must not quench all that He would like to change in our lives, [1 Thessalonians 5:19].

John 15:13 [New King James] *“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.”*

Jesus Christ the Son of Man did this as an example for us to follow.

Romans 12:1-2 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

This is a two-fold antidote for jealousy, as we are making this total living sacrifice of our lives, our time is our life, out of love for Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit will then re-educate us to eradicate the society in which we live which is full of pride, selfishness and jealousy.