

How to Handle Anger from Jealousy

Jealous – Fearful or apprehensive of losing affection or position. Resentful or bitter in rivalry; envious. Inclined to suspect rivalry. Having to do with or arising from feelings of envy, apprehension, or bitterness. Vigilant in guarding something. To yearn for.

Jealousy - Resentment, protectiveness, suspicion, distrust, envy

Sometimes anger has its roots in envy. When we focus on the abilities, possessions, or position of others, we can easily become resentful. Let's look at how to handle envious feelings so that they don't turn into hostility.

A. A Biblical Example: King Saul - Saul's jealousy of David began almost immediately after David killed Goliath. Read 1 Samuel 18:5-16.

⁵So David went out wherever Saul sent him, and behaved wisely. And Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants. ⁶Now 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. ⁷So the women sang as they danced, and said: "Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands."

⁸Then 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?" ⁹ So Saul eyed David from that day forward.

¹⁰And it happened on the next day that the distressing spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied inside the house. So David played music with his hand, as at other times; but there was a spear in Saul's hand. ¹¹And Saul cast the spear, for he said, "I will pin David to the wall!" But David escaped his presence twice.

¹²Now Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, but had departed from Saul. ¹³Therefore Saul removed him from his presence, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people. ¹⁴And David behaved wisely in all his ways, and the LORD was with him. ¹⁵Therefore, when Saul saw that he behaved very wisely, he was afraid of him. ¹⁶But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them.

What first bothered Saul regarding David's victory (vv. 6-9)?

What wrong conclusion about his kingdom did Saul draw concerning the younger man's triumph (v. 8)?

What was the real reason that Saul would lose his kingdom (1 Sam. 15:1-3; 13-26)?

Scripture says that Saul was troubled by an evil spirit (v. 10). In order to find relief from the torment, the king commissioned David to play the harp (1 Sam. 16:14-23).

How did Saul try to kill David (vv. 10-11)?

When the king failed, what did he decide to do (v. 13)?

When we become angry with others, we sometimes try to punish them by holding a grudge. However, because David had the Lord's favor, he was "prospering in all his ways," despite the fact that the king—who held the highest position in the country—hated him (v. 14). Nothing could stop God's blessing on David.

What lesson can you learn from this, regarding harboring anger or trying to hinder the success of someone you envy?

When those in authority either overlook or expressly dislike you, how can this principle bring encouragement?

B. Handling Jealousy Correctly

This emotion/attitude sometimes called “covetousness” in Scripture, is so harmful that the Lord forbade it in the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:17 - ¹⁷“*You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s*”). Here are a few practical steps we can take to avoid its temptation.

1. Seek the Lord for all good things.

God – not our ability, appearance, or connection to the right people—gives us favor and places us in positions of influence (1 Sam. 2:6-8).

When you begin to feel jealous of another person, turn your emotions into a prayer. Ask the Lord to bless your abilities, friendships, ministry, and finances—and to give you contentment with what you have.

James tells us that every good and perfect gift is from the Lord. In James 1:17 *Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.* How does James describe God in this passage?

Why does Psalm 34 tell us to “taste and see that the Lord is good” (vv. 8-10)?
⁸*Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.* ⁹ *Fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing.* ¹⁰*The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.*

Note: Verse 10 is not a promise that Christians will have everything they want. Instead, David is making a general statement that when we seek the Lord, He supplies **our most basic needs** (Matt. 6:21-34).

2. Make a commitment not to compare yourself to others.

Western culture encourages competition and ambition. It's easy to find that we're measuring ourselves against what we see in others. Unfortunately, discontentment and even anger often result.

What did Paul give as a reason for not comparing ourselves with others (2 Cor. 10:12)? ¹²*We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise.*

As believers, we can sometimes feel inferior because of our position and talents or lack thereof.

What analogy does Paul use to demonstrate that all members of the church are equally important to its functioning (1 Cor. 12:12-26)?

1 Corinthians 12 teaches that we should be content with the spiritual gifts God has given us. What responsibility or ministry do you believe the Father has planned for you?

What does selfish ambition introduce into the church, according to James 3:13-16?

If you are in the right position, serving the Lord will be a joy. Enjoy where He has placed you, and seek to develop your gifts and talents -in that way, you can keep jealous feelings at bay.

3. Praise and thank the Lord for His blessings to you.

When we choose to meditate on what God has done for us, encouragement and contentment usually follow.

According to Philippians 4:8 our thoughts should be described as *true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable excellent or praiseworthy*

Make a brief list of things that you are grateful for in your life.

4. Look for ways that you can bless others.

Jealousy is self-seeking. An envious person looks at what others have and wants it for him or herself. One way to break the power of jealousy is by **deliberately (by choice)** seeking to bless others either the person whom you envy or someone in need.

In Romans 12:9-21, the apostle Paul describes some practical ways that believers should treat others:

⁹*Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.* ¹⁰*Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.* ¹¹*Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.* ¹²*Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.* ¹³*Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.*

¹⁴*Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.* ¹⁵*Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.* ¹⁶*Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.*

¹⁷*Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.* ¹⁸*If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.* ¹⁹*Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.* ²⁰*On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."* ²¹*Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

Jot down three of his instructions that speak to you, and briefly explain why.

1)

2)

3)

5. Pray for the person you envy.

We are called to pray for fellow believers (Eph. 6:18). A jealous individual focuses on one or two areas of someone else's life that are going remarkably well. But everyone still has needs, hurts, and wants. Think about what the other person may be battling, and base your prayers on those needs.

Jealousy is an attitude of the heart. Seek to rejoice in the gifts, talents and blessings God has given you. Trust Him to shower you with good things in His timing. Determine to serve others instead of focusing on what you lack. Then jealousy *and the anger that can result from it* will not maintain a grip on your life.

Prayer: Father, forgive me for looking at how You have blessed others and wishing that I was the one with that blessing instead. Please give me a selfless heart that rejoices when others prosper. Guard my heart from envy, and help me trust You to supply all the good things I need. Amen.