

ASPECTS OF LOVE

Scripture: 1 Cor 13 vs 4 to 7.

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Part 4.

The Third Aspect

K.J.

*Charity suffereth long, and is kind; **charity envieth not**; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*

N.I.V.

*Love is patient, love is kind. **It does not envy**, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*

K.J. **Charity envieth not**

N.I.V. **It does not envy**

According to William Barclay in 'The Daily Study Bible' there are two kinds of 'envy' he says: "The one kind covets the possessions of other people. The other kind is worse - it grudges the very fact that others should have what it has not".

One of the meanings of the Greek word 'envy' is 'To be heated or to boil with envy, hatred, anger'. *Envy* is linked to zeal, but it is a wrong kind of zeal. You can be enthused with a desire to do wrong just as much as you can have a desire to do that which is good.

According to what Paul is writing here, the Christian, the Holy Spirit filled believer who has the love of God in their heart, has this third aspect in their life, they do not envy.

To be realistic, I have to say that there are very few who do not covet what someone else has, or wish others did not have so much. This is something we have encountered and had to come to terms with, because it is part of our human nature.

The truth is, even though we are Christians we still carry some of the baggage of sin in our nature as a result of the fall. We should however “*press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*”. There should be a desire within us to mortify the deeds of the flesh, which kills off such things as *envy*.

Barns Commentary on this verse says: “The sense is, love does not *envy* others the happiness which they enjoy; it delights in their welfare; and as their happiness is increased by their endowments, their rank, their reputation, their wealth, their health, their domestic comforts, their learning, etc, those who are influenced by love rejoice in all this. They would not diminish it; they would not embarrass them because of possessions; they would not detract from that happiness; they would not murmur or sulk that they themselves are not SO highly favoured. To *envy*, is to feel uneasiness, or discontent at the sight of superior happiness, excellence, or reputation enjoyed by another; to meditate morbidly at another’s prosperity”.

John Gill’s Expositor says: “Charity *envieth* not; or he that has the grace of love to God, Christ, and the saints, does not *envy* the temporal happiness of others, though it is what he has not, or is greater than he enjoys”.

People’s NT Notes says: “Love *envieth* not. How miserable is that *envy* which is made unhappy by the good fortune of another. Love excludes it.”

I feel it important for us to consider this aspect that ‘*Love does not envy*’ in the following way.

1. TO BE ENVIOUS IS DANGEROUS.

When the apostle Peter wrote his general epistles he was moved to write the following in **1 Peter 2v1**. *“Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking”*. The N.I.V says: *“Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind”*.

The Greek word for ‘laying aside’ means: “Put off; lay aside; lay down; cast off; put away.” The reason for putting something away is because you have finished with it. *Envy* is one of the things that once you have become a Christian, you have finished with. Peter saw how futile it is to be envious. It is very dangerous, because of the potential in it to boil over and cause hurt to a lot of people.

It is dangerous, for it can cause division and disruption, ruin relationships, split families and friendships. This is why Peter says we are to ‘Put it off’. Peter’s indication is that to be envious is ruinous. It ruins the person who is jealous, and it hurts the person the jealousy has been directed towards.

We must take seriously what Peter says about *envy*, and also what Paul has to say. There is need for each of us to realise that, that which soils our Christian life and character is to be cast off, and put away. It is to be left on one side because it is of no value to the man or woman of God any longer. No one continues to wear clothes once they have become dirty, for if this were the case then one would lose the respectability and acceptability of others. So to be envious is dangerous. Then please note that.

2. TO BE ENVIOUS IS DESTRUCTIVE

In **Genesis 37 vs 11 & 18** we read *“And his brethren envied him. And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him”*

The story of Joseph illustrates quite adequately the point I want to make regarding how destructive *envy* can really be. Joseph was the victim of a conspiracy, which was motivated by the jealousy that boiled up in his brothers. The situations Joseph was put in could have resulted in the loss of his life. Had it not been for the

providential care of God, and His intervention, he could easily been killed by his brothers or died in prison.

Apart from the effect on Joseph, think of the grief his father Jacob must have experienced. You see when envy boils over; it touches others apart from the person directly in the line of fire. Jacob must have gone through awful trauma caused by his own flesh and blood. It was his own children that caused him to be hurt and damaged emotionally. Joseph's own brothers were responsible, because they allowed the spirit of envy to boil over. Let us make sure that the love we have is a love that provokes us to do works of kindness and not engineer something destructive against a fellow believer because we are envious of their gifting.

Let us make sure we are not envious of the gifts God deposits in other believers. Let us not cause our heavenly Father any grief by doing harm to one of His children because we are jealous.

It was the prerogative of Jacob to give to Joseph any gift he wanted. It was also the prerogative of God to show Joseph any future plans he had for him. It was this that caused the fire of jealousy to boil up in his brothers.

When teaching the disciples about the Kingdom of heaven Jesus talked to them regarding the talents that different people had been given.

We read in **Matt 25 vs 14 to 26** the following.

14 "Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them.

15 To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey.

16 The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more.

17 So also, the one with the two talents gained two more.

18 But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

19 *After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them.*

20 *The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.'*

21 *His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'*

22 *The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.'*

23 *His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'*

24 *Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'*

26 *His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed?'*

There is something very important here that we need to realise, and accept and it is this. Some people will be more gifted than others. In the story of the talents told by Jesus, you will notice a clear principle; each one was given a talent according to their ability. It is obvious that there are levels of ability in each one of us, and this is something we have to recognise. One will have the capacity, which enables them to do a number of things; others are restricted in what they can do.

However, no matter what the capacity of each one might be, let us not be jealous of the talents and ability of other Christians. Otherwise, we will be in danger of causing a lot of damage, which can be an obstacle, and a hindrance, to the use of the gifts God has given.

3. TO BE ENVIOUS IS DECEITFUL

Jealousy can cause people to do all kinds of awful things. When Joseph's brothers did those terrible things to him, to stop their father being suspicious, they concocted a story. They agreed together to invent a story of what had happened to him.

Gen 17 vs 31 to 35 says.

31 Then they got Joseph's robe, slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood.

32 They took the ornamented robe back to their father and said, "We found this. Examine it to see whether it is your son's robe."

33 He recognised it and said, "It is my son's robe! Some ferocious animal has devoured him. Joseph has surely been torn to pieces."

34 Then Jacob tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and mourned for his son many days.

35 All his sons and daughters came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. "No," he said, "in mourning will I go down to the grave to my son." So his father wept for him.

Jealousy can control the actions of normal people and turn them into deceivers and liars. The turmoil the brothers of Joseph caused their father is almost beyond belief, and yet it happened. They were divisive because they did not want their father to find out the truth. The truth would have exposed them as unrighteous individuals who never considered the feeling of others. It was only what they could gain, as a result of their actions, which concerned them.

Action taken by someone who is envious, never considers the pain caused in the present to the individual, it only sees the possible gain for themselves.

So being envious can turn honest people into deceivers.

There have been times when false stories have been spread because of *envy*, which has resulted in some particular individual being hurt and damaged, as in the case of Joseph.

My own advice to anyone who has experienced hurt through jealousy is, do not react! Be passive and let the sovereignty of God work out his purpose in your life. Do not give up; keep focused on the Lord and on the work of the Lord. Let the word

of God dwell in you richly. The Lord will fight for you, as he did for Joseph and look what his end was.

Envy can ruin your Christian life if you put fire under it and let it boil over. Let the Love of God keep envy away, everything is better by doing this.