

## **“ENVY: ROTTENNESS TO THE BONES”**

**Proverbs 14:30**

### **Introduction:**

- 1. The Wise Man said: “A sound heart is life to the body, but envy is rottenness to the bones.”**
  - a. A healthy heart is necessary for the enjoyment of long life.**
  - b. Cancer in the bones is both painful and deadly.**
- 2. One whose heart (seat of the emotions in the Bible) is healthy will live a happy and productive life.**
- 3. One who is envious or jealous of others will be unpleasant to others and unhappy in life.**
- 4. One may obey the Gospel and faithfully attend every service of the church, yet be lost, if he harbors envy in his heart.**
- 5. Socrates, the Greek philosopher, said: “Envy is the daughter of pride, the author of murder and revenge, the begetter of secret sedition, the perpetual tormentor of virtue, a poison, a quicksilver, which consumes the flesh and dries up the marrow of the bones.”**
- 6. We shall examine the Scriptures to answer the following questions:**
  - a. What is envy?**
  - b. How does envy work?**
  - c. How can we overcome envy?**

### **Discussion:**

#### **I. WHAT IS ENVY?**

- A. Webster’s Dictionary defines envy as “chagrin or discontent at the excellence or good fortune of another; resentful, grudging.”**
  - 1. One may say, “So and so has all the luck!”**
  - 2. Some translations use “jealous” instead of “envy.”**

3. **Cruden's Concordance says: "Frequently in the Bible envy has the distinct idea of malice or spite."**

**B. There are many examples of envy in the Bible.**

1. **Cain killed his brother, Abel, because of envy :**

**"For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous" (1 John 3:11,12; Heb. 11:4).**

2. **The Philistines envied Isaac because he had great flocks and herds; they stopped up his wells (Genesis 26:12-15).**
3. **Rachel envied her sister, Leah, because Leah had several children and she had none (Genesis 30:1).**
4. **Joseph's brothers envied him and sold him into slavery (Genesis 37).**
5. **Korah, Dathan and Abiram rebelled against Moses because they envied his position of leadership (Numbers 16:1-3; Psalm 106:16,17).**
6. **Saul envied David and sought to kill him because the women ascribed greater praise to David than they did to him (1 Samuel 18:5-17).**
7. **Pilate understood that the leaders of the Jews wanted Jesus killed because they were envious of Him:**

**"For he knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy" (Mark 15:10).**

**C. Envy is common in today's world.**

1. **Envy is why we want to "keep up with the Joneses."**
2. **"We were content living in a two bedroom house and driving an old Chevrolet until our best friends moved into a four bedroom house and bought a new Cadillac."**

**II. HOW DOES ENVY WORK?**

- A. Envy has always been a common sin in all levels of society.**
- 1. “It is a weed that grows in all soils and climates” (Lord Clarendon).**
  - 2. David warned the righteous: “Do not fret because of evildoers, nor be envious of the workers of iniquity” (Psa. 37:1,2; 73:1-3,17).**
  - 3. The elder brother in the parable of the prodigal son was envious of his father’s reception of his younger brother (Luke 15:28-30).**
- B. Just as one is known by the company he keeps, so envy is associated with many similar evils.**
- 1. Envy, as a work of the flesh, is associated with the worst sins of the human race (Galatians 5:19-21).**
  - 2. Envy is often associated with strife, factions and divisions for it is an underlying cause.**
- “... For you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?” (1 Corinthians 3:3).**
- C. We can find examples of envy in many congregations today.**
- 1. Some elders may be envious of their fellow elder who is more popular or more respected than they are.**
  - 2. Preachers are frequently envious of other preachers who receive more invitations to speak in lectureships and Gospel Meetings than they do.**
    - a. H. Leo Boles prayed for every preacher he heard.**
    - b. Let us be thankful for the talents and achievements of others (1 Corinthians 3:1-9).**

### **III. HOW CAN WE OVERCOME ENVY?**

- A. There are some things we must do:**

**(3)**

1. Learn to love for “love does not envy” (1 Cor. 13:4).
2. “Put on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 13:13,14).
3. “Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16).
4. Remember that we are members of the same body and of one another (1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 5:30).

**B. We should also be content with what God has given us (1 Tim. 6:6).**

“I wonder if the poppy shows the slightest envy of the rose?  
Or if the pansy wastes its time regretting it cannot climb?  
Do blossoms of a yellow hue complain because they are not blue?  
Do birds which God designed to sing envy the wild duck’s  
fleeter wing?  
And does the sparrow sadly mourn because he was not a gold  
finch born?  
I cannot say, but fancy not. Each seems contented with its lot.  
‘Tis only the man that thinks that he, some other man would  
rather be.” (Edgar Guest).

### **Conclusion:**

1. Envy will destroy the one who is envious.
  - a. Haman built a gallows for Mordecai but he was hanged on it instead (Esther 5:9-14;7:10).
  - b. Daniel’s fellow governors had him cast into a lion’s den but they were the ones destroyed by the lions (Daniel 6).
2. Ancient Greek history records the story of Theagenes, an athlete who was envious because his city had set up a statue of his chief rival.
  - a. He struck the statute every night trying to break it down.
  - b. One night he succeeded, but was crushed to death when it fell.

(4)

(Indebted to Wendell Winkler: Heart Diseases and Their Cure).