



November 5/6, 2011
Genesis 4:8-16
“Envy Kills”
Pastor Gary Hamrick

Last week Pastor Gary’s message dealt with the offerings of Cain and Abel, and why Abel’s offering was acceptable and Cain’s was not. The reason was that Abel brought a blood offering or a substitutionary sacrifice, and he came by faith, the way God had prescribed. Cain came to the place of offering his own way, presenting a grain offering, which came from the work of his hands. He did not come the way of faith with a blood sacrifice.

In Genesis chapter four we read that not only did God evaluate how they worshipped, but who they were as worshippers. God saw that there was something different about them as men, their hearts, and their attitudes. What was wrong with Cain led to murder his own brother.

What is the real issue in this account? Well, it started with Satan, who envied God’s power and position to the point that he wanted to be God. Then, Adam and Eve envied God because they wanted to have more of what God had. The trail of envy continues when Cain envied Abel’s spiritual life, his offering and his relationship with God to the point that his anger turned to a murder plot.

Envy Is Sin

1. Envy is not simply wanting what someone else has; envy is not wanting them to have it.
2. Envy is more than jealousy; it is an evil, malicious resentment of who others are or what others have, and envy wishes ill will toward others.

3. Jesus called envy sin.
 - a. **Mark 7:21-23** - *“For from within, out of men’s hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man ‘unclean.’ ”*

4. James called envy sin.
 - a. **James 3:16** - *“For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.”*

5. Paul considered envy to be one of the acts of the sinful nature.
 - a. **Galatians 5:19-21** - *“The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.”*

Envy Is Personally Destructive

6. **Proverbs 14:30** - *“A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.”*

7. There’s a lot of truth in the old saying, “They’re green with envy!”

8. Resentment over who someone is or what he or she has has the potential to literally make a person ill.

9. Envy has the potential to take root and become a cancer in a person’s life.

Envy Is Personally Disrespectful

10. **Numbers 12:1-3** - *“Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of his Cushite wife, for he had married a Cushite. ‘Has the LORD spoken only through Moses?’ they asked. ‘Hasn’t he also spoken through us?’ And the LORD heard this. (Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.)”*
 - a. Miriam and Aaron rose up against Moses and they used his interracial marriage as a smokescreen.

- b. The real issue was their envy of Moses' position of leadership and his relationship with God.
- c. [Numbers 12:4-16](#) provides the evidence to conclude that Miriam must have been the instigator, because she's the one who gets punished.
- d. This incident taught them to never envy Moses again!

Envy Fuels A Sense Of Entitlement

- 11. In the account of King Saul and David, we often read about Saul's envy and jealousy over David being a better warrior, and the fact that God chose David to replace him as king.
 - a. [1 Samuel 18:6-9](#) - *"When the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with tambourines and lutes. As they danced, they sang: 'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands.' Saul was very angry; this refrain galled him. 'They have credited David with tens of thousands,' he thought, 'but me with only thousands. What more can he get but the kingdom?' And from that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David."*
 - b. The Hebrew word, *avan*, only used one time in the Old Testament, means, "to watch with evil intent."
 - c. Saul felt he deserved the praise that David received.

Envy Can Lead To Murder

- 12. Envy led Cain to murder his brother, Abel. ([Genesis 4:8](#))
- 13. Cain envied...
 - a. Abel's righteousness
 - b. Abel's offering.
 - c. Abel's relationship with God.
- 14. [1 John 3:12](#) - *"Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous."*
 - a. The Hebrew word for *murdered*, means to "cut the throat," as in a sacrifice.
 - b. It's possible Cain thought to himself, "I'll make you (Abel) a blood sacrifice!"

15. Envy says with resentment...
 - a. Someone else got the boyfriend/girlfriend.
 - b. Someone else got the promotion.
 - c. Someone else makes a lot of money.
 - d. Someone else lives in a nice house.
 - e. Someone else is more athletic.
 - f. Someone else is smarter.

God's Remedy For Envy

16. Rejoice in the successes of others and celebrate their achievements.
 - a. **Romans 12:15** - *"Rejoice with those who rejoice..."*
17. Be content in whatever your circumstances.
 - a. **Philippians 4:11-13** - *"... I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength."*

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read **Genesis 4:8-16** to provide an overview for this study.
3. Spend time talking about the "Occupy" protestors who are receiving a lot of attention on TV and in newspapers.
 - a. Do you understand what their demands are?
 - b. Do you think they know what their demands are?
 - c. Is it obvious to you that a lot of their vitriolic remarks and destruction of private property come from envy?
 - d. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's illustration about a student being envious of another student who earned better grades.
 - i. One person earns A's and the other earns C's. The person who makes C's doesn't believe it's necessary to consider the importance of investing more time for study and preparation; their desire is for everyone in the class to earn C's or fail, rather than taking the personal responsibility to do what it takes to earn A's.

4. Read and discuss [Mark 7:21-23](#), [James 3:16](#) and [Galatians 5:19-21](#).
 - a. Allow the people in your group to share experiences about times when they allowed envy to gain a foothold in their life.
 - b. Do you think most Christians consider envy to be sinful or is it just a character flaw/problem?
5. [Proverbs 14:30](#) indicates that envy can become physically destructive.
 - a. Are you aware of examples of someone becoming physically ill because of envy?
6. Read [Numbers 12:1-3](#) and spend time talking about the way envy caused Miriam and Aaron to disrespect Moses, who was God's chosen leader.
7. Have you experienced or witnessed situations when envy fueled a sense of entitlement?
8. Read and discuss [Romans 12:15](#) and [Philippians 4:11-13](#).
 - a. How has the Lord helped you eliminate or greatly reduce envy?
9. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: obey the Scriptures and be someone who celebrates the victories and blessings of others ([Romans 12:15](#)); be thankful for God's provision in their life ([Philippians 4:11-13](#)).

Additional Notes

[Genesis 4:17](#) informs us that Cain "*lay with his wife.*" So, naturally, the question is, "Where did Cain get a wife?" In [Genesis 5:4](#) we read that Adam and Eve had "*other sons and daughters,*" however, only three sons are named. Dr. Henry Morris¹ considered average life span, average number of children and rate of reproduction, to calculate that by the time Cain took a wife, there would have been more than 100,000 people on Earth. This explanation helps us understand that Cain may not have had to take his sister as his wife because there would have been quite a number of potential candidates!

Regardless, two important things need to be understood. First, biologically, the gene pool was very pure with the first humans, which means there would have been no problem with dominant and recessive genes. Second, morally this seems unnatural to

¹ As with any Wikipedia entry, one should always make sure to take the time to carefully read and investigate biographical information, etc. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_M._Morris

us, as it should, but in that day it was an innocent thing for a limited time, as evidenced by the fact that it was later outlawed and codified in the Mosaic Law.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).