



VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH

SUGAR GROVE CAMPUS

Shattered Emotions

When life goes to pieces | Part 7

Tim Badal | November 8, 2015 | 1 Samuel 18–19



Turn in your Bible to 1 Samuel 18. We'll be continuing in our series entitled "Shattered." We are in the home stretch of this series and will be finishing it up the week before Thanksgiving. We've been looking at broken lives and broken people who struggled—some for short periods of time and others for long periods of time—with trials and tribulations or with the harmful consequences that came as a result of the sinful decisions they made. We've learned that we as a people are shattered. Whether we want to admit it or not, we struggle with issues. We struggle with all types of sin and issues that have come from either God's benevolent hand or as a result of sinful decisions that we've made.

We've used this series to remember that we're all in the same boat. We're all living shattered lives in some way, shape, or form. But we have hope in our Savior Who is not shattered. He is the Rock amidst the storm. He has laid before us a picture of perfection and how we ought to live, even in the midst of our own struggles and difficult realities. Jesus reminds us that though He was tempted and had trials of many kinds, His response was always, *"Not my will, but yours, be done"* (Luke 22:42). That's our prayer as we move forward.

For the last couple of weeks we've been studying the life of King Saul. It's a difficult life to look at. The first king of Israel did not have it all together. In fact, because of sinful decisions he made, and because he chose to do things his way and not God's way, the life of King Saul is a reminder of how not to live. When we live our lives our own way, shunning the ways and Word of the Lord, we're going to deal with some of the same things Saul did.

Over these last three weeks we've look at things like Saul's shattered confidence. He was unable to move even though God was with the people of Israel when Goliath was standing before them. We looked at Saul's shattered directions. He was unable to lead his people well and had all kinds of struggles and issues along the way because he chose to do it his way instead of God's way.

Today we're going to talk about his shattered emotions. Saul was a broken man. Not in a humble way, but his life was shattered because of sinful decisions that affected every part of his being, down to his psyche and the feelings he had for others.

Turn your attention to 1 Samuel 18. We are fast-forwarding a little bit to chapter 18. Much has happened since David defeated Goliath. Before we move too quickly, I want to remind you what happened in chapter 16. David was anointed king and Saul had his kingdom taken away from him. God said, *"I'm going to choose a man after My own heart instead of this one whom the people chose."* So God picked David as he was shepherding his father's sheep.

During that time, unknown to Saul that God had chosen another, Saul had a tormented spirit that was agonizing him. Even before Goliath was in the picture, David was introduced to Saul because he was brought into his service so that the tormenting spirits might be drawn away by David's beautiful music. We will learn that David's soothing music, which was the balm for Saul's tormented soul, will go away because Saul becomes incredibly jealous and envious of David. He was jealous of God's working in David's life and what he was doing amongst the people.

So we pick up in 1 Samuel 18:6–16:

⁶As they were coming home, when David returned from striking down the Philistine, the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with songs of joy, and with musical instruments. ⁷And the women sang to one another as they celebrated,

“Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands.”

⁸And Saul was very angry, and this saying displeased him. He said, “They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed thousands, and what more can he have but the kingdom?” ⁹And Saul eyed David from that day on.

¹⁰The next day a harmful spirit from God rushed upon Saul, and he raved within his house while David was playing the lyre, as he did day by day. Saul had his spear in his hand. ¹¹And Saul hurled the spear, for he thought, “I will pin David to the wall.” But David evaded him twice.

¹²Saul was afraid of David because the LORD was with him but had departed from Saul. ¹³So Saul removed him from his presence and made him a commander of a thousand. And he went out and came in before the people. ¹⁴And David had success in all his undertakings, for the LORD was with him. ¹⁵And when Saul saw that he had great success, he stood in fearful awe of him. ¹⁶But all Israel and Judah loved David, for he went out and came in before them.

There’s a story about two shopkeepers who were bitter rivals and competitors. Their stores were right across the street from one another and they spent their days sitting in the shop doorways, keeping track of who had the most customers on any given day. When one got a customer, he would smile and raise his hands in triumph at the other, as if winning a battle. But one night an angel appeared to one of the shopkeepers and said, “God has brought me to teach you a lesson. God has promised that He will give you anything that you ask for, but I want you to know that whatever you get, your competitor across the street will get twice as much. Would you like wealth? Ask for all that you want and just remember, the guy across the street gets twice as much. Do you want to live a long and happy life? It can be yours, but he will live twice as long. You can be famous. Your children can have good and fruitful lives. Whatever you desire, it can be yours, but please remember, whatever you get he will get twice as much.” The man thought for a moment. He smiled and then he frowned. He said to the angel, “My request is simple: strike me blind in one eye.”

Jealousy is a formidable opponent. No wonder Shakespeare called this emotion “the green-eyed monster.” A man named Dryden called envy “jaundice of the soul.” Taken together, jealousy and envy are the most corroding of all the vices that we struggle with. This monster of jealousy and envy decimates friendships. It can bring a budding relationship to a crashing halt. It can impact those who have been married a long time or those who have been married a short season. Jealousy is the cause of so many divorces today.

But it doesn’t just impact lovers. It impacts churches as well. Jealousy can divide churches. Jealousy can make churches go off of their mission. It destroys and dissolves families. Jealousy is running rampant in our society, both inside and outside the church. It’s a sin that you can experience without moving a limb or saying a word. Right now some of you are having jealous and envious thoughts. As you entered the sanctuary with all of these people, you began to look at others and have jealous and envious thoughts about them.

In a sermon on jealousy by Ray Pritchard, he asked the following questions that we need to ask as well:

- Are we struggling with envy and jealousy?
- Do we secretly regret that our friends have succeeded where we have not?
- Would we believe that we could have done better if we had gotten the right breaks?
- Do we use excuses to explain why someone else is doing better than us?
- Do we temper our compliments with the word “but”?
- Do we complain that others do not appreciate us as they should?
- Do we walk the other way rather than congratulate friends on their good fortune?
- Do we question the motives of those who show kindness to us?
- Do we secretly gloat when others get caught because they had it coming to them?
- Do we not sincerely rejoice with others on their personal successes?
- Do we refuse to be friends with people who might excel in our field and might even be better than us?

- Do we struggle to hear our friends being complimented in our presence?
- Do we say things like, “I really like so-and-so but I want to make sure I have all the facts”?
- Are we happy to hear that some public figure was caught in a sin, which makes us feel better about our own sin?
- Do we keep our eyes on others to make sure no one gets ahead of us unfairly?
- Are we better at criticism than praise?
- Is it a struggle for us to not be around others without complaining about how hard our lives are?
- Do we have a hard time believing our friends may have more talent than we do?

These are questions we have to ask that help us see if we struggle with jealousy. In our text we have to pause and say, “Of course the Bible has stories full of jealousy.” We think of Lucifer who was jealous and envious of God’s standing in heaven. Before the earth was created, jealousy and envy were a part of Lucifer’s diabolical plan to take out God. Envy and jealousy would be a part of the heart of Adam and Eve in the garden. One of their sons struggled with envy and jealousy. Cain raised his hand against Abel because he was envious of what the Lord had said about Abel’s sacrifice instead of Cain’s. We see jealousy and envy in the story of Joseph and his brothers when his father gave him the coat of many colors.

We could go on and on with stories of jealousy and envy in the Scriptures and throughout human history. But one place we wouldn’t think to find envy and jealousy would be in the life of a king. That’s exactly where we find ourselves in our text. Of all the people who could possibly be envious, how could it be that the king would be envious? The king has everything. Whatever the king wants he can have. He has riches. He has accolades. He has possessions beyond measure. He has power and authority. He’s in charge. If you would think of anyone who would not struggle with envy and jealousy it would have been King Saul. But a good portion of King Saul’s life was characterized by the sins of envy and jealousy.

While we give King Saul a hard time for his sins, I want to remind you that the first two kings of Israel struggled with the issue of envy and jealousy. Remember that the one God said was a man after his own heart, David, would one day stand on the top of his palace, see a woman and he would envy in his heart. “I want her and I have to have her.” He sinned and did everything he could to keep her for himself.

Whether you’re walking with God or not, the sin of jealousy is something we always have to be concerned with. No Christian is immune to this issue. It happened in Saul’s life, it happened in David’s life and it happens in ours. Here’s the reason: instead of feasting on the goodness of God and His gospel, you and I go dumpster diving, devouring jealousy and envy, and in the process rotting our souls.

God loves us too much to leave us there. So He gives us these stark reminders of the reality of what happens when jealousy and envy enter our lives and the foolishness of living in that state of emotions. He gives us truths that remind us how we ought to live. As we address this condemnable act of Saul, I want to answer four questions:

1. What is jealousy?
2. How does jealousy send us on a downward slide?
3. What damage is done through this malady?
4. What are the ways to destroy it?

1. Definition of this Prevalent Sin

Envy: I want something you have.

In English the word jealousy is a somewhat difficult term. When we see someone who has something we want, our response is always, “I’m jealous of you.” But that’s not completely right so let’s define what jealousy is by first understanding jealousy’s friend, envy. Envy is an open-handed emotion or feeling. Maybe a better term than open-handed is empty-handed. It’s an empty-handed feeling or emotion. Envy is the displeasure you feel when you don’t have something you want and someone else already possesses it. When you say, “I’m envious,” what you’re saying is, “You have something I want, I don’t have it and I’m yearning for it. I want to pursue that. I want to have that as my own.”

Jealousy: I have something and you can't have it.

On the other hand, jealousy is the close-handed or full-handed feeling. It's the displeasure that you feel when someone tries to take something that you already possess.

This is how the Bible uses the words envy and jealousy. I'll give you two definitions so you use them in the right way:

- Envy says, "I want something you have." Erma Bombeck captured the heart of envy in her humorous prayer that some of you may already be praying. "Lord, if you cannot make me thin then at least make my friends look fat."
- Jealousy says, "I have something and you can't have it."

Theologians would say that jealousy and envy are two sides of the same coin. When speaking of envy and jealousy in James 3:14, the NIV translators understood this aspect by adding a modifier to the word envy. They translated the word envy as "*bitter envy... in your hearts.*" Bitter envy is the two-sided definition of jealousy and envy combined.

Before we go too far into our text on this issue and see how it manifested itself in Saul's life, I want to remind us of something very important. When we speak of jealousy—having something that you won't allow anyone else to have—while almost always condemned as sin in the Scriptures, in certain arenas it's not condemnable but commendable. There are times when jealousy is good and right. Scripture tells us that God calls Himself a jealous God (Exodus 20:5). Has God just sinned? If He had, the cosmos would have fallen off its axis. We know that's not the case. God is saying, "I have something and you can't have it." God knows that He is the best. God knows there is none like Him. He knows He's the Alpha and Omega, the Creator of all things. He knows He is preeminent over all things. He's holy and set apart. Because all of these things are attributes and characteristics of our God in heaven, He says, "These are mine and you can't have them. I'm a jealous God. Because I am these things, all the worship, all the praise, all the adoration belong to Me. They're Mine."

How does that work? To put it into human understanding, there are times when you and I can be legitimately, biblically—or even better said—righteously jealous. I have the privilege and ability to be jealous any time another man flirts with my wife. I'm not sinning. I'm not in trouble. God isn't sitting there saying, "Hey, what are you doing? You can't do that!" God says that I am Amanda's and she is mine. We're in a covenant relationship. If anyone tries to take that covenant relationship from us, we both should be jealous. So there are times when jealousy is a commendable thing.

Here's the problem: Saul's jealousy wasn't commendable. Here's the amazing thing: in one story of human history surrounding the king of Israel we see both envy and jealousy. We see envy in our text when David received more accolades in a song that the women sang. Saul was envious of him. "They say David killed ten thousand while they say I only killed a thousand." Then we see jealousy when he said that the only thing he had that David didn't have was the throne and that he would keep it for himself. Here's the problem: the kingship wasn't his. He had already been told that the kingship of Israel had been taken away from him. So in this story there isn't legitimate jealousy, but a man struggling with both sides of that coin. If we're honest with ourselves, you and I in some way, shape or form are probably struggling with both sides of that coin as well.

So let's look at the text and try to understand what's going on, and then draw some conclusions from it. How did jealousy begin to manifest itself? It began to manifest itself in a song. Good things are happening in 1 Samuel 18. David was returning home from striking down the Philistines. The women came out from all the cities to celebrate. This was a normal response when the armies of any nation would vanquish their enemies. They would come back in a parade-type form, just like we do with the ticker-tape parade in Times Square when we celebrate and recognize the great victories over our enemies. So the Israeli army was coming home and the women came out cheering. Why the women? Because the men were battling and were in the parade, so there were only women and children, and maybe some elderly individuals, but the narrator only comments on the women. Here's the problem: when you're a man and women start cheering accolades, guys can start being jealous and envious of one another.

The women began to sing a song with tambourines and were filled with joy. They sang to one another as they celebrated, "*Saul has struck down his thousands...*" I wonder if when Saul heard that, he tipped his crown and said, "Thank you very much! This is a good song. I'm sure it will make the Top 40 on Israel's billboard hits." Things were going well. Of course the king should get praise. Of course the king should get adulation. The king was the guy who led the army into battle. So he was enjoying himself. Things were going well, as they should.

But they kept singing and in the second verse they said, "*And David his ten thousands.*" I wonder what Saul thought in that moment? "Hey, wait a minute...." Envy and jealousy begin when the spotlight gets taken off of us and put on another. In my

years as an adult I've learned that that is when real character is found. How do you respond when no one is talking about and praising you? Even worse, how do you respond when you receive less praise than you deserve, and someone receives more praise than you think they deserve?

Nowhere in the text does the narrator tell us that any of this is not true. So we can't think that Saul was saying, "Did you count the bodies? Did you really see David do that?" It seems that the narrator is making it abundantly clear that what the women were singing was actually true. Saul had been part of the laying down of thousands of men, yet David's count was in the ten thousands.

As a result, notice in verse eight how quickly things changed. Saul went from no doubt being filled with joy when the women sang the first verse to being very angry after they sang the second verse. *"And Saul was very angry, and this saying displeased him."* If you think you're going to see jealousy and envy coming a mile away, you won't. It comes very quickly. Saul wasn't thinking it was going to happen. He didn't think it would be a problem. He was doing okay as a king. People were appreciating and loving him. But in one song, in one moment, Saul became discombobulated because a bunch of women started singing a song that praised him a lot but praised David a little more.

Do you see the fine line between envy and jealousy in our lives? I can understand where he would be mad if the women said, "Saul is the worst king. He's terrible. He doesn't do a thing. But David is great in comparison to Saul. He's outstanding. We love him. We want him to be king." I get that there would be reason for some sadness and displeasure if that were the song. They praised Saul, but they praised David just a little more.

How many of you are envious or jealous because God, Who loves you so much and has gifted you and provided all that you need, has graced, gifted and blessed someone else a little more? Saul thought all he needed was affirmation from his people. "You're our guy, Saul! We love you. You are great. You've won an awesome battle."

2. Downward Slide of Jealousy

Begins with a coveting heart

How do I identify this jealousy? It begins with a coveting heart. What was Saul's problem? Saul's problem was simple: he wanted what David was getting. There was selfishness in that. Remember, the women were singing the truth that David had in fact killed tens of thousands of people. We know that David was the representative of the troops he was leading. We know that David did not personally kill tens of thousands of people, just as we know that Saul hadn't killed thousands by his own hand. These two men were leading groups of men. None of these guys were getting upset. It doesn't say, "And the soldiers were displeased that David and Saul got all the credit." Saul should have recognized that the king always gets more credit, more praise and adulation than the foot soldiers who actually fought the battle.

Saul was upset because he wanted all the praise. Not some of it, not a large portion of it, but all of it. The only way the women could have gotten it right was to sing, "Saul struck down his thousands, and Saul killed his ten thousands. Saul! Saul! Saul! We love Saul. We can't get enough of Saul. Saul is the greatest!" If you're living your life where you've got to have it all, and the second the spotlight moves off of you, you yell to the guys in the back, "Hey! I'm over here! Let's get that light back on me. Let's focus on who is really important," then you better be careful because that's a coveting heart that's going to lead you down a problematic road.

Coveting is the breeding ground for envy and jealousy. Let's go on a field trip for a moment. I want to take you down the hallway. We'll hit the dead end at the T, turn to the left and head down to the nursery. We peer into the nursery. We bring a nice, shiny truck to a group of young boys. It's a beautiful truck, one that they've never seen before. We hand that truck to one kid and say, "This is your truck! This is yours. You play with it and do what you want with it. It's all yours!" What's going to happen when the rest of the boys see that truck? Are we going to have to teach them to covet? Do we have to teach them to have envy? No, because we know it's part of human nature. Here's the problem: we leave the nursery but we don't leave our envy and jealousy there.

As we get older the trucks get bigger. The dolls become nicer looking. The houses and cars become more elaborate. This is all the stuff that leads us to struggle with jealousy. What happens when jealousy comes? James 4:1-2 says, *"What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you?"* James says, "Why are you guys fighting? *"You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel."* Some of you are at odds with other individuals because of coveting in your own heart. It's not them. It's all you! It's all me.

The Ten Commandments are given in Exodus 20. The final commandment addresses the issue of coveting which leads to jealousy and envy. Moses tells the children of Israel, *"You shall not covet your neighbor's house."* We do that. "They have a three car garage! I only have a two. Their kitchen is so nice that Paula Deen would like to cook in it! They have four bedrooms. We only have three. Look how big their lot is. Look at the neighborhood they live in." Covet! Covet! Covet!

Now it get's a little more personal. *"You shall not covet your neighbor's wife."* "She's so pretty." "He's so dignified." "Do you see how he stands amongst the other men? He's not messed up. He's not some loser standing before others." "Look at her! Look how clean her house is. Look at how she takes care of the kids. Look how she excels in the workplace."

It says you shouldn't covet his male or female servants. The idea here is coveting someone else's authority. "Look at his role. He's got the nameplate. She's got the nameplate. She's got the corner office." How about his possessions? Moses says to not covet his ox or donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's. In modern day language, God says if you don't want to struggle with jealousy and envy then don't covet anything.

John Calvin once said that the human heart is an idol-making factory. Coveting makes idols out of those things by saying, "I have to have that! If I don't have it I'm going to die, or you are." We have to ask the question: is our jealousy coming from a coveting heart?

Jealousy causes us not to celebrate with others

Here's where Saul's example makes us see the idiocy of our ways. Saul was receiving praise with David. There were things that Saul was praised for and there were things David was praised for, but Saul couldn't celebrate that he had a great military leader on his hands. He had no idea at this point that David was given the kingship, but God had promised that Saul would live out his life before anyone else would become king.

Go back to 1 Samuel 18:1. Notice who really deserved to be jealous or envious of David: Jonathan. Look at Jonathan's response:

As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. ²And Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father's house. ³Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. ⁴And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt. ⁵And David went out and was successful wherever Saul sent him, so that Saul set him over the men of war. And this was good in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

Here's the one who should have been jealous and envious. Jonathan was the crowned prince of Israel. He hadn't done anything wrong. We learned in 1 Samuel 13-15 that Jonathan in his own right was a great military leader. When the entire nation of Israel was struggling with fear, he defeated his own set of Philistines with his own hands. Jonathan should have been jealous in his heart because what David got was what the crown prince should have gotten, but it wasn't. If you think that only God has the ability to not be jealous or envious, we need to recognize that throughout this story Jonathan remained absolutely faithful in not becoming envious and jealous. He was celebrating. Nowhere in the text does it say, "And Jonathan struggled like his dad did." The struggle with jealousy and envy is that we find ourselves unhappy when others have victory.

For some years before Noah was born, Amanda and I struggled to conceive. We had Fertile Myrtles all over the place here. At one point there was a list of 30 babies on their way. We changed the water and things seemed to drop down a little bit. I remember some times when we would walk away from church and it would be quiet in our car. We were thinking, "Come on! What's going on? Why does everyone else get to celebrate? What's the problem here?"

I'll be honest, if you're struggling with celebrating God's goodness in the life of others, then there is some unchecked jealousy or envy in your life. Do you struggle when other people are blessed and you're not? How do you feel when you see someone with a brand new car as you're driving your old jalopy? How do you feel when you hear someone received an inheritance? Or when someone at work receives the recognition or reward that you think you should have gotten? If this is where you're struggling, you're right there with Saul with shattered emotions.

Jealousy produces cruelty instead of love

For a while you may think that you're able to contain your jealousy, but eventually you get further down the road. At first you're just not able to celebrate with others, but then you're not okay with keeping your mouth shut when others are cheering and there begins to be cruelty. Notice in the text how long it took. Verse nine says:

And Saul eyed David from that day on. ¹⁰The next day a harmful spirit from God rushed upon Saul, and he raved within his house while David was playing the lyre, as he did day by day. Saul had his spear in his hand.

Some of you are saying, "I'm with Saul. Saul should be getting the accolades. He shouldn't have to lay down his renown to anyone else. I feel that way and no one knows. So really what does it hurt to be envious and jealous when it all stays inside?" The Bible says, *"Out of the abundance of the heart [the] mouth speaks"* (Luke 6:45). My dad said it a different way: "Garbage in. Garbage out." At some point, whether by word or deed, cruelty is going to come out because you will not stand idly by and watch someone get something you think you should have. Saul says, "I'm done with this guy. He got praise when I should have been getting all of it." So what did he do? *"And Saul hurled the spear, for he thought, 'I will pin David to the wall.'"*

You know what he's saying there? "I'm going to skewer that kid! He's going to be the royal shish kabob." There's anger in that. Commentators believe that he was actually thinking about what it would be like to see David bleeding profusely from the spear going through him, and the joy that would fill Saul's heart when he would stand over him and gloat that he was the king and David was not. How many of us have thought cruel or murderous thoughts about someone else? We say, "It'll never happen."

Again I go back to our children. They are great reminders of what we do as adults. A few weeks ago the Badals added a new member to our family: a little puppy named Wrigley. He's cute and the boys love him. As soon as we get home they go to the cage and pull him out. They forget to walk him (which is a whole other issue). I'm jealous over that because I'm jealous for my carpeting. Here's what happens: one of the boys grabs Wrigley and starts playing with him, and the other says, "Your time is up. Give him up!" They don't stop and say, "You're right! You're absolutely right. Here! Here's the dog. I'm so sorry for taking up more than my allotted period of time. Go! Enjoy the dog." That happens in your house. It doesn't happen in ours. What happens? One grabs the poor dog and the other responds with closed-handed admonitions: "If you don't give me that dog back you're not going to see next week."

You can take one of two thoughts from this: either your pastor's house is full of chaos, or—at least for Amanda's sake—you can believe that to be an illustration that jealousy and envy can cause us to do the craziest things. Once you break up the boys and say, "Are you really going to beat up your brother because he's spending time with the dog?" "No." "Well, you look like you were going to. You took the swing."

The question has to be asked: "Saul, when you heard the song did you really think that you would want to kill David?" "Well no. I was angry but I would never let it go that far." Saul never had a reality check that what he was doing was leading to murder.

Some of us don't have that check within us. We think that it can stay inside but it can't. Over the next two chapters we will see Saul make five attempts on David's life. This isn't a moment of insanity when he just lost his cool. Five times in two chapters Saul schemed against his great military leader. It's even worse as we learn in the text that David becomes Saul's son-in-law. So now it's a family thing. We know that David and Saul's son Jonathan were best friends, and his daughter loved David, yet Saul hated him to the core. Over the course of David's life, Saul sought to kill him a dozen times. Some of these attempts were crafty and schemed while others were just barbaric. Saul seethed at the thought that David would live another day.

How many of us are there with that rival at work, with our boss, or with that neighbor who drives us crazy? Whether it's verbally or physically, what cruelty is at your doorstep because you can't bring it in check?

Jealousy makes us a critic of God's sovereignty

This is probably the most important point. Saul's anger and jealousy weren't against David. They were against God. Verse 12 says, *"Saul was afraid of David because the LORD was with him."* Verse 14 says, *"And David had success in all his undertakings, for the LORD was with him."* When you struggle with envy and jealousy your issue isn't the person. Get off that thought. Your jealousy isn't with someone here on earth. It isn't with the girl who wears the great clothes. It isn't with the guy with all the personality, leadership skills and charisma. It isn't with the person who got the promotion. It isn't with your neighbor with the bigger house. As a Christian your jealousy has nothing to do with them and everything to do with God.

You and I know full well that God is sovereign. He has created us. He has made us who we are. He has placed us in our own situations. He has given us all that we have. Our issue isn't with what someone else has. Our issue is that God hasn't given us what we wanted.

What we're saying when we're envious and jealous is this: "God, we've got a problem. You've not given me what I want. I want to look like Brad Pitt and You won't let me look like that. I'm angry with You. I'm mad that he's got all the good looks, all the great fortune and all the great accolades. He's got everything. And what do I have? I've got this mug. That's it."

"What about my neighbor who has the bigger house and better job? Seemingly everything is going well with him. He doesn't even go to church! He doesn't even care about God. God, what's Your problem? God, You didn't get the memo that followers of

Jesus Christ should be healthy, wealthy, wise and better off than everyone else? Did You not get that memo, God?" Our jealousy and envy is an affront to God as if we are pointing to God and saying, "You blew it! You missed it and I know what's better."

God responds to us when we do that. Romans 9:20 says, "Who do you think you are, old lump of clay, to tell the Potter how to make things?" God says, "I'm the Potter. You're the clay. I'm going to make you how I will make you." Tim Badal's translation says, "You better shut your mouth and do what you're supposed to do." We've got to stop being jealous of all the clay pottery in the room that God created, and be thankful and content in the sovereign place and way that God has built us and created us for the purposes He has. God does it way better than we ever could. But we don't.

3. Damage that is Done

So what happens? Saul doesn't say, "I'm playing a role in God's sovereign plan and I'm willing to be obedient. I'm going to repent of this envy and jealousy." He doesn't say any of that. Notice the damage that is done. There are three things that take place.

Destroys your life

When the Jews translated 1 Samuel into Greek hundreds of years after it was written, they used an interesting word for the phrase in our passage in verse nine: *"And Saul eyed David from that day on."* The Greek word is *âvan*, to watch with jealousy. Saul *âvan*-ed David from that day forward. The idea here is that he envied him and couldn't keep his eyes off David. He would watch his every move. He was consumed with one passion. A king has a lot of jobs to do and Saul lost his kingdom because he was focused on one guy: his son-in-law, his son's best friend, and his greatest military leader. These were all things that he should have been excited about but couldn't be. Saul was devoured by an evil spirit. That's why another king of Israel, David's son Solomon, would say, *"A tranquil heart gives life to the flesh, but envy makes the bones rot"* (Proverbs 14:30). The New Living Translation says it this way, and I like it in light of what Amanda and I have struggled with this last year: *"Jealousy is like cancer in the bones."*

Jealousy and envy are little things. They start out really small. You can't even see them, but then little by little they grow. That malignancy takes over, and it becomes bigger and bigger, until one day it's so big that it impacts every aspect of your life. It takes away your health and joy. That's exactly what happened to Saul. It will rob us, as it did him, of our happiness and joy. He was a grandparent no doubt. David had children with his wife. Saul couldn't even enjoy them because they were David's kids. Envy will destroy your life.

Diminishes your appetite for God

First Peter 2:2 says, *"Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation."* How do we do that? Earlier in the text it says, *"So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander."* We can't taste and see that the Lord is good if we're constantly waging war against what God has given us and looking to what He hasn't.

You and I will never pursue the things of God if we're too busy whetting our appetite on the things that others have and we don't. You can't focus on God and the things of God and also be worried about the things your neighbor has. You'll either devote yourself to His Word and will or you'll devote yourself to your will.

Distracts you from evangelism

At no point will you ever be able to share the good news of Jesus Christ with someone you're envious of, because at the heart of it, you are in competition with them, and when there is competition there is never compassion. You will never sit down and say, "I love you and you're a sinner in need of God's grace, just as I'm a sinner in need of God's grace." "How do you know you're a sinner?" "Let me tell you. I envy some of the things you have."

If you're in competition with them you'll never live out the great commission with them. Why? Because you're vying against that individual. You're not concerned about their eternal fate. The only time you may be, you'll say something like this: "They're getting all that they want in this life but just wait for the life to come." That's always an envious and jealous statement. "I may not be getting anything here but I'll have a throne in glory." Good luck with that one. You'll never share the good news of Christ if you are constantly envying others.

4. The Way to Destroy this Sin

How did Saul deal with it? How did he destroy it? Here's the shattered reality: he didn't. In fact, later in 1 Samuel Saul will go and have a misinformed battle plan against his enemies to garner attention for himself and he'll lose his life. His envy of David

caused him to be a bad leader and in the process lose his life. He lived a shattered life and his shattered emotions never got fixed. For many of us, unless we change something today, we like Saul will be in the same place.

But here's the thing: God is sharing a word of love with you today. Jesus is saying, "You don't have to be jealous of people. You don't have to be jealous of what other people have. I've given you all that you need. I'll never leave you nor forsake you. I love you. I've gifted you with the gifts to change the world. You have it all. Why must you have someone else's?" Jesus reminds us that there are ways to get rid of jealousy.

Reflect the attitude of Christ

Philippians 2:6-8 says:

⁶[Jesus], though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

There are times when it is commendable to be jealous. Theologically speaking, Jesus had every right to be jealous of His position as the Second Person of the Trinity, where He was worshipped and adored 24/7 for all of eternity. Jesus lays those honors down. But God had a plan. God knew man was going to sin and the Second Person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ, said, "I will go. I will set My prerogatives aside. I will set aside the praise that I receive on a continual basis in order to become a man. I'm going to take on human form and for the sake of others I'm going to open My hands so that they might receive redemption."

When you're jealous and promoting yourself, ask the question: would Jesus do that? Jesus humbled Himself. It's not about our position. It's not about our desires. It's not about our prerogatives or our preferences. It is what Paul says earlier in that passage:

³"Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."

Are you reflecting the humility and the attitude of Christ?

Reaffirm God's goodness to you

When you are jealous and envious, the only thing you can see is other people's stuff. When that happens, and it will, you need to put the DVD in the player and replay the highlights of God's mercies that are new every morning (Lamentations 3:22-24). Great is God's faithfulness to you and me! As you observe all that God has done in your life, your response should be like that of Sammy Sosa when he said, "Baseball been very, very good to me." The response should be, "God, You have been so very, very good to me! You've been good to my family. You have been good in all circumstances. How can I be jealous or envious of others when You have been so gracious with me?" Let Psalm 73:25-26 be your heart's cry:

²⁵Whom have I in heaven but you?
And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.
²⁶My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

When was the last time you reaffirmed God's goodness to you when you were feeling jealous or envious?

Renounce your envy and jealousy as sin

Are you man or woman enough to say, "My envy and jealousy are vile sins before God?" I want to remind you that these are the sins that Jesus paid for on the cross. Are you willing to acknowledge the insidious power that this disease has on your life? It's robbing you of your joy. As the Proverb writer said, it's rotting your soul (Proverbs 14:30). Do you realize that jealousy is an affront to God? Are you willing to repent of it and say, "No more! Today is the day that jealousy and envy will be defeated once and for all. I'm going to renounce it and I'm going to reflect on the attitude of Christ. I'm going to serve others. I'm going to cheer when they cheer and cry when they cry?"

Remember your rival in prayer

But what about the ones you really hate? Matthew 5:44 says, "*Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.*" When you see someone getting something that you wanted and desired, instead of letting that sin get the best of you, stop and pray. "Lord, thank You for that blessing in their life. Lord, I pray that You would continue to bless them. I pray that this will never

become an issue of pride in their life but that they would rely on You and You alone. Lord, as I see You blessing them, I am reminded of how You have blessed me. Thank You for loving me as You have loved them. Whether it's a new house, a new car, a new child, or a new promotion, Lord, thank You for Your continued love and blessing in the lives of Your children, including them and me."

Rekindle God's love in your heart

I'm going to be doing a wedding next week and some of the verses that no doubt a wedding will always have are from 1 Corinthians 13, the love chapter. It tells us that love does not envy. We're called to love God. We're called to love others. We'll never be Christians or a church that loves Jesus to the point of transformation if we're envious. We'll never be Christians or a church that loves one another to the point of sacrifice if we're jealous and envious of one another. We will never be able to love our neighbors to the point of action if we're too busy looking at the stuff in their garage instead of the gospel need in their hearts.

You and I are recipients of God's grace. The gospel reminds us that Christ has given us all that we need and that we're called to enjoy and rest in the fact that He has been so good to us. Jealousy keeps us from that gospel reality. If we're so worried about what others have we'll never be worried about what God desires for us.

But I'm thankful that Jesus came. Jesus fulfilled His mission. He fulfilled His plan that He might die for the jealous and envious hearts we have. The cross was powerful enough to defeat this evil, shattered emotion in our lives and the penalty that came with it. So as you leave this place, leave in the power of the cross and the power of the Spirit. Rid yourself of all envy, malice, and jealousy. Be filled with the grace of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ for the glory of God. Do it in a biblical way, that you may honor Him and live in light of the gospel that we've received.

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All Scriptures quoted directly from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

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