Dealing with the deadly sin of ENVY

 **“Can anybody be of such a sweet nature or character or mentality, to say anything good about envy?”**

For envy can be described as the resentful, bitter and unhappy feeling of wanting somebody else’s qualities, possession and / or achievements.

Church, tonight I would like to deal with one of the most **poisonous, destructive** feelings or character traits of the human heart; something so powerful, for it has the **capability to destroy** friendships, families and yes even the body of Christ! (Envy destroyed many churches)

Even many biblical writers have shown their distaste for the sin of envy as we read in:

**Proverbs 14:30 (NIV)** – A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.

**Proverbs 27:4 (Amp)** – Wrath is cruel and anger is an overwhelming flood, but who is able to endure and stand before [the sin of] jealousy?

So why, church would you say that envy is such a **venomous, toxic, harmful, secretly kept emotion?**

Answer: Envy is contrary to the Word of God and is therefore a sin; a damaging sin that the enemy will use through you to hurt others, but will not benefit you at all!

Another reason why envy is such a dangerous sin, is the fact that selfishness is one of its **key ingredient** as it **contradicts** John 15:13 completely!

**John 15:13 (NIV)** – Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.

**1 John 4:20 (NIV)** – Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen.

Can I love and envy people at the same time? No never ever!

Please realize that envy is a sin that brings **grief when others prosper**; it **rejoices when others fall**; it **hurts when others rise** and many people yes even in the body of Christ find **secret satisfaction in the misfortunes of others**! Eina!!!

Why should the humiliation of others afford us gratification? Why are we gloating, inwardly laughing when others are hurting?

It is also a fact church that many crimes were **birthed and authored** by envy; many murder committed by envious people (Cain and Abel)

**Gen 4:1-10 (NIV)** – Adam made love to his wife Eve and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, “With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man.” **2**Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks and Cain worked the soil. **3**In the Course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. **4**And Abel also brought an offering – fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favour on Abel and his offering, **5**but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favour. So Cain was very angry and his face was downcast. **6**Then the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? **7**If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.” **8**Now Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.” While they were in the field, Cain attached his brother Abel and killed him. **9**Then the Lord said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?” “I don’t know,” he replied. “Am I my brother’s keeper?” **10**The Lord said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground.”

Cain was overcome by an **envious emotion** so strong that it caused him to kill his own brother! Many examples in the Bible:

1. Korah was envious of Moses and was swallowed up by the earth. (Numbers 26)
2. Saul let envy of David rule his heart and he was killed in battle
(1 Sam 18)
3. Even Jesus was killed by the rulers of the day **out of envy**.

Please take note church, that envy is **depressing and ill-humoured** and will steal the love and joy of your character. No 2ways about that!

Did you know that even the worst sins of the tongue are products of envy? We (even as Christians) curse, kill and destroy people by what we say about them in **ENVY**; making snotty remarks behind their backs **INSTEAD** of **loving them**, **praying for them**, **encouraging them**, **edify them, serve them** as fellow labourers in the body of Christ!

Did you know that even great leaders of the world was and are still affected by envy?

Few examples:

1. **Alexander the Great** never ever permitted any praise or honor to any of his generals, but seeked the spot light for himself
2. **Nero Emperor** of Rome, was so carried away by a craze for popularity that he even killed his own mother out of **envy** for the way in which she ruled the Roman Empire
3. **Aristotle (Greek Philosopher)** defined envy as a great pain at the sight of another’s good fortune and one of the most potent causes of **unhappiness** (check yourself)
4. **Napoleon (Bonaparte)** was known for his **envious character** that he even remarked in one of his famous quotes: “If you wish to be a success in this world, promise everything but deliver nothing!” **(Envy and jealousy eventually led to Napoleon’s demise)**

**BUT** the sin of Envy has a remedy church.

**Remedy #1**

**Romans 12:14-18 (NIV)** - **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 everyone. **18**If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

 This passage is an instruction that will **counter** envy.

**Rejoice, be glad, merry and happy with those who are happy**; **share their good fortune, partake in their celebrations (promotions), congratulate them on their achievements with all the genuine love you have within you**. Don’t fake it! You can’t bluff people (you may think so!)

**Remedy #2**

**Count your blessings!**

**Phil. 4:11-13 (Amp)** – **11**Not that I speak from [any personal] need, for I have learned to be content [and self-sufficient through Christ, satisfied to the point where I am not disturbed or uneasy] regardless of my circumstances. **12**I know how to get along and live humbly [in difficult times], and I also know how to enjoy abundance and live in prosperity. In any and every circumstance I have learned the secret [of facing life], whether well-fed or going hungry, whether having an abundance or being in need. **13**I can do all things [which He has called me to do] through Him who strengthens and empowers me [to fulfil His purpose –I am self-sufficient in Christ’s sufficiency; I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him who infuses me with inner strength and confident peace.]

 We tend to look “up” to those who have “so much” and we envy them; but look down to the less fortunate. **Be content** with what you have; your **blessings, your good health, your God-given abilities, your talents etc. Be Thankful!!!**

For it is when you do that, that you will come to a place of **contentment, happiness and utter joy, envying nobody!**

Conclude:

**John 3:25-30 (NIV)** – **25**An argument developed between some of John’s disciples and a certain Jew over the matter of ceremonial washing. **26**They came to John and said to him, “Rabbi that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordon-the one you testified about-well, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him.” **27**To this John replied, “A man can receive only what is given him from heaven. **28**You yourselves can testify that I said, ‘I am not the Christ but am sent ahead of him.’ **29**The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom’s voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. **30**He must become greater; I must become less.”

John the Baptist gave us the **ultimate remedy** for all to **conquer** envy; upon seeing his followers turn from him and flock to Jesus he said: “He (Jesus in me) must increase but I must decrease.” T**his is my pleasure and my joy!** More of Him, less of me.

It is my sincere prayer, the prayer of my heart that God spoke to many tonight as it is so easy to envy and to do so **habitually**....

May His Word and the Holy Spirit’s conviction bring us to a point of **repentance**, a point of **confession** and **acknowledgment** to overcome the deadly sin of envy!

Amen