

THE EMPTINESS OF ENVY
Ecclesiastes 4:4-6

Oakridge Community Church
Questions for Consideration and Discussion

Introduction:

The Emptiness of Envy
Ecclesiastes 4:4-6

I. THE MEANING OF ENVY

- A. Zeal
 - 1. Wanting something belonging to someone else (coveting)
 - 2. Wanting something like what others have (jealousy)
- B. Acts 4:34—5:2
- C. Rivalry, competition

II. THE PREVALENCE OF ENVY

- A. In our world
- B. In Biblical times
 - 1. Luke 9:46
 - 2. 1 Corinthians 1:12
 - 3. Philippians 1:15-17
 - 4. 2 Corinthians 10:12
- C. Commendable jealousy/envy
 - 1. Deuteronomy 4:24
 - 2. 2 Corinthians 11:2
 - 3. 1 Corinthians 11:1
- D. Human jealousy/envy
 - 1. Proverbs 14:30; 27:4
 - 2. Galatians 5:19-20
 - 3. James 3:16

III. THE PROBLEMS WITH ENVY

- A. Its emptiness
- B. Its blindedness – 1 Corinthians 10:31; Galatians 5:14

IV. THE ALTERNATIVES TO ENVY

- A. The folly of laziness 4:5 cf. Gen. 2:15; Prov. 6:10-11
- B. The wisdom of working with right motives
 - 1. Glorifying God who created us to work
 - 2. Glorifying God through contentment in Him
 - 3. Glorifying God by helping the needy
 - a. Ephesians 4:28
 - b. 1 Timothy 6:18

Conclusion

1. As the extent of envy, rivalry and competition was described in the message, how did your perception of their prevalence change? In what ways have you seen envy, jealousy and rivalry demonstrated in your own life?
2. We see a godly jealousy and envy portrayed in Scripture. How do godly jealousy and envy differ from fleshly jealousy and envy? How can we evaluate the nature and character of the zeal we have in any particular situation?
3. Why is it such a struggle for us to have godly jealousy and envy rather than fleshly? How should we handle that struggle?
4. Why is apathy toward work and life a wrong approach from a moral perspective? From a practical perspective?
5. If there is no lasting meaning and purpose in fleshly envy, jealousy and rivalry, what should supremely motivate our labors and activities? How will this motive be manifested?
6. How does contentment in the Lord combat fleshly envy, jealousy and rivalry? What steps can we take to cultivate godly contentment in our lives?