

# 20 Days of Trouble

## Topic #3 - Envy

### **Textbook Def:**

A feeling of discontent or covetousness with regard to another's advantages, success, possessions, etc.\*

### **Real-Life Look:**

Okay, so how much money could The Smiths possibly make? They have a toy hauler, dirt bikes galore, and now they just came home with brand new quads for their twins. Is there no end to their stuff?

Renee is forever the center of attention and it drives me crazy. Just because she always knows exactly the right thing to say, dresses with a fantastic sense of style, and has the time and money to volunteer and donate extreme, does this mean that everyone has to like her...all the time? Sure, I like her too, but sometimes it just makes me want to throw up in my mouth a little bit.

Is Mike really going on another trip? Diving off the California coast, fishing in Idaho, and hiking the Grand Canyon, he never seems stressed for time or money. Not sure how he manages to get his wife to agree to his adventures, but he sure does have the life. Best of all worlds if you ask me. Man, I'd like to be like Mike!

For as long as I can remember, I've desperately wanted to start my own business, but I just haven't been able to get it off the ground. Start-up capital is a challenge, and I can't figure out how to balance working fulltime, managing my family, and still having enough time and energy left to invest in my new venture. I'm happy for Sally, really I am, but watching her realize her entrepreneurial dream is incredibly difficult.

Seeing Darren walk across the stage to accept the award is bittersweet. Sure he's a good guy and has worked hard, but I deserved the recognition more. I had it in the bag. I'm not sure why my company passed over my efforts but going to work on Monday morning and seeing Darren's plaque of pride hanging on his wall will sting something fierce.

## **Sword of the Spirit:**

“But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such ‘wisdom’ does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.” James 3:14-16

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

## **Breaking It Down:**

My initial reaction to this Trouble Topic was, “I really don’t want what other people have, so envy isn’t much of an issue for me.”

And that’s a pretty accurate statement. Kinda.

I don’t long or want for much in the way of physical stuff. I never have, and the little desire I’ve had for things, has waned even more the older I’ve gotten.

But then I read the textbook definition. Even though I had no intention of making this an academic type study, there’s something to be said for understanding exactly what you’re talking about. *We often narrowly define a word by our circumstance or experience, leaving out, whether intentionally or innocently, the ‘rest of the story’.* Considering the meaning in its entirety is critical for accuracy and benefit.

After reading the definition, I realized I was, in fact, an envious person.

Envy refers to much more than just physical possessions. You can be envious of “another’s advantages and successes too.”

I am envious of another’s relationships.

Boy, definitely never looked at it this way before.

I long for what someone else has, desperately, but there is nothing I can do aside from praying to bring it to fruition. I’m insanely jealous. I’m bothered by the friendship and fun other people have with this particular individual and it hurts. Why am I not good enough? Why haven’t I made the cut? Why am I so awful? I’ve asked myself these questions a million times. I’m resentful of those who have what I want. And I’ve got work to do.

I ask you to consider what you most desire and evaluate if you’re craving is reasonable, healthy, and balanced? Are you able to keep it in perspective? Is it creating hardship or heartache? A covetous spirit? Simply desiring something, in and of itself, isn’t

necessarily a sin. But allowing it to consume our thoughts and actions, and provoking us to temptation and ungodly behavior, is.

### **The Benefit in Decluttering Trouble**

Envy is like a constant ember of irritation, always lit in the background, keeping the flame of jealousy, bitterness, and resentment forever burning.

Ouch.

There's NO comfort in that.

True peace comes from appreciating the blessings you have, not from focusing on the ones you don't.

Have you stopped lately to consider all the blessings in your life? From basic provisions to the promise of eternal life and everything in between, there is much to be thankful for.

Envy may rot the bones, but the absence of envy provides a fertile breeding ground for true joy and harmony in your life. A blissful ignorance of what others have because what you have is plenty enough. A lack of concern, not born from neglect or uncaring, yet one stemming from a deep personal appreciation.

Declutter envy today and begin enjoying the good and peaceful life that God so deeply desires for you.

\*dictionary.reference.com

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