

DEADLY SE7EN

Week 3: Envy

Focus Scripture

Genesis 29:1-35; 30:1-24

Main Point

Envy is a short-sighted emotion that will end in destruction. Only the gospel can replace the jealousy in our hearts with gratitude.

Introduction

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Envy is resentful desire for what someone else has or is. Think of it as the longing and resentment we've all felt for someone else's car, health, financial stability, job, marriage, and so on. What would you say you are most prone to envy in another person?

How do you rank envy compared to other sins, in terms of seriousness and potential consequences? Why?

Understanding

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Have a few volunteers read Genesis 29:1-30:13.

Jacob traveled to his Uncle Laban's home in hopes of gaining a wife. Jacob fell in love with Laban's younger daughter Rachel and agreed to work for him seven years in exchange for her hand. But at the end of seven years, Laban deceived Jacob and gave him Leah, his other daughter. Laban agreed to let Jacob marry Rachel also, under the condition that Jacob work for him another seven years.

Earlier, we defined envy as resentful desire for what someone else has or is. In what ways do both Rachel and Leah reflect this definition of envy? What is the root of each sister's envy?

If you could have advised Leah, what would you have told her?

Is the issue of envy the whole problem with these women?

When we are envious of another, what does that envy reveal about what we believe about God?

What do you think Jesus would say to the envious person?

Have a volunteer read Genesis 30:14-24.

The envy between the sisters continued to fester as the women aged. In the wheat fields one day, Leah's eldest son Reuben discovered wild mandrakes that became a bartering advantage for Leah in her battle



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for her husband's love.

In what ways is the envy of both women irrational?

Is it safe to say that envy impacts more than just the envious person and the one he or she is envious of? How do you see that dynamic in this passage?

Generally, then, what is the effect on a family or church community when envy is present?

In this one family, the consequence of envy was devastating. Jacob's marriage to both his wives was filled with adultery and manipulation, and the relationship between the two sisters was fueled by resentment and hatred. But it doesn't stop there. The twelve sons born to Jacob out of these events became the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel, and the Old Testament tells of the bitter rivalries and fights that took place between these tribes.

The envy of both women was rooted in idolatry—Leah's idol was her husband and Rachel's was children. What are some of the most common idols in today's culture?

How do those idols push us toward the sin of envy?

Can you identify any idols that have become a snare for you, idols that push you toward envy?

How can the truth of the gospel help you combat a specific envy you've felt recently?

Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How specifically might you remind yourself of the goodness of God in your life this week in order to build a heart of gratitude?

Why might serving at our church or in the community help guard you against envy?

Who is one person you are tempted to be envious of whom you can actively pray for this week? Why might doing so guard you against envy?

Pray

Close your time in prayer by thanking God for the gifts that He has given you. Pray that God would help you to be content with what you have, and to not be envious of the blessings He has given others.