

Coping With a Rival

I saw that all labor and all achievement spring from man's envy of his neighbor. **—Ecclesiastes 4:4**

Do you have a rival? Is there someone who is in competition with you? Is there someone who gets under your skin?

A rival is a competitor, someone who is a threat, a person who could upstage you. Sooner or later most of us know what it is to have a rival. It may be a close friend. Perhaps you don't mention the rivalry between you, you rarely think about it, and yet it's just beneath the surface. Sometimes that rival is an enemy, and it would seem in this case it almost came to that. Leah and Rachel were so jealous of each other because although Rachel had the looks, Leah could produce children; that was her claim to fame. We don't know whether this caused rivalry between Leah and Rachel as they grew up, but it's possible.

Ambition will get things done, but achieving that ambition will make another person jealous. You know the feeling when you've achieved something and someone says, "I'm very happy for you," and somehow you don't really think they are. Sometimes it's the loneliest thing to have accomplished something and you don't have anyone you can tell who will be glad for you.

You see, an ambitious person may start out wanting people to admire them, but that won't be enough, ultimately, to bring glory to God. God wants to bring you to a place where you just want to please Him.

Perhaps a rival spirit has brought you to a place where you have lost all sense of pride, you've been put down, and you have lost all sense of self-esteem. Often a rival lives for one thing, and that is to make you look bad. It is very painful. What can you do if you have a rival? You can let a

rival spirit throw you or destroy you, or you can let them be the best thing that has ever happened to you. The day will come when you are so thankful for that "thorn in the flesh."

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