

Learn How to Handle Jealousy

There are few people who have not been either the subject or the object of jealousy at some time in their lives. Someone has said that jealousy is the sin nobody talks about; I think it is the sin nobody admits to—at least, readily. We do not like admitting to being jealous because this exposes our insecurity and weakness; the last thing we want another person to know is that we are insecure. Yet the chances are, our jealousy is one malady everybody else can see but us, and although we cannot deny that there are also psychological implications, fundamentally, jealousy is sin.

We may define jealousy as an attitude of envy or resentment toward a more successful rival. Sometimes it results from frustrated attempts to achieve an ambition, and sometimes it results from seeing somebody who has more talent, greater social advantages, more money, better looks, or a better personality than we have. It may also arise when we see another succeeding where we have failed and we allow our resentment to grow into jealousy.

The reason it is easy to detect jealousy in others is they inevitably behave in a way that betrays their feelings. However, being the object of jealousy is also problematic. Most of us know what it is to have somebody jealous of us.

Yet what if another's jealousy of you is real? How do you handle a situation like this? You need to identify the real enemy. Paul identified the real enemy: the devil. So if you are the target of unjust criticism aimed to hurt you by attacking your character or by diminishing your influence, know that Satan is behind it all. However, you should also realize that you are no different, and in similar circumstances the chances are that you would react in the same way.

Only God can deal with jealousy, and only God can forgive it. But the Bible says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins" (1 John 1:9).

Excerpted from *A Vision of Jesus* (Christian Focus Publications Ltd., 1999).