

This Subtle Sin Can Hold You Back From God's Purpose

"For where there is envying and strife, there is confusion and every evil work" (James 3:16, MEV).

The number one thing that holds you back from God's purpose and mission for your life is a very subtle sin. It's not lust or pride or anger. It's not worry or fear or discouragement. In fact, you would probably never even think of it because it is so insidious we don't realize its damaging effect on our lives.

It's envy.

When you envy other people, you are so fixated on what you don't have and what you are not that you totally miss God's plan for you.

You need to understand the four ways envy damages your life so that you can eliminate it from your life"

1. Envy denies your uniqueness. Psalm 139:13-16 says, "You brought my inner parts into being; You wove me in my mother's womb. I will praise you, for You made me with fear and wonder; marvelous are Your works, and You know me completely. My frame was not hidden from You when I was made in secret, and intricately put together in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw me unformed, yet in Your book all my days were written, before any of them came into being" (MEV). Envy blinds you to your own giftedness and uniqueness. But God didn't make you to be like somebody else. God made you to be *you*.

2. Envy divides your attention. You cannot follow God's purpose and focus on other people at the same time. You get a divided allegiance, and then you don't get anything done in

your life. Jesus says in Matthew 6:24, *"No one can serve two masters. For either he will hate one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money"* (MEV).

3. Envy wastes your time and energy. Ecclesiastes 4:4-8 says, *"Then I saw that all toil and every skillful work come from one man's envy of another. This also is vanity and like chasing the wind. The fool folds his hands and eats his own flesh. Better is a full hand of quietness than handfuls of toil and chasing the wind. Again, I saw vanity under the sun: There is a man who is alone, neither having son or brother, and there is not an end to all his toil, and his eyes are not satisfied with riches to say, 'For whom do I labor and cause my life to lack good things?' Also this is vanity and a burdensome task"* (MEV).

4. Envy leads to every other sin. Envy can destroy everything and everyone around you. The Bible says, *"For where there is envying and strife, there is confusion and every evil work"* (James 3:16, MEV). At the heart of the problem is *a problem of the heart*. Envy is a heart problem. Any time you envy you have gotten your worship misguided, because envy is a form of worship. It says, *"I desire that. I want that. I love that. I want to live for that."* That's called worship.

And any time that item is not God, it becomes an idol. If you're going to eliminate envy, you have to ask, *"What am I worshiping? Am I worshiping God and His grace in my life? Or am I worshiping what I want from other people?"*

Talk It Over

- In what small ways have you let envy creep into your heart? What have been the larger effects?
- What can you acknowledge about yourself that will help you stop envy from blinding you to your giftedness?
- How does your view of envy change when you consider that

it is a form of idol worship? {eo}

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