

How to Handle Jealousy

✖ Removing jealousy from our own lives is hard enough. It's even more complicated when we encounter jealousy from others. How should we handle another's jealousy? What is the proper response? Again, Jesus is our perfect example: We should overlook it.

Jesus did not say to those who were jealous of Him, "The trouble with you is that you're jealous." That would never do.

First, it would have been a sin had Jesus done this. Jesus was tempted yet maintained words, thoughts and deeds "without sin" (Heb. 4:15, NIV). This is why He was so calm and did not lose His temper. He therefore did not sin in His response.

Second, He would have stooped down to their level had He accused them of being jealous.

Third, to accuse another of jealousy never does any good.

Fourth, rarely would a jealous person like this admit to any jealousy in any case.

Finally, Jesus kept His eyes on the Father—and moved on.

They were jealous of Jesus, yes; but was Jesus jealous? No. But was He tempted to be jealous? Yes. Hebrews 4:15 states that He was tempted at all points as we are. I am not saying that Jesus was tempted to be jealous of His own brothers—probably not. But there would have been other times no doubt when He was tempted to jealousy.

Satan tempted Jesus by showing Him "all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor" (Matt. 4:8). That would indicate that Jesus was tempted to be jealous of those who had everything in this life—compared with His own lifestyle of having no place to lay His head (see Luke 9:58).

I am only saying that it is not unlikely that Jesus was

tempted to jealousy; indeed, it is very likely that He was so tempted. In any case, He resisted; this means He never gave in—ever.

Let us not forget that His natural brothers were later converted. Remember too that the same person who is jealous of you today may be your friend tomorrow. This very possibility should be enough to make you cautious in everything you say at the moment. What you say or don't say could make a huge difference in the situation now—and how you will feel down the road.

Just remember, then, when you read the epistles of James or Jude that these were ordinary men who once felt toward Jesus as every unconverted person initially does. They do not see His glory. They do not see His deity. They do not see that He is the Son of God. They do not see that His death on the cross atoned for our sins (expiation) and turned God's wrath away (propitiation). They do not see that Jesus was raised from the dead. Only the Holy Spirit can reveal these things.

We do not know when Jesus' brothers were converted. Neither do we know how many other brothers there might have been. We do know that Jesus experienced the unpleasantness of sibling rivalry, and we see in this, at least in part, how He handled it.

He did not acknowledge it but moved on. He kept His eyes on the Father. You can do the same.

✠ Adapted from *Jealousy: The Sin No One Talks About* by R.T. Kendall, copyright 2010, published by Charisma House. In this wise and compassionate book, Kendall shows you how to deal with jealousy both in yourself and others, as well as how to identify and get free from the crippling effects of envy. To order your copy click on this link.

PRAYER POWER WEEK OF 10/25/2010

This week ask the Father to help you deal with jealousy the way Jesus did. Forgive and pray for those who have mistreated you because of their jealousy. Ask God to show you if you've been harboring those feelings toward anyone else and thank Him that He's given you the tools to gain victory over this. Continue to pray for our nation's leaders and the upcoming elections. Ask the Lord to help you make a difference in the lives you touch at home as well as in your church, community and nation. Pray that God's people would heed 2 Chron. 7:14. James 3:14-18