

THE TWIN SINS OF  
ENVY & JEALOUSY  
Message 3  
Scripture: Genesis 4:1-13

INTRO: We have been dealing with the sins of envy and jealousy. We have spent much time on identifying these sins and showing the difference between them. Now I have taken some extra time in these messages explain some of the makeup of man from Scripture and some errors of present day psychology. This is a very important issue today, and it is important for your mind to be able to raise red flags for you when you hear some present day teachings. I also mentioned to you the view that has been taught in our community that we are spirits and pointed out to you that this teaching is not biblical. But there is some further importance to understand a little about the spirit part of our being because I view the sins of envy and jealousy as filthiness of the spirit.

So, let us briefly go to 2 Corinthians 7:1, once more. Albert Barnes says with regard to this filthiness of spirit, "By "filthiness of the spirit," the apostle means, probably, all the thoughts or mental associations that defile the man. Thus the Saviour {#Mt 15:19} speaks of evil thoughts, etc., that proceed out of the heart, and that pollute the man. And probably Paul here includes all the sins and passions which appertain particularly to mind... — such as the desire of revenge, pride, avarice, ambition, etc. These are in themselves as polluting and defiling as the gross sensual pleasures. They stand as much in the way of sanctification, they are as offensive to God, and they prove as certainly that the heart is depraved, as the grossest sensual passions. The main difference is, that they are more decent in the external appearance; they can be better concealed; they are usually indulged by a more elevated class in society; but they are not the less offensive to God."

John Gill says, "...by "the filthiness of the flesh" is meant external pollution... as idolatry, adultery, fornication, incest, sodomy, murder, drunkenness, revellings, &c. and everything that makes up a filthy conversation, which is to be hated, abhorred, and abstained from by the saints: by 'filthiness of the spirit' is meant internal pollution, defilement by the internal acts of the mind, such as evil

thoughts, lusts, pride, malice, envy, covetousness, and the like..."

And so, this morning we want to see how these sins operate from examples from the Bible and we begin with the first time sin is recorded in the Bible after the fall in the Garden of Eden. So we have had read for us Genesis 4:1-16, the account of Cain and Able.

### III. REVELATION OF ENVY & JEALOUSY IN THE BIBLE - How Envy Works

#### A. Cain and Abel (Gen. 4:1-16)

So, what we want to do now is see if we can learn to identify the tracks envy and jealousy leave behind, and by which we may determine what the real problem is if one of these two foxes has been at work. Now it is interesting that the very first sin in the Bible is also one involving both desire and rights. Eve saw that the tree was good for food, it was pleasant to the eyes, and it was desirable to make one wise. Now, Eve did not have a right to eat from this tree. But here is desire magnified in all three major areas; the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes and the pride of life. So, she gave in to temptation and ate and she gave to Adam and he ate. And thus we have the very first sin of mankind.

Then, in the very next chapter, Genesis 4, the second recorded sin in the Bible, we come upon one of the sins we have been talking about (read 4:1-8). Two sons are spoken of here. I expect they are grown and on their own by now, so there would likely have been numerous other sons and daughters born as well since both Cain and Abel would have married. And one of these boys was a grain farmer and the other a sheep farmer.

And our text says that in the process of time, Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. Abel also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. Now we must stop here and get the picture. These two sons both worshipped Jehovah, the LORD. No doubt they have grown up in a home where Jehovah was

worshipped. And there can be no doubt that they were instructed in how to worship the LORD. Adam and Eve will have instructed them that vegetation was not a good offering, since they themselves had tried to cover themselves with leaves as well. And God had covered them with skins. I expect those will have been sheep skins. When it came to covering for sin, sheep were the animal God had chosen as is clear throughout the Scriptures. Jesus is later called the Lamb of God.

And now, Cain, who is the oldest does his own thing. Maybe he did not want to give Abel his business, since Abel was a sheep farmer. Maybe they were on bad terms, we do not know. What we do know is that instead of offering the prescribed offering, he did his own thing.

Now the text says the Lord had respect to Abel's offering but not to Cains. The text says it came to pass at the end of days... I would expect that it was at the appropriate time of making an offering that they both came. And they both brought their sacrifice and offered it. And we might well ask how they knew whose offering God respected and whose He did not? From Scripture elsewhere, it becomes evident that when God was pleased with an offering He consumed it by fire. (see Gen. 15:17; Jud. 13:20). So, the scene might have been something like this. At the appropriate time to offer, they both came to the same place to offer. And I would suppose that normally they would both have offered the appropriate offering. And now, possibly something happened between these two brothers and Cain decided to do things his own way. Abel, however, offered the way it had been prescribed, for we have a very interesting verse on this in the NT. Hebrews 11:4 says, "By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks."

Now get the picture. Here is older brother. He has become arrogant. He does not have to have faith and he can do his own thing (Heb. 11:4). Possibly he even has an issue with his brother. And he decides to do his own thing. Without doubt, he is out of fellowship

with God. And in his arrogance, before the others, he offers a bloodless sacrifice. And then the appropriate time comes, and whoosh, Abel's offering is consumed, but the vegetables are still lying there.

So look at verses 3-5 (read). Track #1 anger. Now there are many reasons for anger. You cannot always say there is envy because there is anger but anger is involved here too. And note that he was VERY angry. And with whom is he very angry? Abel! We find that later. Now why would he be angry at Abel? Did Abel do wrong? No. Here is how envy operates. You might say, "Surely Abel did something wrong too!" But he did not. Now look in the same verse at track #2, a fallen countenance. He could not look his brother in the face. Why? Because his brother had done something wrong? No, he himself had done something wrong. Track #3, confusion. You say, "Well that makes no sense that he would be angry with his brother if his brother did nothing wrong." I'm glad you said that. You see, where envy is, there is confusion. It makes no sense.

But I want you to notice something else in verse 6. It was God, not Abel that spoke to Cain, "And the LORD said to Cain, Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?" A fallen countenance speaks of personal misery, and so we have track #4. It is personal misery by the wrong doer. When we envy and do things like this, God will talk to us. And if we don't do something about it, we will become miserable. Our conscience will not let us go. It will say, "Why are you so angry? Why are you so deflated?" And we will argue, and argue, and think of any possible solution as to why we are right. And no matter how much we argue, still God will talk to us. God talks to the wrongdoer. This is tremendously tormenting. And then there is one more track, track #5, a harmed relationship. The relationship with the other person suffers.

I want to further suggest that these sins are unreasonable. You cannot well reason with an envious or jealous person. So track #6, envy wants to be unreasonable. You see, God not only talked to Cain, He reasoned with him. God said, "If you do well, will

you not be accepted?" In other words He said, "Look Cain. All you have to do is bring the right sacrifice. Is that so hard? And if you do it, you will be accepted and there will be no problem. Can't you understand that?" But, God added this, "...if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it." Now is it not reasonable to accept God's offer and do right? So God is saying to him, "Cain, if you live right, everything will be OK. If you do not do well, sin is right there present with you. It wants to overtake you, but you should rule over it." God is saying something like this, "Cain, all you have to do is do right."

Now when God talks to us, this is inner exposure. When God talks to us, the conscience goes to work. In short, when God reasoned with Cain He said: "Cain, you have sinned. Deal with it and all will be well." And how is an envious person to deal with envy? He must confess his anger and bad attitude caused by envy, and ask forgiveness. That is repentance. If his envy has only been inward, he must deal with God. If it has been outward towards the other person, now it must be inward and outward. And how does an older brother do that when it involves a younger brother? With nothing but the crucifixion of the cross of Christ. You see, we must be crossed out. Someone has said that the big "I", self, must have a cross member placed at the top and it becomes a T or a cross. And when I am crossed out, I die. Cain must die. But Cain, like all the rest of us, does not want to die, and especially not this death. But, if you do not deal with it, now you have to live with it. Unless, of course, you can get rid of the other person so he is no longer in the way.

So, when an envious person does not deal with his envy, he will now most likely end up conniving how to get rid of the obstacle. And there is another track, track #7. Experienced trackers might detect such conniving. And so the text goes on like this in verse 8, "And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him." Wow! God had communicated with Cain and Cain had rejected the council of the Lord. Sin desired to have him, and

he let it have him rather than do right! How hardly will an envious or jealous person confess and acknowledge what is in the heart? What cross is so horrible as this one?

Now the text does not indicate any evil conniving by Cain when they went out into the field. But it would do violence to the nature of the case to say that he intended nothing evil by talking to Abel and ending up out in the field. Did he lead him out here to get rid of him or did Abel stand up to him and he got angry and killed him? However that may be, here is the most horrid end of envy; get rid of the one who got what you didn't want him to get. Envy is a tremendously powerful tool used of the devil to do the most devious of deeds. So, when they were at a safe distance, Cain killed his brother Abel. Envy, like a viper, has struck, and the poison has done its final work. The devil has succeeded in using Cain to get rid of someone who stood in his way to get mankind!

Now I ask you, when Cain got back, what do you suppose happened? Do you think he told them he had killed his brother? Whatever he did, and however he did it, I believe he covered his tracks. Like Joseph's brothers, he might well have blamed some wild beast, or fabricated some other story. And you might say, "What makes you think that?" Look at verse 9, "Then the LORD said to Cain, 'Where is Abel your brother?' And he said, 'I do not know.'" What is that? Lying! He has covered his tracks by lying and he is not about to reveal them. There is track #8, lying. But you cannot see the track. It has been brushed to hide it. It is a track that is very hard to find. Only professional trackers can recognize this one. And now notice track #9, pleading innocence. "Am I my brother's keeper? Lord, why are you asking me about Abel? Is Abel my responsibility?" With a question he has demonstrated his innocence.

Now let me tell you something worth remembering. Every envious person or jealous person who covers his tracks thinks that if he can hide it, he somehow will get away with it. As long as this matter is not revealed, it will all be OK. But God does not ask us what we have done because He does not know it. He

asks us so we will know it! So to Adam He said, "Adam, where are you?" And Adam said, "Na, na, na na, na, na. You can't find me. I hid myself from You!" Really! So God next said to Abel, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground." God is saying, "Cain, where ever you go, I can even smell your tracks. And they lead to blood. And the blood says, 'Cain did it, Cain did it. Cain did it.'"

And then God talked to Cain one more time (read 11-12). I have to stop reading there lest you ask me questions I cannot answer about Cain's mark. You see, Cain became a marked man. Marked by God! But, there is something every envious person should remember from this. God came back to talk to Cain once more. And we have track #9. Marked! And Cain bore a life-long mark. When envy carries itself out to its bitter end, it leaves a marked person. And he is trapped in a cage of his own making, a cage from which there is no freedom, EXCEPT, EXCEPT full and complete confession. This man has been delivered to the tormentors.

Now consider what happens in envy. The wrongdoer persecutes the righteous. Cain and Abel are the first example of persecution in the Bible. There is the justice of envy. Makes you wonder how much of persecution has its roots either in envy or in jealousy. And as if that is not enough, the righteous person gets the treatment deserved by the unrighteous. The righteous person here died. There is the justice of envy. And consider that in all of this, Cain lives though Abel has died, and God gives Cain opportunity after opportunity to do things right. There is the mercy of God! And yet, never do we read that Cain repented!

#### B. Joseph

Consider another biblical account. It is the story of Joseph, that favored little brother. That little rascal. Daddy's pet. Little kid with the colorful coat! Little kid with the big dreams! So, let us read Genesis 37:1-4 (read). "Now Jacob dwelt in the land where his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. This is the history of Jacob. Joseph, being

seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers. And the lad was with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father. Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of many colors. But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him."

How do you like it when someone gets preferential treatment? What does it reveal in us when we respond badly to that? Cain was the older brother of Abel. That makes it hard when the other is blessed. Joseph was the youngest brother. That makes it hard when he is treated with favor. Now notice two tracks of the spirit of envy. First, his brothers hated him. Why did they hate Joseph instead of their father? Why did Cain hate Abel instead of God? Because Cain wanted what only God could give, but he didn't want his brother to have it. And why did Joseph's brothers hate him instead of their dad? This is how envy works. It is confusing and unreasonable.

That raises a question here. Did the brothers want what Joseph got, would they have been happy if Joseph simply had not received this preferential treatment? I think it is the latter. You may disagree. But if my definitions are correct, then once more we have envy, not jealousy at work. However that may be, they hated their brother Joseph because his dad treated him in a special way.

Now we could have class right here and discuss if Jacob's actions in making this special tunic for Joseph was an acceptable action or not. Mostly, in our society, we would probably say he should not have done that. I am not so sure. Now if he spanked one for lying, but did not spank the other for lying, that would be wrong. But what if this young lad, from a very early age was just a very well behaved child. And you could see God's blessing rest on him. What if when his brothers got into trouble he did not? And this seems to be the case. Look at 37:2 (read).



However that may be, and we will visit that question again, the second track of this spirit of envy is found in the words, "...they...could not speak peaceably to him." With Cain and Abel, it says Cain's countenance fell. Here we have the same thing happening. Envy affects the relationship between those parties. You see, we may get on well with some person and then that person gets something we do not wish them to have, and the relationship is damaged by our envy.

Well, Joseph's brother's envy was to be taken a step deeper. Now this little snippet (growl) has to share his dreams with them and his dream indicates he thinks he is better than they are too. So listen to verses 5-8, "Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more. So he said to them, 'Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf.'" "

Well, his brothers had no trouble interpreting that dream. So our text says, "And his brothers said to him, 'Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?' So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words."

Now you talk about envy taking a deeper root. Now he is not only the favored one of their father, but he is also the favored one of Jehovah God Himself! How dare the little squirt tell them a dream like this? And not only that, in his dream, the little brother is the big boy and they are the little ones! Oh, how galling! So they said to him, "Oh, really now! You little snippet are going to rule over us?" And our text says, "So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words."

Now let me ask you a question related to the one I asked you before. Did God do wrong in giving Joseph a dream like this? Is this not preferential treatment? Or did God see this young lad from an early age as one through whom He would be able to work? I have no doubt the latter is the case. So what if God sees one

among us as one whom He will be able to use. Will we be envious or jealous of that person?

But that is not the end of the story. Our text then goes on like this: "Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, 'Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me.' So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, 'What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?'" Can you just imagine that! First the coat of many colors. Then that first dream, you know, the dream where Joseph becomes their superior. And now, as if that is not enough, now he is to be a superstar! Well, even his dad questioned this dream. And he said, "You mean even your mother and I and all the rest of the family will bow down to you?"

And our text next records these words in verse 11, "And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind." His brothers envied him. They secretly wished he would disappear, and be out of the picture. So, no doubt they now hated him even more. But his father responds differently. He pondered this.

We saw earlier with Cain and Abel that if one does not repent of envy or jealousy, then conniving begins as to how to get rid of this source of irritation. And some later time and chance happened for this envious lot. Joseph's brothers were shepherding the flocks some distance from home and after a time Jacob sent Joseph to check and see if all was OK. And you know the story. This jealousy still resided in the hearts of the brothers. Just the sight of this coat of many colors appearing made their very skin crawl with envy. And now, here was their opportunity to get this little snippet out of the way, and you know the story, how he was sold into slavery.

Well, years went by. Many of them. Yes, Jacob had grieved for his son when he saw the coat of many colors stained with what he thought was his favorite son's blood. And then a number of years later a famine struck the land, and eventually they are out

of grain. But news has it that in Egypt there is grain to be had. And through all these years, it seems this knowledge of what they have done to their brother seems to lie dormant. These brothers have not told their dad the truth.

So let me read Genesis 42:6-22 "Now Joseph was governor over the land; and it was he who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed down before him with their faces to the earth. Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he acted as a stranger to them and spoke roughly to them. Then he said to them, 'Where do you come from?' And they said, 'From the land of Canaan to buy food.' So Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. Then Joseph remembered the dreams which he had dreamed about them, and he said to them, 'You are spies! You have come to see the nakedness of the land!' And they said to him, 'No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food. We are all one man's sons; we are honest men; your servants are not spies.'" But he said to them, "No, but you have come to see the nakedness of the land." And they said, 'Your servants are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and in fact, the youngest is with our father today, and one is no more.' But Joseph said to them, 'It is as I spoke to you, saying, 'You are spies!' 'In this manner you shall be tested: By the life of Pharaoh, you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. 'Send one of you, and let him bring your brother; and you shall be kept in prison, that your words may be tested to see whether there is any truth in you; or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies!' So he put them all together in prison three days. Then Joseph said to them the third day, 'Do this and live, for I fear God: 'If you are honest men, let one of your brothers be confined to your prison house; but you, go and carry grain for the famine of your houses. And bring your youngest brother to me; so your words will be verified, and you shall not die.' And they did so."

Now I want you to note carefully the very next words. Here is what the Word of God says, "Then they said to one another, 'We are truly guilty concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he

pleaded with us, and we would not hear; therefore this distress has come upon us.' And Reuben said to them, 'Shed no blood, *but* cast him into this pit which *is* in the wilderness, and do not lay a hand on him' -that he might deliver him out of their hands, and bring him back to his father."

Do you know how long it has been since they sold Joseph? And all those long years, when the right circumstances come along, here comes this 'Conscience Pop Up'! As soon as this circumstance happened, up comes this sordid event in their consciences. There is this ugly matter. It is still alive and still kicking! Oh, it just won't go away. It is a brutal monster, hidden in the closet.

Well, Joseph's family moved to Egypt and they were there for many years, and never did the brothers confess what they had done to Joseph. And then their father died, and I want you to see what happened (Genesis 50:15-18). Only out of fear for their own lives and only after their father was no longer alive to confess to did they deal with their sin. What a prison envy and jealousy build for those who give in to it.

CONCL: In conclusion, though envy and jealousy are very hard to detect, they do leave tracks. Consider these tracks, and I'm not sure I got them all, but listen to these; anger, fallen countenance, confusion, misery, broken relationship, unreasonable, lying, acting innocent, and last, marked by God because of the sin.

And this morning, let us be warned to not allow ourselves to be drawn in by these sins. They are very serious sins. And if we have been infected, let us be reminded to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the spirit. And how do we do that? First, we must recognize the presence of these sins ourselves. And second, we must agree that we are envious or jealous. And then, we must confess to those who have been affected in some way by our envy or jealousy and then we must forsake it.