

YOKEFELLOW

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From The Director Envyings



INTRODUCTION

The "deadly list" of the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21 can be divided into four groups: "(1) Sensual sins like fornication.... (2) Idolatry.... (3) Personal relations.... (4) Drunkenness." In the third list is "envyings," along with "hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, and murders."¹ "Surely a lively list,"² wrote Robertson. Lenski observed,

Paul places "envies" in the group headed by mercenary "factions" and intends to convey the idea that "envies" are one of the motives which help to create such doctrines and the parties and splits which they cause. Here we may note Matt. 27:18 and also Phil. 1:15.³

"This is one of the blackest sins of the human heart. It is closely akin to jealousy, that 'green-eyed monster.'"⁴ These sins, J. M. Powell wrote, "are often looked upon as being quite respectable, for the 'best' people practice them, staunch members of the church, even elders and preachers."⁵ The scholarly J. Noel Merideth correctly observed, "Envy is one of the most heinous sins of the flesh and one of the most uncalled for."⁶

Brother J. M. Powell gave an illustration of envy:

Some five centuries B.C., there lived in Greece a statesman by the name of Aristides, known for his strict integrity. His fellow citizens gave him the title "The Just." He was one of ten generals who fought with the Persians at Marathon. Following the battle Aristides held a high political office, and enjoyed such popularity that he excited the jealousy of Themistocles who sought and procured the banishment of this just man. Themistocles was asked why he hated Aristides and what harm Aristides had done him. Themistocles answered, "Why he has never done me any harm, but I am tired of hearing him called,

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

Co-Editor's Column IS THERE NOT A CAUSE? (III)

Garland Elkins



WHEN WE PLEAD FOR THE SCRIPTURAL ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH, WE HAVE A CAUSE

There is a cause when we plead for the scriptural organization of the church. The New Testament teaches that Jesus Christ is the only head of His church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). He has all authority in heaven and on earth. Popes and all other clerical hierarchy which presume to head the church on earth fall under condemnation (Mat. 28:18; Eph. 5:23; Acts 3:23). Each congregation is autonomous. There is no council, association, conference, synod, or any other unscriptural body to dictate to the congregations.

In each congregation, when men from among the members can meet the qualifications, elders are to be appointed. These men are charged with the oversight of the flock (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Pet. 5:1-4). Paul appointed elders in the various churches which he had established on his first missionary journey (Acts 14:23). He instructed Titus to remain in Crete that he might set in order the things that were lacking and appoint elders in every city (Tit. 1:5). The qualifications of elders are listed in 1 Timothy 3, and in Titus 1.

Assisting the elders as special servants of the church are deacons. Their qualifications are recorded in 1 Timothy 3:8-12.

WHEN WE PLEAD FOR MERCY TOWARD THE POOR, WE HAVE A CAUSE

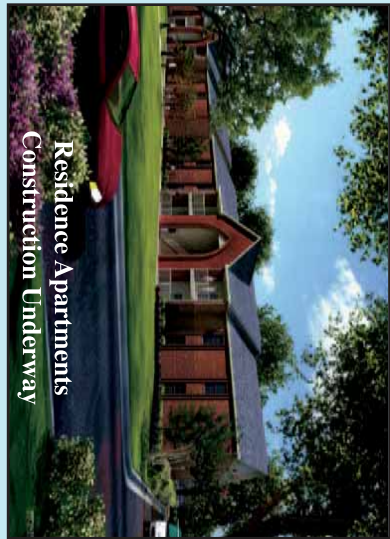
God has given the church an obligation to orphans and widows. "Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world" (Jam. 1:27). God has always required that His people be a friend to the poor. There is an abundance of passages in the Old Testament that teach this (Job 22:6-9; Pro. 29:7; 28:27; Psa. 41:1). Likewise, the New Testament abounds with passages requiring both the church and the individual Christian to practice benevolence (Mat. 5:7; Mark 14:7; Mat. 25:31-46; Jam. 1:27; 2:13-17; Pro. 21:13; Acts 20:35; Gal. 2:10; 1 John 3:17-18; Gal. 6:10; Eph. 4:28). These passages make plain that the church (as well as individual Christians) is to assist all men to the extent of ability and opportunity with special preference to "the household of faith."

(CONTINUED NEXT MONTH)

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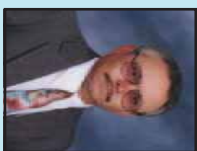
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(CATES: Continued from Page 1)

The Just.”⁷

Commenting on the statement of Solomon that “A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones” (Prov. 14:30), J. W. Brents observed, “Perhaps the most odious in itself and the most damaging evil to the soul is envy. It is not a mere surface sore, but a deep-seated disease. It is ‘rottenness of the bones.’”⁸ Dear reader, envy is extremely self-destructive!

C. D. Plum stated,

In this catalogue of sins, the works of the flesh, we have the Holy Spirit’s condemnation of seventeen specific sins, and for safety, lest some different shade or grade of sin might not here be named, the Holy Spirit named all the other works of the flesh by the expression, “and such like.” So nothing is omitted—no sin is left uncondemned.

If language means anything at all, the Scriptures mentioned above enumerate sins that will undoubtedly keep people from heaven. This being true is it not worth our effort to study these things closely...?⁹

In this vital study about envy, we should keep firmly affixed in mind the powerful, sobering observation of brother Frank L. Cox:

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest,” i.e., offensively visible. Like a buried seed, sin can be concealed only for a season. Committed at first in secret, sin eventually works its way to the surface. The evil thought will betray itself in action (See James 1:15; Matt. 15:19).¹⁰

This study of “Envyings” will consist of an investigation into the following major areas: Definition and Explication, Examples, Characteristics, Consequences, and Remedy.

DEFINITION AND EXPLICATION

The word “envyings” in the Greek is “**phthonoi**,” feelings of ill-will.¹¹ The word “is rendered in the plural correctly ‘envyings’ (KJV). This word is followed in the KJV list by ‘murders’.... **Envy** has the meaning of ‘malice,’ ‘ill will,’ or ‘jealousy.’”¹² Merideth wrote,

The word “envy” etymologically means to look with ill-will, to look against. By definition “envy” is chagrin or discontent at the excellence or good fortune of another; resentful, begrudging. Jealousy and envy are to be distinguished in the following manner. We are jealous of our own; we are envious of another man’s possessions or good fortune. Jealousy fears to lose what it has; envy is pained at seeing another have. In setting forth the sins that come from within, out of the heart of men, Jesus lists “an evil eye” in Mark 7:21-22. The Revised Standard Version translates the passage “envy.” The sin of envy is indeed the evil eye.¹³

Brother Frank L. Cox, citing 1 Corinthians 13:4, “charity envieth not,” defined it as “Grudging to another some advantage or favor or honor.”¹⁴

Envy is a bad disease. When we see others excelling and happy and it causes pain in our chest, we are envious. There is just not much cure for it.¹⁵

The following descriptions of the hideous and “insidious thing” show the seriousness of the subject under discussion.

Hastings: “It is a feeling of uneasiness or displeasure occasioned by beholding the prosperity or advantages enjoyed by others with the illicit wish it was ours not theirs.”

Fallows: “The despicable passion which desires to bring another down below one’s own level while it covets the things which he possesses.”

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia: “‘Envy,’ from Latin **in**, ‘against,’ and **video**, ‘to look,’ ‘to look with ill-will,’ etc., toward another, is an evil strongly condemned in both the Old Testament and New Testament. It is to be distinguished from jealousy.”

“Envy is the filthy slime of the soul, a venom, a poison, or quicksilver which consumeth the flesh and drieth up the marrow of the bones” (**Socrates**).

“As rust corrupts iron so envy corrupts man” (**Antinthenes**).

“Envy is like a fly that passeth all a body’s sounder parts and dwells upon the sores” (**Chapman**).

“There is not a passion so strongly rooted in the human heart as envy” (**Sheridan**).

“Base envy withers at another’s joy and hates the excellence it cannot reach” (**Thompson**).

“Envy lurks at the bottom of the human heart like a viper in a hole” (**Balzue**).

“Envy assails the noblest. The winds howl around the highest peaks” (**Ovid**).

“Sicilian tyrants never invented a greater torment than envy” (**Horace**, 65 B.C.)¹⁶

Envy “is a form of spiritual perversion. While the spirit of compassion is made to ‘rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep’ (Rom. 12:15), the spirit of envy is more likely to weep when others rejoice.”¹⁷ Brother Elam stated that envy looks:

begrudgingly and with discontent and even pain and mortification upon the success and prosperity or Christian character and the good of others. It causes the heart to grieve and fret at the excellencies and honors of others, to wish evil to the ones who excite it and to rejoice at any misfortune that they may suffer.¹⁸

WHAT PRODUCES AND PROVOKES ENVY?

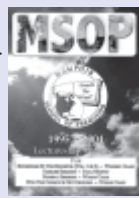
Of course, as in all other sins, envyings are produced in the heart; “Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?” (Jas. 4:5). “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (1:14-15). Ira North correctly observed that envy:

is aroused because of feelings of fear and self-doubt. Envy develops in the person who feels

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inadequate and who fails to believe that God has made us with infinitely more talent, ability, and potential than we can ever use.¹⁹

William Barclay stated:

Maybe it is true that there is no better test of a man than his reaction to the greatness and to the success of someone else. If it moves him to the **zelos** which is noble ambition to goodness, that is the work of the Spirit, but, if it moves him to a bitter and envious resentment, that is the work of the flesh, and what ought to be a spur to goodness has become a persuasion to sin.²⁰

Brother Brents observed similarly:

There is a trait or characteristic implanted in men by the Lord for good and laudable purposes in order to excite to worthwhile attainments and to stir one to imitate the good and noble in others. This principle is called **emulation**. Its purpose is to excite us to greater achievements; but when it meets with a corrupt and rebellious disposition, it degenerates into that most malignant passion in man’s nature, the most obnoxious weed of the poorest soil, called envy.²¹

WHAT DO ENVYINGS PRODUCE AND PROVOKE?

“The fruit of envy is evil continually.”²²

One, the envious person has transgressed God’s law in thought: “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Prov. 23:7). This leads to multiplied miseries and griefs to the soul. “While making other people unhappy, they make themselves wretched”²³ “Envy pains and destroys a man like a knife in the chest...”²⁴

Two, the envious person’s “thoughts lead him to do and say unkind and often untrue things about the envied person (James 1:14,15; 3:13-18).”²⁵

If envy were not so injurious and destructive and if we were in no danger of harming others and of being destroyed ourselves by it, God would not so constantly and so strongly warn against it. But envy leads to backbiting, slander, and murder. Of course, slander embraces lying. There is nothing too mean, too sneaking, too low, for envy to do. There is nothing blacker than envy, except outer darkness itself.²⁶

Thus, one sees that envy has the potential of harming, destroying the reputation of, even murdering the person envied but also destroys the person who allows this insidious evil to abide in his or her heart. “For wrath killeth the foolish man and envy slayeth the silly one” (Job 5:2). Though wrongly applied to Job, this statement by Eliphaz is true. Brother Merideth related the following vivid illustration:

There is a Greek story about a young man who killed himself through envy.... This man’s fellow citizens had erected a statue to one of their number who was a celebrated champion in the public games. But, this man, a rival of the honored athlete, was so envious that he vowed that he would destroy that statue. Every night he went out into the darkness and chiseled at its base in an effort to undermine its foundation and make it fall. It did fall—but it fell on him and killed him.²⁷

(Continued Next Month)

How Shall They Hear?

The charge Christ gave to His disciples to preach the Gospel to every creature is current in every generation, and will remain so until the end of time. Admittedly, the challenge of reaching every soul with the message of salvation is challenging when one considers the current population of over six billion, a figure that could double by the year 2040. Couple that statistic with the fact that about one hundred precious souls are dying every minute, and one readily sees the problem the Lord’s people face today in reaching a world that is rapidly rushing into eternity. However, since it is God’s desire that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, we must believe He has given His people the power and potential to solve the problem of reaching every soul with the truth.

A large part of the solution as to how we may reach the masses with the message of salvation is now in production.

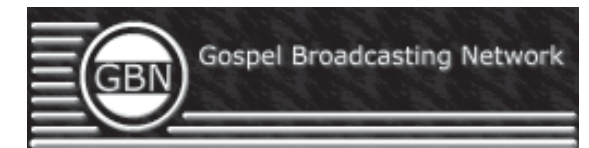
It is Gospel Broadcasting Network, a satellite television network, broadcasting the truth, and nothing but the truth, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. GBN is under the oversight of the Highland Church of Christ in Dalton, Georgia, and is scheduled to go on the air no later than January 1, 2006.

The primary thrust of the network will be three-fold: (1) to establish in viewers of all ages a strong belief in the existence of God, through a heavy concentration of Christian evidences; (2) to establish in viewers the conviction that God has revealed Himself and His will to man through the Bible; and, (3) to encourage the proper response to God’s Word—obedience to the plan of salvation and adherence to the New Testament pattern of worship, work, and Christian living.

In many areas, brethren are threatened by false teaching, and a saturation of sound Bible teaching through a 24 hour a day network may help strengthen them to withstand error and to stand firmly for the truth. Also, there are areas where the church is practically non-existent and brethren are striving to grow in the faith. Sound television programming that may be viewed, possibly videotaped for later use, may edify these brothers and sisters in Christ and assist them in their evangelistic efforts.

The members of the GBN management team, under the oversight of the Highland elders, bring many years of collective experience to their responsibilities. **Barry Gilreath, Sr.** is the **Executive Director** of GBN, and also serves as one of the overseeing elders. **Jim Dearman** is the **Program Director**, and **Don Blackwell** and **Mike Hixson** serve as **National Field Representatives**. Common to all these men is a strong determination to air nothing on the new network but sound Bible teaching and preaching.

If members of the Lord’s church would like further information, they may contact **Gospel Broadcasting Network:**



GBN, P.O. Box 23604, Chattanooga, TN 37422.

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