



Acts 17:1-10



## Overview

Sunday was the third in our 5-week series on MARKETPLACE MISSIONARIES. The first week focused on guidance, the second on freedom. This week the key theme was jealousy. As Steve noted in the sermon, it is incredibly difficult to either own up to or talk about the jealousy within us, because it seems so petty and childish. But, as he also said, whether we like to admit it or not, it is there in all of us. This SBS is going to assume that your group has the courage and the integrity to recognise and personally own up to the jealousy that lives inside all of us. If you don't think your group is in a place to be able to do this yet, then perhaps this SBS is not the best option for you at the moment.



## Getting to Know You

When you think about what you do in your 9-5 day, what are the things that make you frustrated, anxious or angry?

For each of these things, to what extent do you think that jealousy is one of the root causes of that feeling of frustration, anxiety or anger?

To what extent do you think you are driven by jealousy – on a scale of 1 to 10, are you completely unaffected by it, or consumed constantly with envious longings?

How has jealousy affected your life? (For example, your discipleship journey, emotional health, relationships etc.)



## Digging Deeper

- Read Acts 17:1-10.

Have you ever been affected by other people's jealousy? Tell others the story?

What do you think is the "Christian" response to others' jealousy, and how did / could that have played itself out in the stories you told?

- Pastor Rob was quoted in the sermon as saying "Setting out to be successful often means you end up jealous." Do you agree with this comment? If so, why? If not, why not?

What are the common features of ambition and jealousy which mean that they so often go together?

Is "success" something that we should be seeking for as Christians? What exactly is Christian ambition?

- Below are listed some of the many Bible verses about jealousy and envy. Which one speaks to you the most, and why?

1 Cor 3:3	You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans?
1 Cor 13:4	Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.
Ecclesiastes 4:4	And I saw that all toil and all achievement spring from one person's envy of another. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.
Proverbs 14:30	A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.
Proverbs 27:4	Anger is cruel and fury overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy?
James 4:2-3	You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.
1 Cor 1:27-29	But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.
Philippians 2:3	Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,
Psalms 37:1-3	Do not fret because of those who are evil or be envious of those who do wrong; for like the grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away. Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.
James 3:14-16	But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.
Gal 5:14-15	For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.
Proverbs 6:34	For jealousy arouses a husband's fury, and he will show no mercy when he takes revenge.



### Taking it home

Bring to your mind the one situation or difficulty that stirs up the most jealousy and enviousness for you, and (if you are brave enough!) talk through with the group the implications of what it means for you to honestly address it.

- Own it! Say to God "I am unhappy with what you gave me and I want better"

What do your feelings of jealousy reveal about what you think about yourself? In what way are you dissatisfied with the way God made you?

- Understand that our desires and pleasures are not best dealt with by continually trying to satisfy them.

How are you trying to cope with your jealousy? Is it by working harder and harder to get the thing you want, or become the kind of person you of whom you are envious? Can you recognise a cyclic pattern in your responses which is unhelpful?

### 3. Recognise that our disappointment with God is misplaced.

Ask someone to read out the prayer below slowly, as others think about the area that causes the most jealousy in their lives. As the prayer is read, think through whether you can own each of the phrases that are used, and if so, pray it in your mind for yourself.

Sorry God.

I realise that I have struggled to accept the way you made me.

I've wanted more and better.

But I have no right to demand that of you.

You have gifted me in many ways - sorry that I have not been content with these.

You gave me everything I have including relationship with you through the cross.

These things are debts I could never repay.

Thankyou for what you have given me.

Help me to learn to be content with what I have been given.

### 4. Make a habit of celebrating the success of others

Try and think of one situation where you would have trouble complimenting someone else who has done something well. Tell someone else in the group about it, and ask them to keep you accountable for going and congratulating them and celebrating their success.



### Prayer

Jealousy is a huge issue, and one that is rarely acknowledged in churches and Christian small groups. It is unlikely that we will solve it in one night. Pray for each other, that we would have the courage to look at this issue and what it reveals about us honestly, deeply and together.