

Envy That Kills and Kindness That Builds

Genesis 4:1-12; James 1:27

March 30, 2008

1. Lean-In: Introduction Questions

Envy has been called “The green sickness”, and it’s deadly! “Envy slays itself by its own arrows” (a Greek proverb). How can seeing “The grass is greener on the other side of the fence” and “Keeping up with the Joneses” really be such a dangerous distraction? Can you think of any stories or situations where envy turned disastrous? (Began as a sickness, became a malady, and ended in grave consequences).

2. Look Down: Observation Questions

How does the Cain and Abel story (Genesis 4:1-12) show the progressive, destructive nature of sin? How does sin first show its ugly face in this story? How does the sin grow bigger and bigger? How does Cain’s own sarcastic, rhetorical question really cut right to the heart of the matter? What are “Cain” consequences of allowing the selfish sin of envy to overtake your life? (See Genesis 4:13-16)

3. Look Out: Understanding Questions

Mick Jaeger is still singing “I Can’t Get No Satisfaction”. What do people want? Envy, Greed, Gluttony, Lust; even Pride, Anger, and Sloth . . . it seems these deadly sins are always focused on getting what we want. (So be careful what you ask for, you might just get it.) So what is it that people really need? Can you think of a person who is more than just satisfied with life, but who has discovered “The Secret of Shalom”—living life to the full?

4. Look In: the Application Questions

Consider James 1:27 and the LHC Vision Statement: “Creating Community Where Lives Are Fulfilled by Following Christ.” What steps can you take to kill envy in your life and create more community instead?

Note this headline from *Health Bay News* by Amanda Gardner, “Money can buy happiness, at least when you spend it on others.”