

A devotion given by Brother Richard Lam at the Wed night prayer meeting on Jan 31, 2018

## Envy Poisons The Heart

<sup>45</sup> *But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul. Acts 13:45 NKJV*



Do you know that the number one thing that holds you back from God's purpose and mission for your life is not lust or pride or anger. It's not worry or fear or discouragement. In fact, you would probably never even think of it because it is so insidious. It's envy.

Envy is a feeling of resentment aroused because of another person's qualities, possessions, or position, and the desire to have them for yourself. Any advantage held by another person can trigger this feeling—intelligence, good looks, popularity, good job, even a person's spiritual insights. The most devout Christian is not immune to the subtle temptation of envy.

"Keeping up with the Joneses" is a common saying for trying to match the lifestyle of one's neighbors. Ecclesiastes 4:4 says, *"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 I have also learned why people work so hard to succeed: it is because they envy the things their neighbors have. But it is useless. It is like chasing the wind"*. God's has great displeasure with envy and coveting which is the result of envy. In the Ten Commandments it states: "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor." Envious people look with malice, greed, and even hate on somebody for who they are or for what they have. In the bible, Rachel envied Leah because she bore children (*Gen. 30:1*). Joseph's brothers envy and hated him because his father showed favoritism towards him (*Gen. 37:11*). The Jews opposed Paul's preaching for the same reason—envy (*Acts 13:45*).

When we envy what other people have such as their power, money, or position, we are telling God that we are not satisfied with what we have. Envy is *a problem of the heart*. The human heart is geared toward material things and lusts. God is the only one who can change the human heart (*Prov 21:1*). When a person truly obeys and trusts Jesus, his needs and desires changes and he begins to long for the things of God. Envy can destroy everything and everyone around us. According to Rick Warren envy is misguided worship. It says, "I desire that. I want that. I love that. I want to live for that." That's is materialistic worship and an idol. To eliminate envy, we have to ask, "What am I worshiping? Am I worshiping God and His grace in my life or am I worshiping what I want from this world?"

Do not be envious of others, take a step back and look at God's gifts to you. See what He has given you: things that are great, beautiful and enough. He knows what is sufficient for you and me for He is our creator. A heart full of love has no room for envy.