

ENVY

Genesis 4:1-8 & 1 Corinthians 12:7-11

Awareness

Before listening, reflect:

- How do you define envy? How does it compare to jealousy -- is it the same thing or is it different?
- Identify a time in your life when you struggled with envy. What did you do about it?

Thomas Aquinas once wrote that envy is “sorrow at another’s good.” The trouble with envy is that it’s so easy to hide, and that it harms both the person consumed with envy and the subject of their envy. Once again, we turn to Genesis to see just how long envy has been part of the human condition and discuss how it is similar, yet very different from jealousy and covetousness. Then we dig into the New Testament to discover how we can keep in step with the Holy Spirit to combat this sneaky sin.

Reflection

After listening, consider:

- In segment 1, host Dave Bast quoted Dorothy Sayers, who wrote, “Envy begins by asking plausibly, ‘Why should I not enjoy what others enjoy,’ and it ends by demanding, ‘Why should others enjoy what I may not?’” Have you ever observed this progression of attitude in others? What about in yourself?
- How do attitudes and feelings of envy threaten or disrupt community?
- Reflect on your own level of contentment. In which areas of life are you truly content and in which areas do you struggle with contentment? Spend some time thinking about what causes your feelings of discontentment in these particular parts of your life. Then, write down what you are grateful for in these same areas. Do your feelings change at all after intentional reflection?

Related Passages

- **1 Samuel 18:5-9**
- **Matthew 20:1-16**
- **1 Corinthians 13**
- **Romans 8**

Conclusion

Take the first step in acknowledging envy by talking about it -- with God for sure and, if you feel the Holy Spirit’s leading, with a trusted friend or mentor. After confessing and reflecting on the places in your life where envy is prone to lurk, take time to pray that the Spirit would help you to recognize sooner when envy is taking hold and guide you in addressing it.

