**Envy**

Envy and jealousy are often used as synonymous terms. They are, however, *directionally different* emotions. *Jealousy* is rooted in the fear of losing something you already have. But *envy* is a belligerent discontent that stems from desiring the possession(s) of someone else instead of them having it/them.

While *jealousy* is typically shallow and juvenile, *envy* is usually the product of long-held and deep-seething emotions. However, the two emotions are often related in that *jealousy* can easily *mature* into its older cousin *envy*.

**Psalm 73, The Envy of the Righteous Toward the Wicked**

*Asaph* is thought by some to be either a *pseudonym* of David, or perhaps the one to whom this psalm (again, presumably of David) was dedicated or ascribed rather than being the author of it. However, 2Chron.29:30 and Neh.12:46 both mention *David* and *Asaph* as being not only separate people, but that both are musicians. Therefore, it seems not only logical but also plausible to understand Asaph to be the author of the twelve psalms ascribed to him.

A closer look at Psalm 73 gives us considerable insight to the destructive sin of *envy.* Here are some fundamental considerations:

**The Stumbling Point,** vv.1-3; Though God is good and has blessed Israel and those who are *“pure in heart,”* Asaph confesses the weakness that nearly caused him to fall: *envy of the arrogant* because he *saw their prosperity.*

**The Root Cause,** vv.4-5; It is not stated by Asaph in these terms, but by the very definition of “envy” we see him beginning to seethe at the perceived *injustice* of the relative ease of life of the wicked as opposed to the difficulties of his own life. “It’s not fair- I deserve what they have more than they do” bleeds through his words. Such is the very heart of envy.

**The Multiplying Effects,** vv.6-9; Asaph, after noticing what he perceives to be injustice in how the wicked are prospering, is further egged on by their *pride* while covered with *violence;* their *fatness* in fulfilling their *heart’s riotous imaginations;* their *feigned oppression* spoken from *high* (protected; wealthy) *places;* and their *open opposition* to heaven while *parading* about the earth.

**The Incongruity,** vv.10-14; The righteous (such as Asaph) see the *waters of abundance* being consumed by the wicked and question, *“Does God see and know about this?”* Surely He must see how the wicked are *always at ease* and how they have *prospered* in their iniquity. Why does He not bless the *pure hearts* and *clean hands* of the righteous who are *stricken* and *chastened* every day? “It must be vanity to serve God!” is the conclusion to which envy has driven this righteous man.

**The Dangerous Precipice,** vv.15-16; Asaph comes near to the edge! Up until now, everything elucidated has been the thought and questioning of his heart, but now he stops just short of giving voice to his complaint before God- realizing that to do so would deny His prospering of *past generations* of Israel (His children). Still yet, though he has the wisdom not to openly question God with His tongue, Asaph’s *mind* cannot comprehend the injustice of what he perceives.

**The *Turning Point* of Enlightenment,** vv.17-20; When Asaph *came into the sanctuary* he then understood the *final end* of the ways of wickedness. Though they may *prosper* now, the *slippery places* of pride, arrogance, violence, and gluttony will only lead them to *destruction.*  Though they seem to be on top of the world now, they will be *swept away* by *sudden terrors* to *destruction!* Though the Lord seems to be *sleeping* while they “party,” when *awakened* He will *despise their form* and destroy it. Asaph’s enlightenment came from drawing near to the presence of God when he felt himself slipping away mentally and physically!

**The Self-Realization,** vv.21-24; Envy had *pierced* (injured) and *embittered* (damaged) Asaph’s heart. It had also both allowed and caused his whole perspective of God and life to be altered in *senseless* and *ignorant* ways (like a *beast*). But, his *staying with* (or *returning to*) God allowed the Father to *take his hand* and *guide him* with *counsel* to *glory.*

**Therefore,** vv.25-28; Restoration of faith and fidelity!

Now, where did this almost-tragic journey begin? Envy led Asaph to an improper estimation of self that lead to an unwholesome perspective of the world and an unjust view of God.

Such is why “envy” is:

* Grouped with the products of a *“depraved mind”* and *improper conduct* in Rom.1:28-32;
* Listed as a *“deed of the flesh”* in Gal.5:19-21; and
* Called *“foolish, disobedient, deceived”* behavior that stems from *“various lusts and pleasures”* in Titus 3:3.

Therefore, please understand Asaph’s Psalm 73 and heed the command of 1Pet.2:1-3.

**Take-Home Points:**

1. **It’s OK to seek answers for what we don’t understand; but,**
2. **Be careful to never question God’s *awareness* or *goodness-* He *sees* all, *knows* all, and is eminently *righteous* in all.**
3. **While we/you seek answers for what you don’t understand, go *to* God (His *sanctuary*) in trust for them rather than *away* from Him in distrust.**