

Jealousy

by Wayne Goff

J **EALOUSY**, according to Holman's Bible Dictionary, is used in three sense in Scripture:
1.As intolerance of rivalry or unfaithfulness
2.As a disposition suspicious of rivalry or unfaithfulness
3.As hostility towards a rival or one believed to enjoy an advantage.

God's Jealousy

God is jealous for His people Israel in that God is intolerant of false gods (**Exodus 20:5; 34:14; Deuteronomy 4:24; 5:9**; etc.). One expression of God's jealousy for Israel is God's protection of His people from enemies. Thus God's jealousy includes avenging Israel (**Ezekiel 36:6; 39:25; Nahum 1:2; Zechariah 1:14; 8:2**). Elijah is similarly characterized as jealous (or zealous) for God (**1 Kings 19:10, 14**).

New Testament Jealousy

In the New Testament, Paul speaks of his jealousy for the Christians at Corinth on behalf of their husband, Jesus Christ (**2 Corinthians 11:2**). It simply means that Jesus expects us to keep ourselves unspotted from the world (**James 1:27**), and chaste for Christ. So in this sense, jealousy can be a good thing.

Human Jealousy

Most often human jealousy involves hostility toward a rival. Joseph's brothers were jealous (**Genesis 37:11**) and thus sold their brother into slavery (**Acts 7:9**). In **Acts 17:5** a jealous group among the Jews incited the crowd against Paul.

Jealousy, like envy, is common in lists of sin (**Romans 13:13; 2 Corinthians 12:20; Galatians 5:20-21**). Jealousy is regarded as worse than wrath or anger (Proverbs 27:4). James regarded jealousy (or bitter envy) as characteristic of earthly, demonic wisdom (James 3:14) and as the source of all disorder and wickedness (James 3:16). These things ought not once to be named among Christians! We must be careful not to feel this way toward any person, and especially not toward a brother or sister in Christ.

Preacher Jealousy

Sometimes preachers are envious of one another. But if we would remember the words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 3, then we would avoid this sin. "So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase" **1 Corinthians 3:7**. Preaching brethren are merely messenger boys. Preaching brethren are to be one (united) in Christ (**v. 8**). We are all working together for the building up in the faith of each and every saint. The church in this present world is small enough without preachers trying to carve out their portion for themselves. The church in this present world is small enough without saints trying to pit their favorite preacher against all others either.

Godly Jealousy

Brethren, if we are to be jealous, let it be with a godly jealousy! Let us strive on God's behalf to build up the church and to keep it holy, without spot or blemish that it might be transported into heavenly glory one day — with you and me in it! "That He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish" **Ephesians 5:27**.

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