BIG PROBLEMS? BIGGER GOD!
Part 10: The PROBLEM of JEALOUSY

INTRO: Ever found yourself not wanting to celebrate someone else's success? Discipleship Journal survey (2010) showed believers ranked jealousy (envy) in the top ten of spiritual challenges they struggle with. Media advertising doesn't help but encourages us to be jealous of those whose success exceeds our (job, home, car, etc.).

ILLUS: once two shopkeepers . . .

EXAMPLES: Eve/Adam, Cain/Abel, Sarah/Hagar, Jacob/Esau, Joseph's brothers, Saul/David, Prodigal/Brother etc. The 10th commandment is, "You shall not covet . . . "(Exo. 20:17). Moses, Solomon, David, Paul, Peter, James all speak to this sinful problem. Essentially the jealousy of the religious leaders over Jesus' popularity motivated their having Jesus put to death (Matt. 27:18). This is a sin with terrible consequences, but one we rarely address (until today), much less discuss. Worse sin than wrath and anger (Pro. 27:4);. Minor sins? Insignificant sins? No Way!

I. DEFINED

A. Terms: Jealousy and its ally Envy are similar but different. *Jealousy* is the *fear* we feel when we might lose what we have. *Envy* is the *anger* we feel when someone has what we want (and justify we deserve). They are the poisons we drink and hope the other person dies. One seminary professor wrote . . .

B. "Green monster" is what Shakespeare (Othello) names it. The ancient Greeks associated green with the color of sickness. Jealousy and envy are a form of sickness. (Pro. 14:30 ". . . envy makes the bones rot.") Read and shutter (Rom. 1:29-31; Gal. 5:19-21). Jealous does have a positive side when has right purpose. Phineas was commended by God because he was "very jealous for God" (1 Kings 19:10, 14). God is jealous for His people to become all they can for Him (Exo. 20:4-5; Deut. 4:24; 5:9; Josh. 24:19; 2 Cor. 11:2).

C. Comparison is major driver. T. Roosevelt: "Comparison is thief of joy." Whenever we compare ourselves to other's successes we feel proud or arrogant or we feel jealous or envious – feelings of sadness, misery, anger, frustration, criticism, etc. Someone else's success should never make us feel like a failure.

II. ILLUSTRATED

Many biblical examples . . . What can unchecked jealous and envy do? Basically two powerful effects.

A. Destroys *OTHERS*. Eve's jealousy impacted human race. Cain killed Abel, Jacob deceived Esau, Sarah banished Hagar, . . . Saul tried to kill David (5 times). Destroys relationships because trust is destroyed.

B. Destroys *US* (Job 5:2)

1. Look at Cain, Saul, etc.
2. Draws us away from God and hinders our growth (1 Cor. 3:1-3; Gal. 5:20; 1 Pet. 2:1; Rom. 13:13)
3. Makes us miserable (Pro. 14:30)
4. Leads to other sins (Jam. 3:13ff) – rivalry, pride, greed, hate
5. Brings judgment – keeps you out of heaven?

III. MANAGED

Suggestions to manage and overcome:

A. *Admit and confess these sins (1 Jn. 1:9).* Own it. Don't shift blame to others or to God. Our real issue is with God.

B. *Reaffirm God's goodness in your life (Rom. 8:28).* God is always good and always works for our good. Seek your contentment in Him (Phil.4:11-13).

C. *Remind yourself of His unconditional love for you (1 Cor. 13:4).* He only wants what's best for us. He loves us more than we can imagine.

D. *Learn from others not compare yourself to others (2 Cor. 10:12).* Comparison is losing game. You end up feeling superior (proud) or feeling inferior (jealous). Both sinful. Grow from others. What do they do well? What could you do differently?

E. *Give thanks for who you are and what you have instead of lamenting over who you aren't and what you don't have.* Squeeze more of who you are and all you have.

F. *Publically praise and privately pray for the success of others.* Insecure people are usually jealous people.

CONC: Devastating and ugly sins are jealousy and envy. They damage everything they touch, esp. our relationships.