

Series: God Is Jealous #1812

Title: Various Scriptures

God's Not Jealous Like We Are Jealous

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. Welcome back. Starting today I want to share with you another of God's communicable perfections, or attributes if you prefer. This is an excellency within God, something of who He is, that is able to be communicated to us more easily than His incommunicable perfections. Like His goodness and His patience, previously discussed here on *God Is*, this next divine perfection is one in which we can relate...at least to a certain extent, but stay tuned to hear what we mean by this. Friends, I greet you today with this truth: God is jealous. The One and Only True and Living God is Jealous.

"What?" This one often surprises people. God is jealous? How can that be? We reason that jealousy is always a sinful, human emotion. And since there is no sin in God, then how can He be jealous or even get jealous? If that's your question, you are on the right track asking it. Because, as we will learn, God is *not* jealous in the same way we are jealous. Nevertheless, He is jealous. And, just for a moment off the top, how do we know He's jealous? That's simple. God tells us one of His names is...*Jealous*. And each of God's Names reflect His character. Listen to what God says to Moses in Exodus chapter 34 and verse 14, "**You shall not worship any other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.**" From this one statement we learn that God is jealous. In fact, that is His Name. "The Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God." (Exodus 34.14.)

In the Bible, jealousy has three basic meanings, according to the Holman Bible Dictionary. The first meaning is "intolerance of rivalry or unfaithfulness." This applies to God. He is intolerant of rivalry or unfaithfulness. We see that in the one text I read. God (capital G) does not tolerate the rivalry of the other god (small g). God knows the other gods will make His people be unfaithful to Him, so He exercises His jealousy against them. We will come back to this, bigtime, so stay tuned. The second way jealousy is used in the Scripture is "a disposition suspicious of rivalry or unfaithfulness" and the third way it is used is as "hostility to a rival or one believed to enjoy an advantage." This third way captures the sense of human jealousy. When we are jealous we have hostility to a rival or to someone we believe has an advantage over us.

So that we can set-up the *contrast* between our being jealous and God being jealous, let's briefly look (in the Bible) at human jealousy as hostility to a rival. This first example may have even popped directly into your mind. You remember, don't you, how jealous Joseph's brothers were of him in Israel? Joseph was having these dreams and was reporting them to his father Jacob and his older brothers got wind of it and how in each dream Joseph came off on top...*of them!* So verse 11 of Genesis chapter 37 says, "**His brothers were jealous of him...**" One thing leads to another and because of their jealousy the brothers banded together and roughed up young Joe, leaving him in a place where he was apprehended and taken down into Egypt as a captive.

That's human jealousy. Hostility to a rival or one believed to enjoy an advantage. Joseph's older brothers saw him as a rival and believed he had a great advantage over them and so their jealousy fuelled their action! Acts chapter 7 and verse 9, reflecting on this, reads, "**The patriarchs became jealous of Joseph and sold him into Egypt. Yet God was with him, ¹⁰ and rescued him from all his afflictions, and granted him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he made him governor over Egypt and all his household.**" Life does turn very positive for Joseph, but not before he encounters the negative consequences of jealousy. Genesis 37 and Acts 7.

Staying in the Book of Acts, you may also remember that the Apostle Paul dealt with people who were jealous of him. I am reading Acts chapter 17, verses 1-5. "**Now...they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. ² And according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³ explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, 'This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ.'** ⁴ And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with a large number of the God-fearing Greeks and a number of the leading

women. ⁵ **But the Jews, becoming jealous and taking along some wicked men from the market place, formed a mob and set the city in an uproar...**"

That was Acts 17.1-5 and you can see why the Jews were jealous – they saw Paul and Silas as rivals, as threats to be stopped – and so they employed their jealousy to grab wicked men, form a mob, and set the city in an uproar. Paul was perceived to have the advantage over them. His gospel teaching was gaining traction and bringing in new followers to Jesus Christ. But the Jews did not appreciate that, to say the least. Jealousy enflamed their minds and hearts and forced violent action. You can keep reading to find out how this story ends.

As we can tell from the little part of it we have time to read, jealousy is a sinful, human disposition and action. And this is why God commands that we Christian people *not* be jealous. Let me give you a few passages to chew on and digest this morning, afternoon, or evening. Proverbs chapter 27 and verse 4 says jealousy is worse than wrath and anger. **"Wrath is fierce and anger is a flood, but who can stand before jealousy?"** By the way, if you have been on the receiving end of jealousy, you know this is true. It is bad enough to deal with someone else's wrath and anger, but getting smacked around by raging envy is worse.

In Romans 13, verse 13 we read, **"Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy."** Oh, that's very interesting and should capture our attention. Many of us like to dwell on the sins of drunkenness and sexual promiscuity and sensuality (and to be sure these are sins), but what about strife and jealousy? The previously mentioned Apostle Paul here equates jealousy with these other iniquities. Are you someone who does not drink, is faithful to your spouse, and does not indulge in sensuality, but you are jealous? Take heed to Romans 13.13.

Paul again this time to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 12, verse 20, "For I am afraid that perhaps when I come I may find you to be not what I wish and may be found by you to be not what you wish; that perhaps there will be strife, jealousy, anger, tempers, disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances..." This really hits the nerve with many of us, doesn't it? And you heard our word there, jealousy. This is what Paul hopes not to find in the Corinthian Christians. And so it is no wonder that over in Galatians chapter 5, verses 19-21 we read this, **"Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, ²¹ envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."**

Wow. Those who practice jealousy will not inherit the kingdom of God. This is a powerful warning for us. An unrepentant, ongoing, consistent and persistent jealousy within us disqualifies us for Christ's kingdom! I tell you, human jealousy is very different from God's jealousy. Finally, listen to the Apostle James in the Book that bears his name. This is James chapter 3, verses 13-16 as he describes divine wisdom. I am in James 3, beginning in verse 13, **"Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. ¹⁵ This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. ¹⁶ For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing."**

James makes clear the equivalence of jealousy and earthly, natural, and demonic wisdom. Demonic! And then he says where jealousy exists so does disorder and every evil thing. Again we see that human jealousy is very different from God jealousy.

Well, we are just getting started. Next time we will have much more on God's jealousy when you join us because God Is.

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