The Differences between Envy and Jealousy

- **Envy** is resenting the advantage of another, with a desire to possess the same advantage.
- **Envy** is coveting what another has.
- **Jealousy** is resenting another’s rivalry or unfaithfulness, with a desire to guard or maintain what one possesses.
- **Jealousy** is also defined as possessiveness.
- **Envy** is a burning desire to have.
- **Jealousy** is a burning desire to keep.
- **Envy** is coveting what another has.
- **Jealousy** is possessive of what one has.
- **Envy** is empty hands that crave to be filled.
- **Jealousy** is full hands that fear being emptied.
- **Envy** usually involves two people.
- **Jealousy** usually involves three people.

Disguises for Masking Envy or Jealousy

- Making an issue of the unfairness of life
- Pretending apathy or indifference for people or situations
- Feeling self-pity
- Offering false praise and congratulations
- Projecting jealousy or envy onto another
- Developing a superior attitude toward another
- Becoming a martyr
  
  “For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.”  
  (James 3:16)

Envious

“A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.”  
(Proverbs 14:30)

- Encourages envy in others—boastful
- Needs to put down others—critical
- Vengeful feelings toward others—resentful
- Internal pain over the success of others—begrudging
- Overachiever—competitive
- Unfulfilled desires or cravings—greedy
- Self-exalting—demanding

Jealous

“Anger is cruel and fury overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy?”  
(Proverbs 27:4)

- Judgmental of others—performance-based acceptance
- Exclusive expectations—not allowing outside relationships
- Anxiety/anger over potential loss—threat of losing relationship
- Leaning on the identity of others—emotionally dependent
- Overly possessive of others—controlling spirit
- Unable to trust God—insecure
- Suspicious of the normal behavior of others—distrustful

Surface Causes

**Envy**

- Desire for selfish gain
- Comparison
- Emphasis on personal rights
- Unrealistic expectations
Jealousy

• Lack of trust
• Low self-image
• Guilt
• Fear of loss

“Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.”
(Galatians 5:26)

Situational Setups

Envy

• Affluence (money)
• Achievement (honors, awards)
• Appearance (looks, clothes, etc.)
• Abilities (talents)
• Advancement (promotions)
• Activities (trips, social invitations)

Jealousy

• Sibling rivalry
• Friendships
• Marriage relationships
• Adult parent/child relationships
• Competitive work environment
• Legalistic church environment

“I saw that all toil and all achievement spring from one person’s envy of another.”
(Ecclesiastes 4:4)

Root Cause

Wrong Belief:

• For Envy: “I have a right to have what others have because I need to feel more significant.”
• For Jealousy: “I have a right to keep whatever I have to fulfill my need for significance.”

Right Belief:

“I will trust God and choose to be content regardless of what I have or do not have. He will fulfill my need for significance through His life lived within me.”

“I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength” (Philippians 4:11–13).

Key Verse to Memorize

“I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.”
(Philippians 4:11)

Key Passage to Read

Galatians 5:13–26

Praying for the one toward whom you feel jealousy or envy is the key that unlocks the prison door. When I have found myself locked in the jail of jealousy, my only hope for freedom has been prayer—praying for the one who is the focus of my jealousy. When I “prayed for my enemy,” Christ set the prisoner free—and that prisoner was me!

—June Hunt

Speaking the Truth in Love

• Confront in love—speak in love.
• Attempt to determine the source of the jealousy—selfish or godly jealousy.
• Decide whether the jealousy is justified or a product of the imagination.
• Encourage disclosure of the pain without placing blame.
• Ask for forgiveness for any possible offenses—do not be defensive.
• Affirm jealous people by declaring their value—give praise and encouragement.
• Work on a plan together.
• Withdraw from one who is demonstrating open hatred or destructive manipulation.

“Speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.”
(Ephesians 4:15)

Replacing Destructive Emotions

• Face your feelings and use them as indicators to change.
• Recognize the source of these emotions. (James 3:15–16)
• Agape love says that you can transcend your natural jealousy and envy. (Galatians 5:13–14)
Questions and Answers

"Is envy always wrong?"

Yes. Scripture never portrays envy in a positive light. God is never depicted as an envious God.

"Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would. And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas. Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ? For he knew that for envy they had delivered him." (Matthew 27:15–18 KJV)

"Is jealousy always wrong?"

No. It is natural and normal for feelings of jealousy to surface when a meaningful covenant relationship is threatened by unfaithfulness.

"I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.”

(2 Corinthians 11:2–3)

"Why is God called a jealous God?"

Jehovah God initiated a special covenant relationship with the Israelites. Because of His love for Israel, God felt jealous pain when they threatened to destroy the covenant relationship and became disloyal.

"Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.”

(Exodus 34:14)