

“Envy” // Numbers 11:1–10 // *Smoke from a Fire #4*

Recommission Weekend:

Summit, **praise God for the exciting work of raising up and sending out, AMEN???** This weekend, we want to celebrate some of our missionaries who are returning to live sent lives in RDU. You are our heroes, we are proud of you, and we will keep praying for you in this next season. **(Applause?)**

Budget, Approved:

Summit, it is your generosity that enables our mission. We are able to send our best because you give your first and our best. And so, it is not surprising to me that last week you passed our next year’s operating budget by a **resounding 99%**.

Our hope is that through this faith-pledge, **God will continue to use us to spread the gospel** to the Triangle and beyond.

Summit Vision Night:

To that end, I really sense the Lord is **calling us to a dedicated season** when we reevaluate what it means to put Jesus FIRST in our lives—in how we **think, live, serve and give**.

So, if you are a **leader** or **volunteer** at the Summit, or frankly, if you just **want to be more involved**, I want you to make plans to join us on

Works consulted:

The Evil of Envy,” Tim Keller

“Jealousy,” Andy Stanley

“Contentment,” Craig Groeschel

Friday, September 7 at 7 p.m. at the Brier Creek Campus for what we are calling **Summit Vision Night**.

There, **I’m going to lay out the direction our elders believe** the Lord is leading us as a church over the next few years, and then we are going to worship together and pray about how we can be people radically committed to putting Jesus first in our lives. You can **find out more** about this night and RSVP at summitrdu.com/vision.

“Envy”

Bibles: Numbers 11.

The **idea behind this series is that our emotions** function like smoke from a fire—and just like you can follow a trail of smoke to figure out what’s on fire in your house, you can follow the trail of your emotions to figure out what is on fire in your heart.

Or, **to change the analogy**—each of these **emotions**—depression, anxiety, anger—this week envy, and next week “shame”—functions like **warning lights on the dashboard of our hearts**, indicating what is going on in the engine of our souls. The key is figuring out what the **warning light points** to.

- Have you ever been driving when **the little “Check Engine” light** comes on in your car? *The problem is: **that’s it. That’s all it says. I mean, what am I supposed to make of that?*** If you’re like me, the first time that happened, I dutifully complied: I **pulled over**, **opened the hood**, looked at the engine for a while and thought, *“Wow, there’s a lot of stuff in there.”* But there were no blinking lights, no tiny flags waving saying, “It’s me, it’s me!” **Nothing to tell me** what exactly I should be checking. **So, I start tugging** on stuff, tapping on things. Pretty much the only thing I know how to

do reliably is check the windshield wiper fluid. **So, I do that.** And, having now completely exhausted my check engine abilities, I get back in the car hoping I've taken care of what needs to be taken care of.¹

Well, thankfully, **the Bible helps us interpret our soul's indicator lights better than our cars** do their "check engine" lights.

And maybe **nowhere is that so clear as in the case of "envy."** As with the other emotions, the **best thing** to do with envy is **not just to try and get the light to go off**, but to figure out **what is wrong in your heart** that is making the light go off.

- **One of our pastors** told me he literally took a piece of paper and taped over the "check engine" light on his car—he hated seeing the light, and wasn't planning to do anything to fix it anytime soon. NOT WISE!
- **Be honest:** How many of you are driving around with the light on right now??? Less than 1 week. Less than a month. More than 3 months.
- One of our **pastors said he didn't know what to do when his 'check engine' light came on**—so he just traded in his car.
- Unfortunately, you don't have the option to do that with your life.

Think of envy like your "check engine" light, and let's look at what this one **points to**. The Bible unpacks the heart of envy in an obscure little story in Numbers 11:

Numbers 11:1-6 CSB

¹ **Or take your computer.** How many of you have had *this* happen? One day you're typing. It's just a simple document. And I'm just naïve to think that my high-powered laptop with my 2.2 Ghz processor and 1.08 terabyte hard-drive can handle a task that typewriters in 1904 could handle without jamming. I'm pecking away when a message pops up: "Error 1404 has occurred." Error 1404... What is that? Is there a **list of errors** somewhere I can check, and does it really climb into the

Context: *The children of Israel are about a year out from being delivered from slavery. They are passing through a wilderness, during which God leads them with by a pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night, and every morning he provides manna for them to eat miraculously on the ground.*

11:1 Now the people began complaining openly before the Lord about hardship...⁴ The riffraff among them (I love that this was the technical word CSB translators used to translate the Hebrew word²—the actual Hebrew word **ahs-pes-OOF—riffraff**) had a strong craving for other food. The Israelites wept again and said, "Who will feed us meat?"⁵ We remember the free fish we ate in Egypt, along with the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic—and olives and the pastries and the scones. Man, we lived like kings back then!⁶ But now our appetite is gone; there's nothing to look at but this manna!"¹⁰ ...And Moses heard the people weeping throughout their clans, everyone at the door of his tent. And the anger of the Lord blazed hotly.

A couple of questions...

First: What is envy?

The **simplest definition of envy is wanting what you don't have**—feeling like what you have is not enough, that you deserve more—indeed **that you are owed more** by God.

Envy can start with discontent with what you have and turn quickly into resentment toward others who have the thing that you want.

1400's? Am I supposed to be like, "Oh, good thing it wasn't Error 1402!" Error 1404 is completely unhelpful.... it doesn't tell me what to do—Pretty much it means "You're toast. Whatever you were working on is gone." And so, I **stare at it for a few minutes** and then do the most sophisticated thing I know how to do on a computer: **REBOOT**. From **C.J. Mahaney**.

² <https://www.studylight.org/lexicons/hebrew/628.html>

- **Not only do you wish** that you had what they have, you hate them for having it.
- **Whereas the Bible tells us to rejoice with those who rejoice** and weep with those who weep, **envy is the opposite**: *envy weeps over those who are rejoicing and rejoices over those who are weeping.*
 - The Germans have a great word for this (it's one of my favorite German words) **Schadenfreude**. It literally means, "pain-joy." *Your pain brings me joy.*³
 - It always **reminds me of the story** I heard about how fisherman can put a bunch of crabs in a bucket, and none of them ever climb out, not because they can't, but because the moment one starts to climb out, the others pull him back...

Envy, like you see in this story, thrives off of COMPARISON—comparing your situation with someone else's. **I've heard those comparisons** described in **3 major categories**:

First there is... **Material Comparison***

- *He* posts a **picture of his truck**, and you used to like the car you had, but now you are mad because *you* want that truck.
- Or she posts a **picture of the brownies she just made**. But you're not really looking at her brownies; you're looking beyond her brownies, at her kitchen—at her countertops, and her perfect little cabinet pull knobs with the little inspirational quote on the chalkboard in the background of her perfect little kitchen, and you think, "*Oh, I hate her brownies.*"
- Or, maybe one of your friends posted that **perfect family picture from the beach again**, for the second time this month, and you can't even afford to go to the lake. (BTW, **I know that since this is Labor Day**—a lot of the ones I'm talking to are those who can't afford lake houses. We're the ones who are left.)

³ **Martin Luther**: "*Some people are not happy unless they see that their fellow man is doing poorly... they feel sad when others do well and would gladly lose one of their eyes to keep his neighbor from having any eyes at all.*"

Material comparison: *you are envious of the others' possessions. Or, it could be...*

Relational Comparison*

- You **see a post of all your friends, and again, you were not invited**. Or, even worse: Have you ever **seen yourself cropped out of a picture**? I have. You're like, "Hey, I was there. Wait! That's my shoulder!" They just cut me out!
- Or, maybe **you're not married**, and it seems like every other person you know is married—and you start to think thoughts you don't like, like, "I'm more attractive than him/her, or I'm a better person, why are they married and I am not?"
 - (BTW, there's **nothing wrong with grieving** that you're not married if you wanted to be, but then it turns to envy where you resent the other person for having it or feeling sorry for yourself that you don't)
- Or, you get one of **those Christmas cards** where their family just looks so perfect—all the kids are holding up cheesy little block letters spelling out their last name and everybody including the dog is wearing the same shirt, and they are in front of the quaint little barn that you know is not normally a part of their lives... And they **all look so perfect** and your family doesn't seem like that: (**If you were going to send out a Christmas card** it would be of everyone in the family strangling each other by the neck... and all of a sudden, you find yourself envious about someone else's relationships.)

Circumstantial Comparison*

- You just wish you **had someone else's situation** in life.
- *I wish my job had that kind of significance. Or gave me that kind of freedom.*

- If I can be honest, **sometimes I feel this...** because, like most of our campus staff members, I have to work all weekend long, Saturdays and Sundays. I don't even want to look at social media on the weekend, because **you're all showing pictures** like, "Hey, I'm at the football game!" "I'm at the lake!" I'm thinking, "Fine, I'll just serve God here at the church, while you all serve the devil. Have your little fun, and I'll just try to save the world by myself here on the weekends."⁴ Hey—I **didn't say envy was rational.**
- **Or maybe it is more serious: "I wish I could have a baby**—It seems like this is the 14th reveal party of the week for one of my friends—and I want to be happy for them but I can't even have a baby.

Sociologists say that envy seems to be a bigger problem for our generation that any before us, because social media seems designed to play on it!

- And here's why: when we look at other people's lives on social media, we are seeing a **filtered image**.
- **Or, as a friend of mine says it, "We're comparing our behind-the-scenes footage with other people's highlight reels. So, we feel like losers, because we see the best of their best, and we know the worst of our worst."**⁵ *
- You were **feeling great about the flowers and home-cooked dinner** your husband gave to you on your birthday until you see that one of your girlfriends' husbands bought her a pony and took her backpacking through Europe with the cast of Hamilton. They may be on the brink of divorce but it's all you get to see.
- I heard about **two moms who confessed to each other in a small group** how they had hated each other on social media. One was a **working mom**, and she was like, "I just hated you, because you're

the perfect, Pinterest, stay-at-home mom, who does crafts and structured time with her kids, and it made me feel so guilty." And the **stay-at-home mom** said, "I hated you, because you have a life, and you're out in public, and you're doing things. And I haven't had my hair in anything but a ponytail or had an adult conversation since 2015!" Here we have 2 people, longing for what the other person has based on a filtered presentation on social media.

- **And never before, in the history of the world, could** we so accurately **measure our popularity** compared to someone else's. When I was a kid, you **just had to kind of randomly guess** that you weren't popular. Now, you can measure it! "I've only got **214** followers, and she's got **442!** That means she's literally twice as popular as me!" Or, "My picture only got 17 likes, and the one before that only had 9, and my record is 33. And if she posts a picture of her toast in the morning, she gets at least 'triple digits' of likes!"
- **Researchers have demonstrated that the more we compare ourselves to others in social media**, the less satisfied we become. I heard about a study done at **2 college universities** where they had students spend **½ hour on Facebook** looking at random people who were in the same stage of life as them, and then surveyed their feelings after that ½ hour. They found that 1/3 of the students felt—this is the language they used—'**significantly depressed,**' and many more feeling more down than usual after just 30 min of monitoring what happens on Facebook or Instagram with their friends.
- **We ought to call it Envygram and In-your-Facebook**

Envy surrounds us—and **most of us don't realize the deadly poison envy is**. We think of envy as a kind of petty jealousy that just comes from wanting a little more. But the Bible **treats it as far more serious**.

⁴ Tim Keller coined the phrase "comparisonitis" in Tim Keller, "The Evil of Envy," preached at Redeemer Presbyterian Church on Nov 7, 2004. "3 kinds of envy" from

Craig Groeschel, "Contentment" part 1 in the *#Struggles* series, preached at Life Church in 2014.

⁵ Steven Furtick, quoted in Craig Groeschel, "Contentment."

- **Jonathan Edwards** said, “Never underestimate the spiritual power of envy.”*

The **English translation of vs. 6 is unfortunate**. The CSB says, “**our appetite is gone**.” Literally in Hebrew it is, “*our souls are dried up*.” And the word *soul* in Hebrew means *life force*. **Comparison and envy dried up their soul force**. Like Proverbs says it, **Prov 14:30**, “Envy rots (down to) **the bones**.”

Envy and comparison **rot us down to the bones, destroying our appetites** or our **ability really to enjoy anything**.

And so, **when you are envious, like the children of Israel**, you start to find fault with everything: “*This manna is terrible! It tastes nasty and I don’t even think it is good for us. It also makes our breath smell bad.”⁶*

- **Think about what our culture of envy** has done to our perception of our own beauty. We live in a culture whose preferred marketing strategy is getting you to envy others’ beauty, and the **result is that when we look in the mirror** we can’t enjoy what we see at all because we have in our mind what they are eating back in Egypt.

“Never underestimate the spiritual power of envy.”

- Martin Luther said that **God concluded the 10 Commandments with “thou shalt not covet” (envy) because** if you kept that one, you would keep all the others. The reason you lie, steal, commit adultery, even kill is usually because of envy (coveting).
- Look at how strongly James talks about it: 3:14–15, **14 But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your heart** (even if you are super spiritual), **don’t boast and deny the truth**. **15 Such wisdom does not come down from above but is earthly,**

⁶ Tim Keller, “Envy; The Case of Israel,” preached at Redeemer Presbyterian Church on Feb 26, 1995.

⁷ Numbers 10:11 says they left from Sinai “during the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth day of the month,” with the calendar beginning at Israel’s

unspiritual, demonic. ¹⁶ For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there is disorder and every evil practice.

- Envy is a **root sin** that gives rise to so many other sins.

Well, this has been encouraging, right? So, next question...

Where are the root causes of envy and how can we overcome them?

We can see **4 root causes** of envy in Numbers 11—and **recognizing these** will allow us to pull up envy by its roots!

1. Envy forgets God’s goodness poured out in the past

Vs. 1 is pretty **rich with audacity**: **11:1 Now the people began complaining openly before the Lord about hardship... Hardship?** They are less than 13 months out from **being slaves**.⁷

- And now **they are saying insane things like**, “*Yeah, but the food was awesome*.” “Sure, we ate it in chains, but the onions were exquisite!”

They seem **totally oblivious to where they would be had God not, in an act of sheer compassion**, intervened.

Furthermore, they seem oblivious to what that indicates about how God will take care of them in the past. **A God who saved them like that in the past will surely provide for them in their present!**

Envy stays unaware of what it actually deserves, and acts like God owes us much more than we have received.

exodus. They spent about a month journeying, and then spent roughly a year at Sinai. So, they are literally 13 months removed from being slaves.

- **Sometimes it is helpful to stop** and think about what we actually deserve. **When you are having a bad day**, remind yourself of where you should be—you should be under judgment, in hell. Instead, **you're a child of God** with his Spirit inside of you and a promised inheritance that cannot be taken away. All in all, a pretty good day.
- And **then reflect on the incredible kindness** of God in saving you, and the assurance that should come with that—that the God who has delivered us didn't do so only to let us perish. **Clearly, God has our good in mind.**
 - Think about it—at **this point, he has more invested in your life** than you do! He shed his blood for your future!
- And **so, again, we find ourselves again at Rom 8:32**, “He who did not spare his own Son for us...” **You know this!** But do you really believe it?
- The **cross proves** that “no good thing will he withhold” from his children?⁸

2. Envy overlooks God's goodness provided in the present*

Envy cripples your ability to enjoy the good things God *has* put in your life now—things that could bring you a lot of joy!

The Israelites said, **“All we have is this manna**, and if that's all we have, **we are going to shrivel up and die!”**

- Which **was an absolute lie**. In Deut 8, Moses says that during the whole 40 years in the wilderness their feet didn't swell (feet swelling back then was a sign of malnutrition). IOW, the manna really was enough.

Envy always assumes, **“If all I have is what God gives me, if I rely solely on him, it won't be enough. My soul is going to dry up!”**

- **But that is always a lie**. And, tragically, it keeps you from enjoying what God has given to you for your enjoyment.

Envy—at least a version of it—was a **key element at work in the Garden of Eden**. God told them that they could eat of literally every tree in the Garden **except one**. And they thought, “Well, I bet that is the best one!”

- **Tim Keller: “Envy will make you think something is wrong even in paradise!”** *
- And it **dries up** your soul, **taking away even your appetite** to enjoy things.
 - I was talking once with someone **who had some issues with throat and mouth cancer**, and they said, “One of the worst, unexpected things was losing my ability to taste—food no longer tasted good.” That's what envy does. It's a cancer that destroys your ability to enjoy anything.
- **For example, envy makes some of you unhappy in your marriage**, or your job.
- It's why **some of you are a generally critical** person—about everything, why you can find a flaw in anything. **That critical spirit** comes from a deep dissatisfaction that arises from *envy*.
- **It is why some of you are having a mid-life crisis when you're only in your early 20's!**
- It's **why** lurking in the back of your mind every time you look Facebook or Instagram, you are always thinking, *“I think others are enjoying something I'm missing out on.”*
- It's **why some of you are so picky** in dating; it's why some of you can never join a church—you're **picky, picky, picky**, because you **envy, envy, envy**.

Stop ignoring the check-engine light! You have got a **cancer** in your soul that is drying up your life force! **You start to “feel faint”** (another

⁸ Ps. 84:11

translation) in whatever you have and **like life requires more** for you to be really healthy—fully alive.

The happy life always seems like it is right over there, somehow, in that one tree God has not let you have yet.

- But it's a lie! **Go read the book of Ecclesiastes**. Then come back and tell me if *literally* being the richest, smartest, most powerful man in the world with the most girlfriends leads to happiness. (Hint: The answer is NO.)

3. Envy ignores God's goodness promised for the future

They seem to **forget that this whole situation is temporary**—God was sending them to a literal Promised Land that flowed with milk and honey (which is our way of saying 'abundant in bloomin' onions and cheescakes').

Let me acknowledge: There are some good things you might want that you miss out on for a few years, but those deprivations are on temporary.

- **Wealth;** or a **strong and beautiful body,** or **regular vacations** to Hawaii, may be some of those.
- **A great marriage, or a great family, might be one of those.**
 - In fact, **part of Paul's counsel** to those who are "unhappily single" is to reflect on how temporary the situation is. **In 1 Cor 7, he says, 1 Cor 7:29** *The appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none...*
 - Now, at first when you read that, you are like? **What?** This seems like the **favorite verse of people going to Vegas:** "Let those who have wives live as though they had none!"
 - **Let me assure you:** That's **not what Paul means**. Look at the next verse.
- **30** *For the present form of this world is passing away. And along with it, marriage and biological families.*

- So, he's saying, "You married people should reflect on the fact that your marriage is not ultimate or permanent.
- And you single people should reflect on the fact that your situation is not permanent either. **Both situations are light and momentary,** and soon they will give way to **WHAT IS permanent and ultimate:** Christ, the church and eternity!
- And on that day, none of us will suffer lack!
 - **Ps 17:15,** As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness; when I awake, I shall be satisfied with your likeness. None of us are going to feel like we are missing anything!
 - **Ps 16:11,** In your presence is fullness of joy, and at your right hand are pleasures forevermore! (Expound)
 - **1 Cor 2:9,** But as it is written, 'What no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no human heart has conceived'—God has prepared these things for those who love him. **It literally can't be described,** and if **somehow I could describe it to you,** you wouldn't believe it! It would be like telling you about a square-circle or a 4-sided Triangle.
- **And, because of that knowledge of what is coming,** I can be content with the impartial blessings I have now, even when there's a bunch more I want that I don't have yet. Because **these small blessings point to something far greater** I will soon receive—in a **Promised Land flowing** with milk and honey!
 - **Alert: Nerd story.** **JRR Tolkien and Lewis** were friends. Tolkien led Lewis to Jesus at Oxford. But Tolkien soon became envious of Lewis: "Tolkien envied Lewis. They discussed writing the kind of novels they wanted to read. And **Lewis churned out novel after novel, while Tolkien was stuck on one book** (*Lord of the Rings*). He kept on writing and re-writing chapters because nothing was ever as good as what he aspired to. He **got so frustrated** with his lack of progress compared to Lewis that he got writer's block and stopped working on *TLTR* completely. And **then one night he had a dream. When he woke up he wrote the dream down into a story. And after that he was ok.** The story's called *Leaf by Niggle*. (It's a

curious little story). Niggle was an artist commissioned by his town to make a mural. But after years, he had only worked on a leaf. And after years, he died. And he was on a train to paradise... Before him stood the tree, finished.⁹ And **Tolkien realized that in this was a picture of his life.** All of us get to taste only a little bit of the world to come. Some of us **get more** than others. But eventually we're all going to get the whole tree. So, **when all we feel like we have is a leaf, look toward heaven and think about the day you'll have the full tree!**

The point is, our knowledge of what is coming in the future can help keep us content here when there's some blessing I want but don't have yet.

- Or, as **Jen Wilkin** says it: *"Those who know good awaits them in heaven can be content with having little on earth."**
- **BTW**, realizing this was **what freed Tolkien of his writer's block.** He was able to be **free of the pressure of feeling** like everything had to be perfect, and his "appetite came back," so to speak, and he finished Lord of the Rings, inglorious Orcs and all!
- **BTW, if LOTR was only the leaf, I can't wait to see the whole story! And all God's nerds said, "Amen!"**

Lastly,

4. Envy doubts God's goodness expressed through his guidance*

God had a purpose for his people even in the wilderness—it was part of his plan to make them into his special people.

In the wilderness, he was teaching them things about faith that were far more valuable than garlic and onions. And **his presence was with them** every step of the way—keeping them from famine, war, and the diseases of Egypt.

But **envy kept them from seeing that or believing** it. Instead, they saw themselves as **alone, abandoned, and deprived** of the really good stuff in life.

In 1 Cor 10, the Apostle Paul references this story and says the root cause of their envy was idolatry,¹⁰ and **at first that may be confusing.** You might say, **"Idolatry?"** I don't see any little gold statues they are bowing down to. Idolatry is when you love and crave something more than God—when you **think that something beyond God and his play is more** necessary for the good life.

You see, **according to Jesus in John 6, HE** was symbolized in **the manna.** In despising the manna, in saying it was not enough, they were despising him and saying *he* was not enough.

What they always had, and what we always have, in every situation, was the ever-present fellowship with Jesus, the knowledge of his love, and the assurance of his promises, and that is supposed to be enough. If we had to **choose between him and garlicks and onions**, take him!

Knowing him is the essence of the happy and abundant life. Knowing him is what keeps our souls from drying up and making them really come alive!

Soren Kierkegaard in his book *Sickness unto Death* says that envy arises out of worship. If you want to understand what you worship,

⁹ From Tim Keller, "The Evil of Envy," preached at Redeemer Presbyterian Church on Nov 7, 2004.

¹⁰ 1 Cor 10:14

follow your envies. You envy those people who have the thing you most worship.

- **If you love popularity and prestige**, you are envious of those who have more friends and influence than you.
- If you love **thinking of yourself as the perfect mom and homemaker**—if that is where you find your worth and identity—you envy other mothers who seem to be doing it better.
- **If you worship the idea of being happily married**—or having a boyfriend and being in love—you feel envious of those who have one, or you are always on the lookout for those whose relationships seem better than yours.
- **If you idolize family stability**, you are envious of those who look like they have better family dynamics than you.

Follow the smoke trail of your envies down to the fires you've built at your altars of worship, because that's where the real problem is! That's the only place to correct the problem. It's like **Paul Tripp** says, "If you worshipped your way into envy; you have to worship your way out."

- **Bob Roberts, Jr.:** (They moved... but 2 years later, the church hadn't grown; money wasn't great. I was walking in a pasture behind my house one day.) A pastor not far from me had had **affairs with 5 women** and got fired. Another guy north of me had a megachurch, but he was going to jail for embezzlement. I told God, "God, come on. I've got my pants on. I've got my hands out of the offering plate. You've got these guys over here doing all this stuff. Why aren't you blessing me?"¹¹ *"All of a sudden, this little question came to my mind: When will Jesus be enough for you? Sometimes, I think that's when I became a Christian. I just began to weep, because I realized he hadn't been enough for me. I was miserable because of our attendance the day before. But, I mean, if I've got the Holy Spirit, if I've got the Word of God, why can't I be*

content? Why is my joy based on having to grow my church as big as someone else's?"

- **Here's the question:** When is Jesus going to be enough for you?

MUSIC

I love how Paul wrestled with this—in a passage we looked at the other day when we were talking about anxiety: **Phil 4:11–19**, "I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. (notice the word 'learned.' It wasn't instinctive. He didn't get it by being a super Apostle. He had to *learn* it.)¹² I (now) know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have **learned** the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.¹³ I can do all things through him who strengthens me." And I know, he says in vs. 19, that my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

- *Now, keep in mind that Paul wrote this from prison. He's under house arrest, chained to a Roman guard 24 hours a day. Put it this way: He's not on the beach, drinking a little drink with an umbrella in it. He's not living his best life now.*
- But he says, "I've learned to be content with a little, with a lot... *I can do all things through him who strengthens me.*"
- Contrary to popular opinion, this is **not supposed to be the athlete's verse**...
- The key phrase is **through him**. In him, because he is the real Manna, I need, I have enough.
- The secret to contentment is **not** being thankful for the little you have; the secret to contentment is seeing how **much** you have **really been given**.^{*} How rich a treasure we possess in Jesus Christ our Lord!

¹¹ *Christianity Today* article, "Glocal Church Ministry." July, 2007.

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/july/30.42.html>

Feast on Jesus, the true manna! Knowing him—I promise you—is what your soul craves.

Think about it: On the cross, Jesus lived out the opposite of envy. Rather than being resentful of our joy, he was broken over our bondage. And he gave up his good things so we could be saved. Has anyone or anything else ever demonstrated that kind of love and commitment to you?

He is the true manna. Your hunger will cease to be *overpowering only when you feast on him!*

Conclusion

As with all of these problems, we start out thinking our jealousy is a problem between us and other people ... but it's **really a grudge against God.**

- Do you **really believe** in his goodness? You want these things more than you want God!
- Can you **release yourself** to it—all the way?

