

YOKEFELLOW



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From The Director ENVYINGS (II)



EXAMPLES OF ENVYINGS

The Word of God is replete with examples of those who were envious, and of those who were injured, persecuted, and/or murdered by envy's deadly fangs. Not only does God warn us of the cruel sin of envy, but He also gives vivid, powerful illustrations of its folly and fatality, thereby leaving the envious absolutely without excuse (Rom. 1:20). Everyone should take heed, for "Envy is common to all – to sinners and saints, Christians and heathens – and to all generations."²⁸

"Envy has a long and ugly criminal record,"²⁹ and the following examples should be earnestly, soberly, and seriously contemplated if we would avoid envy in our hearts and its bitter, evil, fatal fruits in our lives.

1. Cain's heart was filled with envy when his brother's animal sacrifice, offered by faith (Heb. 11:4; Rom. 10:17), was accepted, and his own offering "of the fruit of the ground," (not what God commanded, not by faith) was rejected. Moved with envy, "Cain rose up against his brother, and slew him" (Gen. 4:1-11); Cain now had to spend his life as a "fugitive and a vagabond," away from the presence of God (4:14, 16).

2. The Philistines in Canaan had filled with dirt all of the wells which the servants of Abraham had dug (Gen. 26:15). But, God continued to bless Isaac as He had Isaac's father Abraham; "and the Lord blessed him" (26:12). "And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great: For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants: and the Philistines envied him" (26:13-14). God made room for Isaac elsewhere when the Philistines' envy kept frustrating his purposes (26:18-22).

3. Rachel, when she "saw that she bare Jacob no children,...envied her sister" [Leah, whose womb the Lord opened because she "was hated" (Gen. 29:31), and she bare four sons (29:32-35)]; and said unto Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die" (30:1).

4. Joseph's own brothers "envied him" (Gen. 37:11). Because Israel loved Joseph more than he did the other sons, and because "he made him a coat of many colours....they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him" (37:4-5). These feelings intensified when "Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren" (37:5). The brethren resented the fact that they would, along with his

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Co-Editor's Column IS THERE NOT A CAUSE? (IV)

Garland Elkins



WHEN WE PLEAD FOR PURITY OF LIFE, WE HAVE A CAUSE

The church and every individual member must keep "unspotted from the world" (Jam. 1:27). Paul wrote to the church in Rome,

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God (Rom. 12:1-2).

It is crucial for us to remember that:

...denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Tit. 2:12-14).

John wrote,

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever (1 John 2:15-17).

In our alluring, comfortable, and affluent society, Christians must remember Paul's admonition to the church at Philippi:

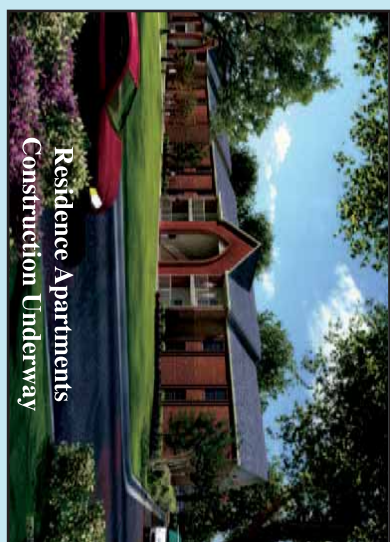
...that ye may become blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life; that I may have whereof to glory in the day of Christ, that I did not run in vain neither labor in vain (Phi. 2:15-16).

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

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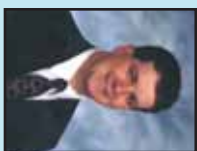
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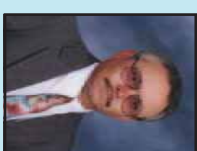
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(ELKINS: Continued from Page 1)

It is sad but true that the nation, and, unfortunately, the church in many places, are moving more and more recklessly away from God, on the way to the terrible place called hell (Rev. 20:12-15; 21:8). Unbelief and all types of glaring immorality are taking an alarming toll, and have produced many apologists both within and without the church for unscriptural divorces, social drinking, social dancing, profanity, gambling, pornography, immodesty, etc.

The answer to all of the compromise is to become a Christian (John 3:5), and live the Christian life (Col. 3:1-4; Rev. 2:10). If we think right (Phi. 4:8-9), we will save both ourselves and those that hear us (1 Tim. 4:16). Let us remember that we are known and read of all men (2 Cor. 3:2).

WHEN WE PLEAD FOR ALL MEMBERS TO BUILD UP THE CHURCH, WE HAVE A CAUSE

The church has the greatest mission of any institution on earth. Paul says that the church is to “edify itself in love” (Eph. 4:12-16). We are to follow after “things whereby we may edify one another” (Rom. 14:19). It is the duty of the church to build up the church to the end that every member of every congregation be given opportunity to be saved.

WHEN WE PLEAD FOR ALL CHRISTIANS TO “SEEK AND SAVE THE LOST,” WE HAVE A CAUSE

The church must practice benevolence toward the Christian and the non-Christian (Gal. 1:1; 6:10). The church must edify itself, and every member is obligated to participate in this. However, everything we do, both as the entire church and the individual, must be done with the view to the saving of souls. Christ healed the sick and fed many of the hungry multitudes, but His major mission was to teach and to save the lost, and He never forgot this mission (Luke 19:10; John 4:32).

WHEN WE DEFEND “THE CAUSE,” WE HAVE A CAUSE

We must be “set for the defense of the gospel” (Phi. 1:17). We are to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). We must put on the whole armor of God, and a part of that armor is the “sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph. 6:17). With this word, we are to repel all attacks against the truth and oppose all false doctrines. We are to make sure that we are busy “casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5).

THERE IS A CAUSE, AND LET US NEVER FORGET IT.

WHAT DOES MSOP TEACH?

Memphis School of Preaching teaches the Word of God just as when it began in 1966. The Bible has not changed, nor has the School’s teaching of it. The godly elders of the Forest Hill Church of Christ, under whose oversight MSOP operates, have not changed their beliefs. Curtis A. Cates, holds to the same scriptural course as was originally determined for the School--and has done so, unwaveringly, for 22 years as Director. The faculty consistently and faithfully teaches the same Truth as did the original faculty.

MSOP does not seek to hide what we teach, for we are not ashamed, nor are we afraid to speak plainly that we take our stand on the Word of God. Our intent is to “Speak where the Bible speaks, and to remain silent where the Bible is silent.” We make no apologies for doing so.

We are thankful that good, faithful brethren are not deceived by malicious, ungodly attacks against MSOP, nor mislead by talebearers, but have continued to encourage and support this work. We could not do it without you, dear brethren. We beseech all to pray for us, and for the spread of the Gospel. Should you ever wonder what we teach, call or write. We will be glad to tell you.

(CATES: Continued from Page 1)

parents, “bow down themselves” to Joseph (37:10). Their envy caused the brothers to “conspire against him to slay him” (37:18). However, Reuben “delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him” (37:21-22). Instead, they sold him as a slave to the Ishmeelites, into Egypt (37:25-28).

They lied, to deceive their father, that the wild animals had killed Joseph, causing Jacob to go into a deep state of mourning; “he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him” (37:29-35). Noel Merideth perceptively observed,

But in the end a perilous famine forced them to recognize Joseph’s superiority. Their envy impoverished their lives, but the intended harm to Joseph never came. Envy is a boomerang-like weapon which hurts the attacker more than the attacked.³⁰

Stephen recounted these events, stating, “And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him, And delivered him out of all his afflictions and gave him favor and wisdom...” (Acts 7:9-10).

5. “Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses” because of envy, saying, “Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? Hath he not spoken also by us? And the Lord heard it” (Num.12:1-2). They were envious of Moses’ standing and authority before God, thus, God asked them, “wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?” (12:8). Miriam was stricken with leprosy, as the result of God’s righteous indignation (12:9-15).

6. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram were envious of Moses and Aaron; “they gathered themselves against Moses and against Aaron, and said, Ye take too much upon you...” (Gen. 16:1-4). They were also accompanied by 250 “men of renown.” Moses stated that their rebellion was “against the Lord” (16:11). “They envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the Lord” (Psm. 106:16). “This is that Dathan and Abiram, which were famous in the congregation, who strove against Moses and against Aaron in the company of Korah, when they strove against the Lord” (Num. 26:9). What was the result? “...the ground clave asunder that was under them: And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up...and they perished from among the congregation” (16:31-33). “And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, what time the fire devoured two hundred fifty men: and they became a sign” (26:10; cf. Psm. 106:17-18). See Jude 11.

7. Saul, the king of Israel, envied David when the women said:

Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands. And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom? And Saul eyed David from that day and forward (1 Sam. 18:7-9).

David and Jonathan loved each other as their own souls, and

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David had been even set by Saul “over all of the men of war,” and successfully fought Saul’s battles; i.e., “the slaughter of the Philistines” (18:1-6). Saul tried multiple times to kill David (18:10-11). The Lord departed from Saul, but was with David (18:12-14). In the face of great jealousy and envy against him, David “behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul” (18:14, 30). Saul even tried to persuade his son Jonathan and all his servants “that they should kill David” (19:1). David finally fled from Saul (20:1). Upon Jonathan’s defense of David, his father “cast a javelin at him to smite him” (20:31-33); he warned David again of his father, and David fled again (20:34-42).

8. The presidents and princes, who served under Daniel, because of envy, “sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful” (Dan. 6:1-3). They then set a trap and made false accusations against Daniel (6:5-13). However, Daniel was delivered by God from the den of lions, and his lying, envious enemies were killed by the lions (6:14-24).

9. Haman, upon being invited to Queen Esther’s banquet, went “forth that day joyful and with a glad heart: but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king’s gate, that he stood not up, nor moved for him, he was full of indignation against Mordecai.” That ate on Haman’s mind, and he told his wife and friends that the invitation to be with the king and Esther at the banquet “availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king’s gate” (Esth. 5:8-9, 13). His wife and friends suggested Haman build a gallows on which Mordecai would be hanged, “And the thing pleased Haman; and he caused the gallows to be made” (5:14). The root of the envy, to kill Mordecai because he “bowed not, nor did him reverence,” caused Haman to seek “to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom,” because Mordecai was a Jew (3:5-6). However, through the providence of God, “they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai” (7:10); and, not only were the Jews saved from the death decree of the “wicked Haman,” their “adversary and enemy” (7:6), but “many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them” (8:17).

10. Judas for envy betrayed the Lord to the Jews with a kiss (Luke 22:47-48). He was even Christ’s “own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, [who] hath lifted up his heel against me” (Psa. 41:9). To attempt to cover his real character and motives, Judas asked why the spikenard [a costly perfume] used by Mary to anoint the feet of Jesus “was not...sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein” (John 12:1-6). This selfsame wretch, “having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons” to the Garden of Gethsemane, and there he treacherously and wilfully turned the innocent Master over to His enemies (John 18:3).

11. The Jews and the Romans united to crucify Christ, as was prophesied by David a thousand years earlier: “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us” (Psa. 2:1-3). Inspiration is very clear; “for envy they had delivered him” (Mat. 27:18; Mark 15:10). The only perfect accountable Person ever to walk this earth--and, He was brutally murdered for envy! Truly, this is a very sad example of the observation by brother Powell thus, “Envy begets strife, strife begets hate, and hate begets murder.”³¹

The leaders of the Jews were jealous of the miracle-worker who had swayed the crowds and

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had robbed them of attention and status. His popularity had filled them with raging envy, and they plotted craftily to get him out of their way. Jesus knew what it meant to be the object of envy, but he never retaliated. He could even say on the cross, “Father, forgive them” (Luke 23:34).³²

Indeed, the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem only increased the envy and hatred. “And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine” (Mark 11:18). However, try as they might [influenced by Satan, the archenemy of God and man, and who tried all through the ages to thwart the eternal purpose of God to save the penitent obedient in the church (Eph. 3:10, 11)], as Judas was likewise influenced (John 13:27), to destroy the scheme of redemption, everything was going according to plan, according to “the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, when they took and “by wicked hands” crucified and murdered Him, “Whom God raised up” from the dead the third day (Rom. 1:4), and made Him “Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:23-24, 36), “by the right hand of God exalted” (2:33). Indeed David was correct when he prophesied, “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision” (Psa. 2:4).

12. Saul of Tarsus, before he was converted to Christ and while persecuting Christ and His church--murdering Christians, was motivated by envy, among other sins. “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another” (Tit. 3:3). He was “breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord” (Acts 9:1), but, he was able to obtain mercy and forgiveness through God’s grace (Tit. 3:4-7).

13. The early church, including the church at Corinth, at times experienced the problem of envy. They preferred one preacher above another, demonstrating a factious and divisive spirit. Paul soundly and summarily rebuked them for this carnal attitude; they were all to:

speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? (1 Cor. 1:10-13).

Some preachers in the first century church did “indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife...of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel” (Phi. 1:15-17).

(CONTINUED NEXT MONTH)