

Second Tuesday
MANAGING YOUR MOODS
Session #4 The Green-Eyed Monster

“Wrath is cruel and anger a torrent, but who is able to stand before jealousy?”
Proverbs 27:4

What is jealousy? How are jealousy and envy alike?

What do you think of the expression, the grass is greener in somebody else’s yard?

Even though children are all different from one another, they are very concerned with equality. If one chooses red for his or her new jacket, they all want red jackets. We can track years in the photo albums by what color jacket our kids are wearing. “Oh yes, that the year they all had blue polar fleece.” If one child receives an apple, they all expect apples. Pies and pizzas must be divided with precision, so no one has a bigger piece than anyone else. The worst complaint they can bring against each other is inevitably accompanied by the resentful wail, “It’s not fair.” Though it’s a relief that the kids can usually agree on what’s fair, I know very well the root of their obsession is not a desire for justice, far from it. They’re nitpicking and weighing and comparing everything that comes their way because they are greedy at heart and jealous of one another. It sounds terrible, but it’s just part of their nature as children.

Jealousy—it’s the green eyed monster. Solomon says, “Anger is cruel, and wrath is like a flood, but who can survive the destructiveness of jealousy?” it’s an emotion that doesn’t fade away when we grow up. We still have a tendency to wail. “It’s not fair.” When life doesn’t give us what we think we deserve. Even Christians are susceptible to pangs of jealousy. We are green with envy when it seems God has blessed other people more than we have been blessed. We resent this one’s bigger house or that one’s new car. We wonder why some women are so wise, poised, and articulate. This one is pretty. That one has the perfect career. This one has such polite children. That one has so many friends. Women who have to work are envious of women who are able to stay at home with their kids. Women who stay home are jealous of women who have satisfying careers. Women who don’t have children are jealous of the mothers with their babies, and mothers with big

broods cast longing eyes at the woman who is free to do what she likes. Such foolishness!

Patsy Clairmont: *I've learned that when I don't enter into my friends' successes with joy, it's usually because I'm jealous. Ouch. . . that's painful to confess . . . even to myself. Jealousy is like a spider's web. It's difficult to see its slender fibers, easy to get entangled in, and hard to brush off.*

1. Envy is like a disease. How does Solomon say it affects us in **Proverbs 14:30**?

2. Jealousy brings with it other emotions. . . envy, resentment, bitterness, coverousness. When these forms of jealousy overtake our hearts, it shows itself in subtle, and not so subtle ways.

Why is greed sometimes difficult to discover, according to **Luke 11:39**?

What does **Psalms 101:5** say comes out of the mouth?

And what speech is spoken of in **Proverbs 25:23**?

Greed and envy become the habit of a heart. How does Peter describe such a one in **2 Peter 2:14**?

3. Covetousness 'kə-və-təs, cov-et-ous-ness is such a danger to our hearts that God included it in the Ten Commandments. "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's ewife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's" (Ex 20:17) What are some of the consequences of covetousness, according to **Proverbs 15:27** and **Habakkuk 2:9**?

4. And, just what does God's Word tell us to do? Solomon says, "The righteous gives and does not spare" (Prov 21:26). How does this giving attitude play itself out, according to **1 Corinthians 10:24** and **Philippians 2:4**?

In the Christian walk, we are told to love one another. Jesus, Paul, Peter, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and James. They all say the same thing. "I did not come to be served, but to serve." "Love your neighbor as yourself." "Consider one another." "Giving preference to one another." It's all so incredibly noble.

But at some point, doesn't it all just sound like lip service? Don't you ever have the urge to shout, "Hey! What about me? How do I know my needs will be taken care of?" If we're spending so much time being self-sacrificing, won't people just walk all over us? Won't we be taken for granted? No one else in the house seems to be grateful that toilet paper rolls are changed, empty ice cube trays are filled, and clean socks magically appear in dresser drawers. Who else refills the copier machine, replenishes dwindling office supplies, and empties the trash?

It's only after I've exhausted myself with indignation over how much I do that I realize something: Everyone feels this way. We all believe our efforts go unnoticed. And that's when I pray, *Oh God, give me a servant's heart. Because I want to be like you. And I know you see, even when no one else does.*

6. You have to love Martha! Here's a woman who wasn't afraid to march into a room full of people (Who were just sitting around until supper was ready) and give voice to the feeling I often find in my heart. "Hey! What about me? What does she say to Jesus in **Luke 10:40**?

7. Right up there with "What about me?" is the related query, "Hey! What about her?" Who asks that question in **John 21:21**, and how does Jesus wisely answer it in verse **John 21:22**?

Luci Swindoll: *I recall times of jealousy toward those closest to me, hating it in myself but seemingly unable to rise above it. I would pout, walk out, ignore, speak out of turn—in short, act like a petulant child.*

8. We should never allow that green-eyed monster of jealousy to cause our eyes to wander from the task God has set before us. We each must answer for ourselves before the Lord. What does Paul say about this in **1 Corinthians 3:8**?

Luci Swindoll: *I am a very human being. Each of us carries within us falshood, self-centeredness, cowardice, and the capacity to do unbelievably unkind things to others.*

9. Let's not compare. Let's not covet. Let's not set up a wail of "It's not fair!" You will be rewarded according to your own labor. Let's leave the decision about what's fair to the Lord. What does Paul say in **Galatians 6:4 and 5**?

TRINKET TO TREASURE: At the close of each session, a gift will be placed in your hand to serve as a reminder of the things we have learned through scripture and our time together. It will be a small token to keep us from forgetting the faith journey we are traveling.

Closing prayer together: Heavenly Father, help us to root out the green-eyed monster from our hearts. If "What about me" has been a prominent part of our moods lately, remind us that in the end we will only have to answer to the Lord, just like everyone else. We pray for your help to quench the urge to compare, and we ask for a generous spirit so that we may be good servants.