

Women & More

Jealous For Us

March 7, 2013

The quickest and surest way to lose anything or anyone is to put it ahead of God! God is 'jealous' for our affection, attention and adoration. Be sure, if we do not give Him rightful place in our lives, we will suffer for it. Exodus 34:14 says, "Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God." And this attribute of God will keep his people from spiritual adultery, and it will not allow the world to rape them. God is 'right' righteous in His jealousy for us. J. I. Packer in *Knowing God*, said, "God's people should be positively and passionately devoted to His person, His cause and His honor."

'Jealous' is His name!

Just *what* is this 'Jealous One' jealous for us about? **Genesis has the answer!**

1. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" —**for us.**
2. God said, "Let there be light" —**for us.**
3. God separated the light from the darkness—**for us.**
4. God placed an expanse between the waters to separate water from water—**for us.**
5. God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear" —**for us.**
6. He said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." He made all of these to be food—**for us.**
7. He said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years" —**for us.**
8. God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night, and He made the stars—**for us.**
9. God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky" —**for us.**
10. God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind" —**for us.**

Genesis 2:8 "Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed." So after God had created this plentiful and palatial place, He created the ones He had planned 'place' **for**—man and woman in His very image: Genesis 1:27-28 "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'"

So, our planning God made ‘place’ for us—humankind—first, and then He placed us in that perfect place! And He gave us ‘rule’ over all the animals and birds and fish He’d made. He further planned for man and woman to have life at its ‘best’, with uninterrupted and unending intimate fellowship and friendship with Him. And for our best and for our protection from evil and the Evil one, He gave a command: Do not eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil! But what did we do with all that God planned **for us** and His command to us? We became discontent with His ‘place’ for us and we ignored His warning; we transgressed—sinned—against Him. And so, God, **whose Name is ‘Jealous’**... would carry forth His plan to redeem us through His Son:

- I. He would guard those plans He had **for us** (Jeremiah 29:11); and
- II. He would grieve when we rejected His plans; and then
- III. He would send trial and tribulation to ‘call’ us back into His plans!
- IV. Though He would never leave us, He would ‘leave-us-alone’ if we persisted in rejecting His plans, and
- V. He would be faithful to come near us (James 4:8) as we come near to Him, and would forgive us our sins when we asked Him!

God would be ‘jealous’ for the relationship He created—between Himself and man—He would guard it **zealously**; and He would have righteous anger toward the one who lured us away, but God would give us choice. Packer asked the question we’d like to ask: **How can jealousy be a virtue in God when it is a vice in man?** To address that at all, we must keep uppermost in our renewed-by-Christ minds that we cannot and must not compare God and His wonderful ways, to our wandering, wanton ways. We must remember that while God is jealous **for** us—for our best; for His glory—our jealousy is usually **of** someone.

The only jealousy in man that God allows for is spousal fidelity! The bride praises her ‘Beloved’ in **Song of Songs 8:6** *“Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame.”* In Scripture, a loving husband is pictured as rightly jealous for **his own wife**—for her fidelity to him—and God guards the fidelity of those who are His by faith in Christ; those who love Him!

God’s anger and God’s jealousy are always right—righteous! A definition of ‘righteous’: God always does the right thing at the right time and in the right way, because He is Righteousness Personified! But of us, Ecclesiastes 7:20 says, *“There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins.”* Exodus 20:5 (from the Ten Commandments) *“You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations, of those who love me and keep my commandments.”*

In Ezekiel 16:38, 42, God gave an allegory of unfaithful Jerusalem, warning what it would take to appease His righteous, divine jealousy: *“I will sentence you to the punishment of women who commit adultery and who shed blood; I will bring upon you **the blood vengeance of my wrath and jealous anger.** 42...Then my wrath against you will subside and my jealous anger will turn away from you; I will be calm and no longer angry.”*

Man’s anger and jealousy—how bad can it be? Again, Genesis holds the answer, and in 3:24 tells us that because of Adam and Eve’s sin, God drove them out of the Garden of Eden, to work the ground from which they had been taken. He placed on the east side of the garden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. Even in this act, **God’s matchless mercy was in effect:** Had Adam and Eve returned to the garden and eaten the fruit from the tree of life, they would have lived forever in their now ‘sinful’ condition! God was ‘jealous’ for them in this, not allowing them to return to commit to that terrible and tragic and eternally toxic end!

Chapter 4 of Genesis in the NIV is titled: **Cain and Abel.** Verse 1—*“Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, ‘With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man.’ 2Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.*

*“Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. 3In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. 4But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. **The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering,** 5but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.”* This is called jealous anger, and Cain had it. We will fight for his right to have it, but God knew Cain’s heart! Therefore, God knew out of what heart Abel’s offering was brought, and out of what heart Cain’s offering was brought to Him. God judges the thoughts and intents of the heart Scripture says—and He has a ‘right’ to do so: He is Righteous!

To this point we have an angry and jealous man, but what Cain would act out will prove his unrighteousness: Proverbs 27:4 says, *“Anger is cruel and fury overwhelming, but **who can stand before jealousy?**”* Genesis 4:8 records: *“Now Cain said to his brother Abel, ‘Let’s go out to the field.’ And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and **killed him.**”* The very first homicide—and of a very own family member—is the act that poured out of Cain’s jealous anger! Amazingly, the sinful nature of human beings will demand a reason—“Why God,” we would ask, as if the Almighty had any obligation to answer us: “What offering did Cain bring that was so bad? Why did You favor Abel’s offering and not Cain’s, too? Is that fair, God?” **If we are not so very careful, we will tread where Cain did!** Before the killing act, God extended every mercy to Cain. In Genesis 4:6-7 *“Then the LORD said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? 7**If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.**”*

Our Father who was ‘jealous’ for Cain to do the right thing and be accepted gave him loving warning: sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it (Remember Jesus warned Peter?). And God speaks that warning to us every day, through His word, through His Spirit, through sermons and lessons and other believers, and if we listen and heed and exercise self-control and master it, we escape discipline and disaster. But if we ignore the warning and deny the discipline—or even God’s right to it—then we will invite God’s just judgment upon our chosen act, as did Cain. Genesis 4:10-12 *“The LORD said, ‘What have you done? Listen! **Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground.** 11Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. 12When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.’”*

The conversation continued because Cain pled with the LORD: *“My punishment is more than I can bear. 14Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.”* Think of it: these are words Abel could have spoken to Cain, begging him for mercy. But Cain did not extend the mercy to his brother that he begged from God. Did God show mercy to Cain? Yes. He marked Cain, Scripture says, so that no one who found him would kill him. But verse 16 ends sadly: *“So Cain went out from the LORD’s presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.”* Did Cain know the LORD? We don’t know for sure one way or the other, but there’s a clue in verse 14: Cain spoke about all the awful things that would happen to him and said, *‘I will be hidden from your presence.’* Cain understood that being out of God’s presence would be terrible. See, the worst thing about hell—only a believer could consider—is being eternally out of the presence of God. **The godless will not miss God’s presence**, since he’s not known it or chosen it!

♥“If you are a true follower of Jesus Christ, I bet you sometimes feel like God is picking on you,” said Beth Moore. “Have you ever exclaimed in exasperation, ‘God never lets me get away with anything?’” Know that as our Father, He is bound-by-Himself—in His jealousy **for us**—to keep us from willful sin, to keep us from the fowler’s snare, to keep us in the sheepfold, to keep us in loving relationships with other believers, to keep us following Him, obeying Him, and honoring Him above all else. And because of God’s faithfulness to us, He warns us, and if we do not heed His warning, He disciplines us. **God’s discipline in our lives is proof that we are His children!** Hebrews 12:5-6 quotes Proverbs 3:11-12: *“My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.”* And in Revelation 3:19 He reiterated to the Church in Laodicea: *“Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent.”* And He placed this verse just before **3:20**—wow!

We are all just 1 phone call from catastrophe; 1 day from disaster, and 1 breath from death! And the father of lies can't wait for us to fall for his latest 'lie'—whatever it is on that day. And if we think that we are above being deceived by the Deceiver—look again at his work: At noon on a March Friday, Dr. Phil had 2 women on his show—one 58 year old weighing 62 pounds, and the other just 22 years at 63 shriveling pounds. They were skeletons waiting to die, and when they were sitting next to each other on the stage he asked first one and then the other: “How does she look to you?” Remarkably each woman responded: “She looks thinner than me.” And they were only one puny pound apart!

They both claimed to feel bloated; are still searching for their perfect weight, and the younger one was concerned that she would look 10 pounds heavier in front of the cameras. Look at the 'lie' that Satan has sold these precious ladies! It's unbelievable, and, yet, we can believe it: the premier Liar and the father of 'lies' has lied to them. He's been doing it for years. It's a lie they were inclined to, yes, because they had both shared a feeling of not having control before, and now it's all about 'control'—going their own way, however deceived, and doing it their own way (which is actually Satan's way) even if it's killing them!

Someone said: **Whatever occupies our mind the most becomes our god.** God is angered and made 'jealous'—righteously—when His children buy and believe any of Satan's lies: Psalm 97:9-10 *“For you, O LORD, are the Most High over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods. 10Let those who love the LORD hate evil, for he guards the lives of his faithful ones and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.”* Hebrews 9:24 tells us that Jesus appears in the presence of God **for** us!

► Deuteronomy 32:16-18 *“They made him jealous with their foreign gods and angered him with their detestable idols. 17They sacrificed to demons, which are not God—gods they had not known, gods that recently appeared, gods your fathers did not fear. 18You deserted the Rock, who fathered you; you forgot the God who gave you birth.”* Psalm 78:58 *“They angered him with their high places; they aroused his jealousy with their idols.”* Isaiah 30:1 *“Woe to the obstinate children,” declares the LORD, ‘to those who carry out plans that are not mine, forming an alliance, but not by my Spirit, heaping sin upon sin.’”*

1 Corinthians 10:21-22 *“You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too: you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. 22Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he?”* God wants us to be saved; to stay the course; to keep on keeping on; to lean on Jesus; to trust Him implicitly, and to be all that He created us to be. Moore asks, “Have you ever noticed that God seems particularly jealous with you?” And Bishop Francois Fenelon answers, “He is a jealous God, and He wants you to understand that what He is about to perform in you has been done by Himself alone, and by no other!”