Devotion #287

**Jealous Hearts**

**James 3:16 (NASB)** *“For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.”*

Hollywood has made a living off of television and movies and soap operas by creating scenarios where jealousy is at the root of the story. How many times have we been thrust into a movie or television scene where someone is jealous over another person? And it is usually over a relationship or a possession.

But it’s not just Hollywood. Just this week I was talking with someone who has learned some things from family that caused this person to feel bad about themselves and their relationship with the rest of the family. Certain things were revealed from the family that hurt the person. And it all centered on jealousy. One said this and the other said that, but in the end it was all about what someone had that the other one didn’t, etc. You know how that goes.

The truth is that our sinfulness often wants what someone else has. That’s why the Lord was so clear when He said that we are not to covet anything that belongs to someone else. (Exodus 20:17) James lets us know that our sinful tendencies come from the way we think about things. If you read the previous verses in James 3 you will see this. **James 3:13-15 (NASB)** *“Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic*.” Basically the Lord is clarifying where jealousy toward someone originates. It comes from our natural minds, minds that are motivated and controlled by our desires, but when we are filled with God’s Spirit, we have His mind. Not that we are God but that He gives to us the ability to think and reason clearly, with a mind that is focused on what He wants. Notice James again, **James 3:17 (NASB)** *“But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy*.”

When you and I give our hearts to the Lord, and He saves us from eternal damnation, we also get His Spirit who comes to live in us and remind us of what is right and good. (John 14:26) We have His mind to guide us in the ways of life and in the areas which are best for all people in our lives. He helps us know what to do and where to go and how to live. (John 16:13) But the worldly mind doesn’t have that ability. It is left to itself, and it will always be motivated by selfishness, and when selfishness is present, jealousy is not far behind. (Galations 5:19)

Our goal, beloved, is to pay attention to our hearts - to pay attention to what we are dwelling on in our minds and what our thoughts are focused on. If it is to have what someone else has, whether fame or fortune or the next best material thing, we can rest assured we are walking in our flesh. But when our hearts are focused on what is best for all people and rejoice in what others have even when we don’t have that same thing, we are living by the controlling influence of the Spirit. And that is wisdom given to us from above.

So let me ask you, what is your heart focused on? Do you constantly look at what someone else has that you don’t? Are you bothered that you don’t have a college degree or that job your neighbor has or that house or that spouse or those children or those looks? Whatever it is that you don’t have that occupies your mind and heart will lead to jealousy which will lead to broken relationships with others and with God, which is the worst part of it all. So examine your hearts. Confess to God what it is that makes you jealous. And by the way, call it what it is. Don’t beat around the bush with God. He already knows what’s going on in your heart anyway. (Psalm 139:2) So confess it to Him and let His cleansing power renew you and give you the joy of living life just as you are with just what you have.