

Sermon VI- Jonathan Edwards **“Charity Inconsistent With An Envious Spirit”**

1 Cor. 13: 4b

“Charity envieth not.” [KJ] “Love ..does not envy...” [ESV]

DOCTRINE: “That Charity, Or A Truly Christian Spirit, Is The Very Opposite Of An Envious Spirit”.

“..Envy may be defined to be a spirit of dissatisfaction with, and opposition to, the prosperity and happiness of others as compared with our own..or because..they have some honour or enjoyment that we have not. It is a disposition natural in men, that they love to be uppermost; and this disposition is crossed when they see others above them...for as men very commonly are, they cannot bear a rival much...they love to be singular and alone in their eminence and advancement.” [p. 112, Charity]

What are some common things we tend to envy about others?

Do you agree with Edward’s statement that “[we] love to be uppermost...singular and alone in [our] eminence and advancement”. Why?

How does this “disposition” affect our relationship with God?

I. Biblical examples of envy

- a. Joshua [Num. 11:29]
- b. Joseph’s brothers [Gen.37:4,5,11]
- c. Haman (envy of Mordecai) [Esther 5:13]

Recognizing envy

- * uneasiness and dissatisfaction with the prosperity of others
- * being happy when another’s “honour or comfort is diminished” or “brought down”
- * embracing any opportunity to bring another down
- * speaking “evil of them” to “lower them in the esteem of men”
- * dislike of others when they prosper, or “seem more honourable” than us
- * resentment simply because they do prosper, or are held in higher respect

II. A truly Christian spirit is the opposite of an envious one

1. Efforts are made to resist envy; furthermore it upsets us to begin thinking that way, so we fight against expressing it
2. Efforts are made to quell or kill “envy’s disposition in the heart”

“A Christian spirit disposes us to feel content with our own condition, and with the estate God has given us among men, and to a quietness and satisfaction of spirit with regard to the-

allotments and distributions of stations and possessions God, in His wise and kind providence, has made to ourselves and others. ...Like the apostle [Paul] we shall learn [Phil. 4:11].
[p. 116 Charity..]

“I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content”. {Phil. 4:11, ESV}

3. We rejoice in the prosperity of others

“Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep” [Rom. 12:15, ESV]

“..That we sympathise with their estate and condition, in the spirit we should feel if it were our own. Such a spirit of benevolence and good-will will cast out the evil spirit of envy, and enable us to find happiness in seeing our neighbour prospered”. [p. 116, Charity]

III. A charitable spirit is the opposite of an envious one

1. **New Testament is full of precepts encouraging meekness and humility, which are opposite of envy; in addition to warnings about envy**

Rom. 13:13
1 Cor. 3:3
2 Cor. 12:20
Gal. 5:21
1 Tim. 6:4
Titus 3:3
Jam. 3: 14,16
1 Pet. 2: 1,2

2. **A charitable spirit is consistent with the gospel and biblical doctrine**

“We are told how far God was from begrudging us the most exceeding honour and blessedness...He has not begrudged us his only-begotten and well-beloved Son, who was dearer to him than everything beside...The Christian scheme of doctrine teaches us how Christ came into the world to deliver us from the power of Satan’s envy toward us; for the devil, with miserable baseness, envied mankind the happiness that they at first had, and could not bear to see them in their happy state in Eden...how Christ came into the world to destroy the works of the devil and deliver us from that misery into which envy hath brought us...”. [p. 119, Charity..]

3. Charity [love] helps us obey these precepts, directly and indirectly.

a. First “by its own immediate tendency”

“The nature of charity, or Christian love to men is directly contrary to envy; for love does not grudge, but rejoices at the good of those who are loved...And love to God also has a direct tendency to influence to obey his commands....And so love to God will dispose us to follow his example, in that he has not begrudged us our manifold blessings, but has rejoiced in our enjoyment; and it will dispose us to imitate the example of Christ in not begrudging his life for our sakes..” [p. 120-121, Charity..]

b. Secondly, “by inclining us to humility”

“It is pride that is the great root and source of envy. It is because of the pride of men’s hearts that they have such a burning desire to be distinguished, and to be superior to all others in honour and prosperity, and which makes them uneasy and dissatisfied in seeing others above them. But a spirit of love tends to mortify pride, and to work humility in the heart. Love to God tends to this, as it implies a sense of God’s infinite excellence, and therefore tends to a sense of our comparative nothingness and unworthiness”. [p. 121, Charity..]

IV. Application Life-on-life

1. Do we recognize an envious spirit in our hearts? Can we identify sources of envy that may change with our seasons of life?
2. How does an envious spirit affect how we view others at CPC? How would we recognize it?
3. What specifically causes you to be envious and what can you do to resist this?