*BREAKING FREE FROM ENVY
Galatians 5:25 -26

*ILL Imagine in your mind the guy that everybody loves to hate. He might be like Simon Cowell from American Idol. He gets away with being rude and obnoxious because he is rich and famous. Everything always seems to go right for him. He gets the promotions, he’s got the big salary, the big car, the big house. He just got back from a Caribbean cruise and he has a tan in December. You're driving down the road tomorrow morning and the police have pulled a guy off the road, giving him a ticket. You glance to the side and you notice the guy getting the ticket is that guy! Be honest! What are you feeling inside right now? Is there a smile on your face? Welcome to the world of envy!

*Galatians 5:25 -26 Since this is the kind of life we have chosen, the life of the Spirit, let us make sure that we do not just hold it as an idea in our heads or a sentiment in our hearts, but work out its implications in every detail of our lives. *That means we will not compare ourselves with each other as if one of us were better and another worse. We have far more interesting things to do with our lives. Each of us is an original. MSG

*Galatians 5:25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. NIV

Envy is simply resenting God's goodness in others' lives and ignoring God's goodness in my own life. Envy says, “Not only do I want my grass greener than yours, I'm praying yours dies and turns brown.”

Would you agree that we live in a society that is preoccupied with comparing ourselves with others? In our society, envy is encouraged. That's the whole purpose of many commercials. "Buy our product and you will be the envy of everyone.”

http://www.marketmenot.com/chevy-the-new-premium-commercial/

ILL I read about a study done on conspicuous consumptions that said, people will buy inferior products if the products imply to the world that they are wealthy. It doesn't matter whether it's a good or bad product as long as it will make other people envy you.

The Bible is full of examples of envy, like, Cain and Abel, Jacob and Esau, Leah and Rachel, Joseph and his brothers.

We all struggle with envy. So what are the consequences of envy? We find them revealed to us in Scripture.

*1. CONSEQUENCES
*(1.) ENVY CAUSES CONFLICT.

*James 4:1 What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don't they come from the evil desires at war within you? 2 You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. *You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and...
wage war to take it away from them. Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it. 3 And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure. NLT

Envy causes all kinds of conflict, in families, among friends, and at work. It destroys relationships. One person gets special recognition, or achieved more or acquired more than the other and suddenly there is envy and conflict and a broken relationship.

*ILL How many of you played King of the Hill when you were kids? Only one guy could be on the top and he pushed everybody else off. Envy is like that.

Envy causes conflict in relationships.

*(2.) ENVY LEADS TO OTHER SINS.

*James 3:16 For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.  NIV

Envy can cause all kinds of sin. Envy leads to lying, cheating, anger, adultery, and murder. Cain killed Abel because of envy. Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers because of envy. Jesus was put on the cross by the Pharisees because of envy.

ILL I read about a high school girl that was so envious that she lost the cheerleading position in an election to someone else, that she murdered the girl that got the position.

That's the power of envy. It leads to other sins.

*(3.) ENVY MAKES ME MISERABLE.

It ruins your happiness. You cannot be happy and envious at the same time. In fact, one of the greatest secrets to being happy is learning to eliminate envy.

*Proverbs 14:30 A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.  NIV

Envy eats you up inside. Envy is like a cancer. It robs you of peace and contentment. Envy is self-destructive. When you are resenting God's goodness in somebody else's life and ignoring God's goodness in your own, you make yourself miserable.

A lot of depression comes from envy. Phrases like "It's not fair! ... He gets all the breaks!" are motivated by envy. When those kinds of thoughts fill our mind, then anger and depression will follow.

*ILL In the movie Amadeus, the character Antonio drives himself crazy by his envy for Mozart.

If you were told you had a cancer on your back, you would immediately get it cut out. Envy is worse than that. We need to cut it out and get rid of it. We cannot afford to indulge in it. It is deadly.
TS So let’s look at God’s cure for envy.

*2. CURE

**(1.) RESIST COMPARING YOURSELF TO OTHERS.**

*Galatians 6:4* Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, NIV

Comparing myself to somebody else is just dumb! There is always somebody better than me and that fact alone will discourage me and make me miserable if I chose to focus on it. Comparing yourself with others is the root of envy.

Instead of comparing, test your own actions. Are you doing your best? If you are doing your best, that's all God requires. Make it your daily prayer to ask God to help you resist comparing yourself to others and to instead do your best for Him.

TS The next step to get rid of envy...

**(2.) RECOGNIZE YOUR WONDERFUL UNIQUENESS.**

If I want to break the grip of envy in my life, I must recognize that I am a unique creation of God.

*Psalms 139:13* you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. 14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, NIV

God designed you in your mother's womb. You have designer genes. Everything that God creates is wonderful. Therefore, you are wonderful! There will never be another person like you. You are unique.

So don't compare yourself. Envy is an expression of inferiority and low self-esteem. You are fearfully and wonderfully made and God has a wonderful plan for your life.

TS The next step to get rid of envy...

**(3.) REJOICE IN WHAT YOU HAVE.**

*Ecclesiastes 6:9* It is better to be satisfied with what you have than to be always wanting something else.

There is a myth behind envy that says, “I must have more than you, to be happy.” That's just not true. Your happiness has nothing to do with your achievements or acquisitions. It comes from being thankful for your uniqueness and rejoicing in all of God’s blessings. This is what Paul said in...
Philippians 4:12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength. NIV

What is the secret to contentment? Knowing, I already have more than I deserve. Therefore, with Christ’s strength I will rejoice in the blessings that God chooses to give me.

TS The next step to get rid of envy...

*(4.) RESPOND TO OTHERS IN LOVE.

*1 Corinthians 13:4 Love … does not envy, NIV

The opposite of envy is love. You can't love somebody and envy them at the same time. Love desires the best for others and is willing to make sacrifices to ensure they get it.

Love rejoices with those who rejoice; weeps with those who weep. (Romans 12:15)

Envy does the exact opposite. Envy, rejoices when other people stumble and fall and weeps when other people succeed. It's the exact opposite of love.

One of the great joys in life is enjoying other people's joy. We need God's love in our hearts to desire the best for others.

TS The next step to get rid of envy...

*(5.) REFOCUS ON PLEASING GOD.

Refocus on pleasing God instead of impressing people.

*Look at Colossians 3:2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. NIV

Look at life from God's viewpoint, realize that everything here on earth is temporary, nothing is going to last. There's only two things that are going to last forever: people and God's Word. Everything else is going to burn, -- cars, stereos, homes, everything.

Focus on what's going to last forever. Just your values. Focus on pleasing God. Make that the primary aim of your life.

When we set our mind on heaven and the reward that is waiting there for us, it changes the way we view everything in this world.

God has created you for a unique purpose. You are not in competition with anyone. There is no one that can do what you can do.
There are people in this world that only you can reach and lead to become followers of Christ. That is your mission and my role as your pastor is to equip you to complete your mission.

So let’s refocus on pleasing God.

Challenge:

Where are you struggling with envy today? Are you envious of the things that others have that you don’t? Are you envious of their popularity? Are you envious of their talents and abilities? Are you envious of someone else’s marriage or their children? Do you ever secretly gloat over the failures of other people?

*Only God can remove envy from our lives, so we must surrender to him.

Prayer:

Would you pray a simple prayer with me? God, help me to resist comparing myself to others, help me to recognize my wonderful uniqueness, help me to rejoice in what I have, help me to respond in love, and most of all help me to refocus on pleasing You and not on impressing other people.

Father, help us to be content in a world that is filled with envy so that others might see Jesus in us.