



Week Four: How to Overcome Envy – Study Guide

August 23, 2014

Have you ever found yourself not wanting to celebrate other people's successes because you wanted to be in their position? You might even have thought they received their success or status unfairly. Many of us have found ourselves in those situations before. If we aren't careful, envy can creep into our lives and destroy the relationships we have around us. Envy has a way of stoking the coals of our pride and enflaming our ego. In this week's study, we are going to be discussing envy, how to overcome it, and how to celebrate life change and success in others' lives as well.

Where Am I Today?

- 1) Think about how envy has impacted, or is impacting, your life. Are there areas of your life or relationships where you've become envious, and might even have a sense of anger because you feel as if it's unfair? It could be someone in your family, a friend, or even a co-worker. Share with the group. Why can envy be such a challenge and so important to prevent in life?

Into the Bible

- 2) This week we are going to look at the older son's response to his younger brother's homecoming in the parable of the prodigal son. Read **Luke 15:25-30**. Discuss why the older brother wasn't happy. How do you see envy affecting his relationships with his brother and father?



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- 3) Read **Luke 15:31-32**. What was the father's response to his son's anger and how is it a reflection of how God responds to us?

- 4) Read **Philippians 4:11-12** and **2 Corinthians 9:8**. Why is it important to be content? How can contentment be a great antidote for envy?

How Does This Apply?

- 5) Think about the response you gave in the *Where Am I Today?* section. What would it look like if you applied the previous verses to your life? What is it going to take for you to overcome envy?

- 6) How can envy leave us angry toward God? On the other hand, how does contentment enable us to focus on our relationship with God and find His purpose for our lives?

- 7) Throughout the Go Bananas project, we've been celebrating all the lives that have been changed—something the older brother in Jesus' parable couldn't do because of his envy. Take a minute to reflect as a group. How has the Go Bananas project opened your eyes to the needs of others, both spiritually and physically? What are some things worth celebrating because of Go Bananas?

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Continue Learning on Your Own

8) Jealousy and envy are often thought of as having similar meanings. Yet, when we think about how they both surface, the circumstances surrounding the two are different. Think about it. What is the difference between jealousy and envy?

Read **Exodus 20:4-6** and **Exodus 34:14**. From the verses we just read, how is jealousy not necessarily a bad thing, and how can God be jealous, yet not envious?