

GLITTERING ILLUSIONS

ENVY





Enjoy

SCRIPTURE

Galatians 5:19-25 + Luke 6:43-45

“Envy is the Enemy of Love. We envy the internal qualities of another person, the qualities that give a person worth, honor, standing, status, or identity. We not only cannot rejoice in their good, rather we desire what they have for ourselves, and we delight in their destruction.””

– REBECCA KONYNDYK DEYOUNG

As with vainglory, the illusion of envy is that our worthiness and identity are tied to something other than our belovedness—drawing our focus away from the good gifts God placed in us and toward what others have that we “have not.” We may honestly believe that we are simply striving for excellence and doing our best, but envy always operates out of competition and scarcity—the deception that there is not enough good to go around. *If another has it, I cannot. If I am to have it, others cannot.*

However, the belief that “being good enough means being better than another” creates a moving target, for there will always be another occasion in which we risk being outdone by a rival. A life focused on comparison and lack cannot love or trust God—who seems to have withheld good from us; others—who seem to have the status or gifts we desire; or ourselves—who seem to lack worth unless we outrank or outshine others. Whatever quality or status-lifting possession we desire, envy claims that “having not” makes us deficient and less worthy of love. We are robbed of rejoicing in our own good or the good of others.

While envy can remain more hidden than vainglory, which desires public recognition, the result is the same:

“Envy is a loser’s game. In more ways than one, the envy game dooms us to lose even if we win. “Winning” at envy...precludes gratitude and contentment, love and happiness. But only relationships of love will truly make us happy.”

So, how do we train our attention on the true desire underlying envy and every other glittering illusion: to live a life of deep connection, a life in which we both receive and offer unconditional love?

Practice

COMMON GOOD + GRATITUDE

“Because the envious essentially see the world as competition—a world where some people outrank others—part of unlearning envy (or better still, preventing it) involves investing ourselves deliberately and deeply in activities with shared or common goods...when one person’s having or participating in them does not diminish others’ share.”

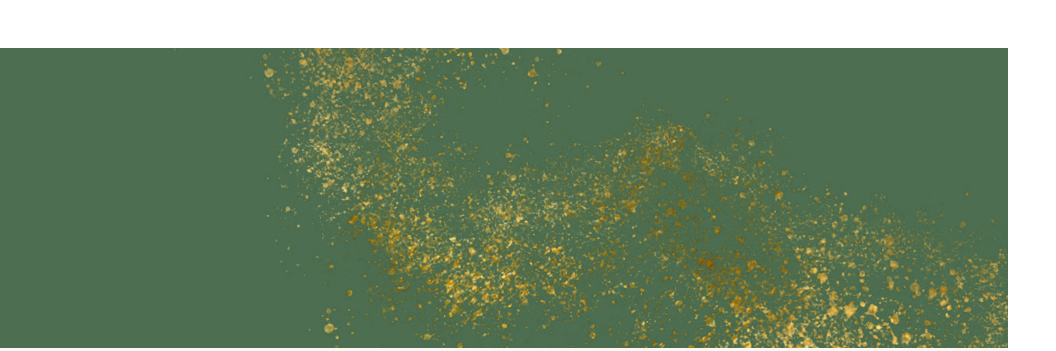
COMMON GOOD

This week, deliberately choose activities you can share with another that offer mutual enjoyment without competition or comparison: quiet walks in nature, appreciating beautiful music or art, coffee or lunch dates with no agenda—anything you enjoy without aspirations of “success.”

Observe, welcome, and name (OWN) with God the feelings that stir in you: Were you uncomfortable or distracted, tempted to compete or compare with the other’s experience? What do the moments envy spoke up tell you about what you value in yourself? How did it feel to notice the good with another?

Take it a step further and choose to perform an act of “quiet benevolence,” a hidden act of love for someone else. Pay attention to how it feels to give and serve in a way that doesn’t increase your status or garner recognition.

A simple idea: spend some time with a child. Notice the authentic presence of children who haven’t learned to perform for acceptance. Allow yourself to receive their generous, unconditional love! Ask God to remind you of what childlikeness feels like for you.



GRATITUDE

“The practice of gratitude—naming specific gifts and blessings, large and small, and thanking God for the gifts of others that blessed us that day—can also give us fresh eyes to see and hearts to celebrate the goodness that has already been lavished on us as the beloved of God.”

Each morning, ask God to help you notice the good gifts you encounter throughout the day—things as simple as lovely flowers in the ditch as you drive, conversation with a friend, or an unexpected success. Train your attention on the good that is right in front of you. Start small and make a list of at least 3 things you noticed each day.

Each evening, free your mind from comparison and envy by giving to God everyone and everything for which you feel responsible. Name the last good thing that happened during your day, and go to sleep with your mind focused on rejoicing in the good.

SILENCE + SOLITUDE



Return to the practice of Silence and Solitude featured on pgs 4-5 of the Vainglory booklet by using the QR code. Silence social media and the voices that encourage competition and comparison. Spend time alone with God to receive His unconditional love. Consider meditating on Isaiah 43:1-4.

Pastoral Word

+ NEXT STEPS

We live in a world consumed by comparison—a challenge made increasingly difficult in our digital age. The voices we listen to matter: it's crucial to develop opportunities to hear what God thinks of us and grow in the humility to listen to what trustworthy known friends see in us. As we learn which voices to heed and which to silence, we can step out of the illusion of lack and into gratitude, contentment, and unconditional love.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Do you have a trusted friend you can share with?
- Schedule a session with our Care and Prayer team.
- Attend our Generational Healing Service November 15.
- Consider meeting with a Spiritual Director.

*Quotes taken from *Glittering Vices: A New Look at the Seven Deadly Sins and Their Remedies* by Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung.



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