

# ***“A Fight To The Finish Line”***

John 21:20-22

December 7, 2014

## **INTRO:**

## **REVIEW/Context:**

Chapter 19      Crucifixion

Chapter 20      Resurrection

v.21 = Great Commission

v.29 = Thomas’s blessing

v.31 = Purpose of John’s Gospel...

## Chapter 21:

Impetuous Peter... (“I’m going fishing...”)

Inspirational Peter... (“Lord... I love you...”)

Instructed Peter... (“Feed & Lead My sheep”)

Informed Peter... (“You’ll be crucified...”)

Inspired Peter... (“Follow Me” – No matter what!)

- Live the Word
- Love the Lord
- Follow by Faith... No matter what!

**T/S:** Today we will see the...

**“Inspection Process & Inspected Peter”**

**Timeless TRUTH:** Life is a Fight for Faith till the Finish-line

- \*\*\* From cradle to grave... Genesis to Revelation!
- \*\*\* Faith fights the world, the flesh, & the devil!
- \*\*\* Christ’s cross... and our armor... tell the story!

**T/S:** You REALLY NEED to have this perspective...

i.e. Creationism vs. Evolution...

“What you believe is who you become.” -JDP

VIDEO: “Perspectives”

QUOTE:

When a person has settled  
the matter of death,  
then he is ready to live and to serve!

- Warren Wiersbe

**PREVIEW:** "A Fight To the Finish"

**Biblical faith fights devilish adversaries!**

**Biblical faith fights against grumbling...**

**Biblical faith fights best by following...** in action AND attitude!

NOTE: Distracted & Dissatisfied  
(various degrees of unbelief)

**T/S:** Let's watch the passage & then unpack it...

**VIDEO:** Gospel of John 21:15-22

## I. Biblical Faith Fights Devilish Adversaries!

- A. See Judas vs. Jesus (wolves in sheep's clothing)
- B. See Peter and the Church (both epistles)
  - 1 Peter = Persecution from the outside  
(30 years later...)

RECOGNIZE THAT YOU ARE ENVIOUS OR JEALOUS

**Acknowledging your envy means looking at yourself honestly. [Galatians 5:19-21](#) tells us that envy is a product of our sinful human nature. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you whether your ulterior motives are for selfish gain or to achieve status in other people's eyes. Name envy for what it is. Blow away the cover-up.**

CHOOSE WITH YOUR WILL TO GET RID OF IT

**Harboring envy keeps us from hungering for God's Word, and God's Word is vital for us to continue to grow spiritually. *"Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good"* ([1 Pet. 2:1-2](#)).**

**[Galatians 5:26](#) says envy will also keep us from living the Spirit-controlled life**

- 2 Peter = Persecution from the inside  
(33 years later...)
- \*\*\* See also Jude's letter (series)
- \*\*\* See previous series on 2 Peter

**2 Peter 1:14** = *For our Lord Jesus Christ has shown me that I must soon leave this earthly life,*

**2 Peter 2:4-17** = *4For God did not spare even the angels who sinned. He threw them into hell,**a** in gloomy pits of darkness,**b** where they are being held until the day of judgment. **5**And God did not spare the ancient world—except for Noah and the seven others in his family. Noah warned the world of God's righteous judgment. So God protected Noah when he destroyed the world of ungodly people with a vast flood. **6**Later, God condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and turned them into heaps of ashes. He made them an example of what will happen to ungodly people. **7**But God also rescued Lot out of Sodom because he was a righteous man who was sick of the shameful immorality of the wicked people around him. **8**Yes, Lot was a righteous man who was tormented in his soul by the wickedness he saw and heard day after day. **9**So you see, the Lord knows how to rescue godly people from their trials, even while keeping the wicked under punishment until the day of final judgment. **10**He is especially hard on those who follow their own twisted sexual desire, and who despise authority.*

*These people are proud and arrogant, daring even to scoff at supernatural beings**c** without so much as trembling. **11**But the angels, who are far greater in power and strength, do not dare to bring from the Lord**d** a charge of blasphemy against those supernatural beings.*

**12** These false teachers are like unthinking animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed. They scoff at things they do not understand, and like animals, they will be destroyed. **13** Their destruction is their reward for the harm they have done. They love to indulge in evil pleasures in broad daylight. They are a disgrace and a stain among you. They delight in deception even as they eat with you in your fellowship meals. **14** They commit adultery with their eyes, and their desire for sin is never satisfied. They lure unstable people into sin, and they are well trained in greed. They live under God's curse. **15** They have wandered off the right road and followed the footsteps of Balaam son of Beor, who loved to earn money by doing wrong. **16** But Balaam was stopped from his mad course when his donkey rebuked him with a human voice. **17** These people are as useless as dried-up springs or as mist blown away by the wind. They are doomed to blackest darkness.

## II. Biblical Faith Fights Internal Grumbling...

A. "Internal" = within ourselves

➤ Peter (SINKING vs walking on the water)

Beware when you get your eyes off the Lord and start to look at other Christians! "Looking unto Jesus" should be the aim and practice of every believer ([Heb. 12:1-2](#)). To be distracted by ourselves, our circumstances, or by other Christians, is to disobey the Lord and possibly get detoured out of the will of God. Keep your eyes of faith on Him and on Him alone... How He works in their lives is His business. Our business is to follow Him as He leads us (see [Rom. 14:1-13](#)) - Wiersbe

➤ Older brother...

**QUOTE:**

In case you aren't aware of the symptoms of jealousy and envy, give yourself this test taken from material developed by Les Carter in his book *Mind Over Emotions*:

- Do you work extremely hard to come out looking good?
- Do you examine others with a critical eye?
- Do you have hidden feelings of inferiority?
- Do you complain about not getting fair treatment?
- Do you have an insatiable desire for success?
- Do you need a lot of recognition for your achievements?
- Do you tend to be status conscious?
- Do you find it hard to pay compliments to others?
- Do you keep score of your own good deeds and those of others?
- Are you willing to pass along negative rumors about a successful person?
- Do you put on a false front in order to appear impressive?
- Do you base your self-image on your performance?

If you answered yes to some of these questions, you may be having trouble with envy, even though you haven't recognized it.

➤ **Parable of the Vineyard Workers**

- \*\*\* See also the context... (pre & post)
- \*\*\* Rich young ruler (close but NO...)
- \*\*\* Jesus tells of His (our) cross...

➤ Parable of the Soils also applies...

*“Other seed fell in the weeds; the weeds grew with it and strangled it.” Luke 8:7 (MSG)*

**QUOTE:** (Rick Warren)

Jesus says distractions are like weeds that grow up in your mind and heart, just as weeds grow in a garden.

**Worries** – The Greek word for worry is *merinma*, which means “pulled in different directions.” When you are pulled in different directions, you are worried. And when you are worried, you can’t hear God.

**How much effort does it take to grow weeds? None. Weeds are a sign of neglect.** When you neglect your time with God, the weeds start to grow in your life. In order to overcome the weeds, you must learn to overcome your preoccupied mind.

B. **“External” = Dividers...** (devilish detractors)

➤ **Numbers: 12, 14, 16...**

We must understand the “progression of grumbling”

1. Rebellion
2. Repent
3. Restoration
4. Relationship

Follow = Faith

Obedience = Abide

Fruit = Root

Grumbles = God-less

### **III. Biblical Faith Fights Best By Following!**

- A. “Jesus said” = authority & clarity
- B. “what is that to you” = mind your own business
- C. “Follow Me!” = grammar reveals force...

See common thread in all those who said:

**"Yes Lord" & "send me"**

- Abe
- Noah

- Job
- Isaiah
- Jeremiah....
- Peter
- John
- Paul
- Philip
- Stephen...
- Hebrews 11 (2nd half)

**Luke 14:27**

**Ephesians 6:10ff**

**2 Timothy 3:12**

*Indeed,  
all who desire to live a godly life  
in Christ Jesus  
will be persecuted,*

## **CLOSE:**

ALL Christians will fight devilish adversaries!

ALL Christians will fight internal grumbling.  
(Inside ourselves & Outside dividers)

ALL Christians fight best by following!

We as His followers must yield ourselves—just as He yielded Himself for us—and be "living sacrifices" ([Rom. 12:1-2](#)) who are "ready to be offered" ([2 Tim. 4:6-8](#)) if it is the will of God. - Wiersbe

Praise God for His gospel invitation to follow...

and His empowering grace to fuel our following...

...No matter what! - Amen.

# **Let's Pray**

## Study Notes:

Jesus had just spoken about Peter's life and ministry, and now He talks about Peter's death. This must have been a shock to Peter, to have the Lord discuss his death in such an open manner. No doubt Peter was rejoicing that he had been restored to fellowship and apostleship. Why bring up martyrdom?

The first time Jesus spoke about His own death, Peter had opposed it ([Matt. 16:21ff](#)). Peter had even used his sword in the Garden in a futile attempt to protect his Lord. Yet Peter had boasted he would die for the Lord Jesus! But when the pressure was on, Peter failed miserably. (You and I probably would have done worse!) **Anyone who yields himself to serve the Lord must honestly confront this matter of death.**

**When a person has settled the matter of death, then he is ready to live and to serve!** Our Lord's own death is a repeated theme in John's Gospel: He knew that His "hour" would come, and He was prepared to obey the Father's will. We as His followers must yield ourselves—just as He yielded Himself for us—and be "living sacrifices" ([Rom. 12:1-2](#)) who are "ready to be offered" ([2 Tim. 4:6-8](#)) if it is the will of God.

Earlier that morning, Peter had "girded himself" and hurried to shore to meet Jesus ([John 21:7](#)). The day would come when another would take charge of Peter—and kill him (see [2 Peter 1:13-14](#)). Tradition tells us that Peter was indeed crucified, but that he asked to be crucified upside down, because he was not worthy to die exactly as his Master had died.

But Peter's death would not be a tragedy; it would glorify God! The death of Lazarus glorified God ([John 11:4, 40](#)) and so did the death of Jesus ([John 12:23ff](#)). Paul's great concern was that he glorify God, whether by life or by death ([Phil. 1:20-21](#)). This should be our desire as well.

Our Lord's words, "Follow Me!" must have brought new joy and love to Peter's heart. Literally, Jesus said, "Keep on following Me."

Immediately, Peter began to follow Jesus, just as he had done before his great denial. However, for a moment *Peter took his eyes off the Lord Jesus*, a mistake he had made at least two other times. After that first great catch of fish, Peter took his eyes off his Lord and looked at *himself*. "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" ([Luke 5:8](#)) When he was walking on the stormy sea with Jesus, Peter looked away from the Lord and began to look at the wind and waves; and immediately he began to sink ([Matt. 14:30](#)). It is dangerous to look at the circumstances instead of looking to the Lord.

Why did Peter look away from his Lord and start to look back? He heard somebody walking behind him. It was the Apostle John who was also following Jesus Christ. Peter did a foolish thing and asked Jesus, "What shall this man do?" In other words, "Lord, you just told me what will happen to me; now, what will happen to John?"

The Lord rebuked Peter and reminded him that his job was to follow, not to meddle into the lives of other believers. Beware when you get your eyes off the Lord and start to look at other Christians! "Looking unto Jesus" should be the aim and practice of every believer ([Heb. 12:1-2](#)). To be distracted by ourselves, our circumstances, or by other Christians, is to disobey the Lord and possibly get detoured out of the will of God. Keep your eyes of faith on Him and on Him alone.

This does not mean that we ignore others, because we do have the responsibility of caring for one another ([Phil. 2:1-4](#)). Rather, it means that we must not permit our curiosity about others to distract us from following the Lord. God has His plan for us; He also has plans for our Christian friends and associates. How He works in their lives is His business. Our business is to follow Him as He leads us (see [Rom. 14:1-13](#)).

I recall a critical time in my own ministry when I was disturbed because other ministers were apparently getting God's "blessing" in abundance while I seemed to be reaping a meager harvest. I must confess that I envied them and wished that God had given their gifts to me. But the

Lord tenderly rebuked me with, "What is that to thee? Follow thou Me." It was just the message I needed, and I have tried to heed it ever since.

Bible Exposition Commentary - Bible Exposition Commentary – Be Transformed (John 13-21).

[21:21, 22](#) Peter asked Jesus how John would die. Jesus replied that Peter should not concern himself with that. We tend to compare our lives to others, whether to rationalize our own level of devotion to Christ or to question God's justice. Jesus responds to us as he did to Peter: "What is that to you? As for you, follow me."

Life Application Study Bible.

[21:20-22](#) Jesus' prophecy regarding Peter's martyrdom prompted Peter to ask what would happen to John ("the disciple whom Jesus loved"; see [13:23](#)). He may have asked this because of his deep concern for John's future, since he was an intimate friend. Jesus' reply, "You follow Me," signified that his primary concern must not be for John but his continued devotion to the Lord and His service, i.e., Christ's service must be his all-consuming passion and nothing must detract from it.

The MacArthur Bible Commentary.

**Verse 21.** *What shall this man do?* This question probably means, "What death shall he die?" But it is impossible to ascertain certainly why Peter asked this question. John was a favourite disciple, and *perhaps* Peter suspected that he would have a happier lot, and not be put to death in this manner. Peter was *grieved* at the question of Jesus; he was probably deeply affected with the account of his own approaching sufferings; and, with *perhaps* a mixture of grief and *envy*, he asked what would be his lot. But it is *possible*, also, that it was from *kindness* to John—a deep solicitude about him, and a wish that he might not die in the same manner as one who had denied his Lord. Whatever the motive was, it was a curiosity which the Lord Jesus did not choose to gratify.

Barnes' Notes on the New Testament.

### **John 21:22**

**If I will that he tarry till I come**—There are several opinions concerning this: the following are the principal.

1. Some have concluded from these words that John should never die. Many eminent men, ancients and moderns, have been and are of this opinion.
2. Others thought that our Lord intimated that John should live till Christ came to judge and destroy Jerusalem. On this opinion it is observed that Peter, who was the oldest of the apostles, died in the year 67, which, says Calmet, was six years before the destruction of Jerusalem; and that John survived the ruin of that city about thirty years, he being the only one of the twelve who was alive when the above desolation took place.
3. St. Augustin, Bede, and others, understood the passage thus: If I will that he remain till I come and take him away by a natural death, what is that to thee? follow thou me to thy crucifixion. On this it

may be observed, that all antiquity agrees that John, if he did die, was the only disciple who was taken away by a natural death.

4. Others imagine that our Lord was only now taking Peter aside to speak something to him in private, and that Peter, seeing John following, wished to know whether he should come along with them; and that our Lord's answer stated that John should remain in that place till Christ and Peter returned to him; and to this meaning of the passage many eminent critics incline.

Adam Clarke's Commentary.

## Hear God: Eliminate The Distractions

BY RICK WARREN — MAY 21, 2014

*“Other seed fell in the weeds; the weeds grew with it and strangled it.” Luke 8:7 (MSG)*

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"If you are always on the go and you can't hear God, you are facing the barrier of busyness."

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You can't hear God when your mind is crowded with thoughts, worries, fears, and plans, or if you always have the radio or TV on. And if you constantly have your phone against your ear, when God calls all he gets is a busy signal!

All of these distractions are what Jesus was referring to in Luke 8 when he talked about the seed falling in the weeds. Today's verse says those weeds grew with the seed and strangled it.

Now notice that this scenario is a little bit better than the shallow soil because the seed actually sprouts and grows. But the weeds choke it out so it never bears fruit. So many people hear God speak, but as they go on their way, life's worries, riches, and pleasures choke them, so they never mature.

If you are always on the go and you can't hear God, you are facing the barrier of busyness. Often we confuse busyness with productivity and they aren't the same thing. If you keep going, going, going but you aren't spiritually growing, growing, growing, you are busy, not productive.

Jesus says distractions are like weeds that grow up in your mind and heart, just as weeds grow in a garden.

There are three types of weeds that will keep you from hearing God's voice:

**Worries** – The Greek word for worry is *merimna*, which means “pulled in different directions.” When you are pulled in different directions, you are worried. And when you are worried, you can't hear God.

**Riches** – You can be so busy making a living, trying to make money to pay the bills and get out of debt that you can't hear God.

**Pleasures** – God gives you pleasures, and they are a good thing. But you can get so busy pursuing pleasures and fun that you forget to pursue God as well.

How much effort does it take to grow weeds? None. Weeds are a

sign of neglect. When you neglect your time with God, the weeds start to grow in your life. In order to overcome the weeds, you must learn to overcome your preoccupied mind.

First Kings 19:12 says that when God spoke to Elijah, it wasn't in a wind or earthquake or fire; it was in a gentle whisper. If you want to hear God whisper to you, you have to be quiet.

### Some Biblical Examples of Envy (as a distraction)

- (1) Satan Envies God and Mankind (Genesis 3)
- (2) Cain Envied Able (Genesis 4:4-8)
- (3) Ishmael Envied Isaac (Genesis 16)
- (4) Jacob Envied Esau. (Genesis 25-32)
- (5) Philistines Envied Isaac (Genesis 26:14)
- (6) Rachel Envied Her Sister Leah (Genesis 30:1)
- (7) Joseph's Brothers Envied Joseph (Genesis 37:4-5,11)
- (8) Aaron and Miriam Envied Moses (Numbers 12:1)
- (9) Korah and 250 Leaders Envied Moses (Numbers 16:3)
- (10) David Envied the Arrogant (Psalm 73:3, 17-20)
- (11) Haman Envied Mordecai (Esther 5:13)
- (12) The men of Ephraim Envied (Judges 8:1)
- (13) Sanballat Envied Nehemiah (Nehemiah 4:1-4)

(14) Chief Priests Envied Jesus (Mark 15:10; Matthew 27:18)

(15) The Laborers in the Vineyard Envied (Matthew 20:12)

(16) The Elder Prodigal Brother Envied (Luke 15:28)

(17) The Jews Envied Paul (Acts 13:45)

**7 Examples of Envy From Genesis** In the great book of “beginnings,” Moses records for us in the book of Genesis at least a half a dozen examples of envy.

(1) Satan Envied God was expelled from heaven because he **envied God** and then **envied Adam and Eve**. Devil tries to encourage us wanting something we don't have.

(2) Cain Envied Able (Genesis 4:4-8) **The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering** (his tribute and gift), <sup>5</sup> **but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor** (or respect). **So Cain was very angry** (he lost his temper and went into a sulk), **and his face was downcast** (his countenance fell; he felt rejected and dejected). <sup>6</sup> **Then the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? [Why this tantrum?] Why is your face downcast? [Why the sulking?] <sup>7</sup> If you do what is right** (correctly, appropriately, as God asked), **will you not be accepted?... <sup>8</sup> Now Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let's go out to the field.” While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.**

(3) Ishmael Envied Isaac (Genesis 16)

(4) Jacob Envied Esau (Genesis 25-32)

(5) Philistines Envied Isaac (Genesis 26:14) **He** (Isaac) **had so many flocks and herds** (sheep and goats) **and servants ,that the Philistines envied him.** (God richly blessed Isaac)

(6) Rachel Envied Her Sister (Genesis 30:1)

(7) Joseph's Brothers Envied Joseph (Gen. 37:4-5,11)<sup>3</sup> **Now Israel** (also known as Jacob) **loved Joseph more than any of his other sons,**

*because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate (varicolored, fancy tunic) robe (an elaborately embroidered coat) for him. <sup>4</sup> When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them (that he was favored), they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him (they could not speak to him peaceably or on friendly terms).... <sup>1</sup> His brothers were jealous (and envious) of him...*

## Envy—The Green-Eyed Tyrant

Holly was a bright, pretty child. But she had a peculiar habit—she always wanted her friends' toys. She cried when her best friend got a beautiful doll for her birthday. She whined when the neighbor girls appeared at church in matching Laura Ashley Easter dresses. She pouted when her sister was taken to Disney World as a reward for straight A's throughout high school.

When Holly became a teenager, she turned her attention toward boys. She quickly mastered the use of makeup, lightened her hair dramatically, and learned to dress with a slightly sexy flair. Her competitive drive always drew her toward her friends' boyfriends, and she made it her habit to call them, ask them for advice, and sow seeds of criticism about the girls in their lives. Then, at eighteen, she met Jack and Tammy Jensen, a couple in their thirties who were youth leaders at her church.

At first Holly innocently joined the other kids at the Jensens' home. They gathered as a group, watched videos, and just hung out. But before long, Holly was spending a lot of time talking to Jack—alone. Like any married couple, Jack and Tammy had their small differences from time to time, and Holly instinctively homed in on them. While flattering Jack on one hand, on the other she gently questioned his reactions to Tammy's quick temper, her same old hairstyle, or her not-quite-perfect housekeeping.

Holly's divisive arts were astonishing, as were her manipulative capabilities. She called the Jensen home in tears one night from a pay phone, hysterically claiming to have been kicked out of the house by her parents. She asked Jack if he could pick her up. She knew the family well enough to calculate that Tammy would be getting dinner on the table for the children and that Jack would arrive alone. He did.

Jack listened to her story patiently, and by now he felt close enough to Holly to put his arms around her in comfort. The truth was, he'd been wanting to hold her in his arms for weeks. Before the night was over, the two of them had made love. Before the year was over, Jack and Tammy had filed for divorce, Jack had left the church, and he and Holly were living together.

The tragedy didn't end with the breakup of Jack and Holly's marriage. In fact it continues. Holly has become disillusioned with Jack—she complains that he's too old for her. She constantly compares him to younger men, humiliating him with caustic jokes about his weight, his thinning hair, and his middle-aged attitudes. Holly wants a house at the beach, like the Fosters'. She needs a new Chevy Suburban, like the Jarvises'. She and Jack fight constantly and bitterly over her insatiable desires for more things, better things, things her friends have that she'll never get because Jack is "such a boring old man."

## Jealousy and Envy—Good News, Bad News

Jealousy and envy are emotions we all feel from time to time. But if they are allowed to become dominant in our lives, they warp our perspectives, keep us from realizing our personal potential, and in cases like Holly's, lead us into destructive behavior. Without question, jealousy and envy impede our growth to spiritual maturity.

Although we sometimes use the words *jealousy* and *envy* interchangeably, there is a difference. Jealousy can be used in a good sense. Its root is *zelos*, the same word from which we also get *zeal*, or *zealous*. When the word is applied to God, saying He is a jealous God means He demands that we worship and love Him exclusively.

In a bad sense, jealousy is a fear of being displaced by a rival in affection or favor. To be jealous is to be anxiously suspicious or vigilant. [Proverb 27:4](#) says, "Anger is cruel and fury overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy?" The implication of this Scripture is that jealousy is hidden. It corrupts our motives, thoughts, and actions. 'Ib make matters worse, the object of that jealousy may be unaware of it and therefore be unable to deal with it.

While jealousy can be positive, envy, on the other hand, always has a bad meaning. Envy is defined as "a feeling of discontent and resentment aroused by another's desirable possessions or qualities, accompanied by a strong desire to have them for oneself."[13](#)

Scripture reminds us, "A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones" ([Prov. 14:30](#)).

## The Story of Rachel and Leah

In the Old Testament, we have classic examples of jealousy and envy in the lives of two women who were victims of their culture. Leah and Rachel were sisters, and they were married to the same man, Jacob. Have you noticed how many of our lessons have been centered on Jacob and his family? Talk about being dysfunctional!

In [Genesis 5](#), Jacob was fleeing the wrath of his brother, Esau. When he reached Paddan-Aram, where his mother's family lived, his cousin Rachel was the first person he met. For him, their meeting was love at first sight. He was warmly welcomed into his Uncle Laban's home and began helping him shepherd his flocks.

Jacob asked Laban for Rachel's hand in marriage and volunteered to work seven years in return for her. Laban agreed, but then he deceived Jacob by secretly marrying him to his older, less attractive daughter, Leah. Laban agreed to give Rachel to Jacob, too, but he would have to work seven more years. The biblical account concludes, "Jacob lay with Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah. And he worked for Laban another seven years"

([Gen. 29:30](#)).

One wouldn't have to be a psychologist to predict the problems that were about to arise in that household. Can you imagine the conflicting emotions Laban's cruel deception produced? Jacob, the deceiver who had cheated his brother of their father's blessing, was outdone in deception by Laban! He ended up doing seven more years of hard labor without pay for a woman he didn't want in the first place. This was not exactly a great start for a marriage—especially one with two wives.

There was a physical difference between Leah and Rachel. Leah was older, had weak or delicate eyes, and apparently was not attractive. Rachel was younger and had a beautiful face and figure. Scripture simply states the sad truth: "And Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah."

#### AN UNLOVED WIFE

We can't blame Jacob. He'd made his choice almost from the moment he saw Rachel, and it's impossible to drum up romantic love on demand. Can you imagine how difficult it was for Leah to see Jacob's passionate love for Rachel, knowing that he didn't feel the same way about her at all? This was living in daily pain. She must have experienced both jealousy and envy. But God has a way of evening things out:

"When the LORD saw that Leah was not loved, he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren. Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben, for she said, 'It is because the LORD has seen my misery. Surely my husband will love me now' . . .

"When Rachel saw that she was not bearing Jacob any children, she became jealous of her sister. So she said to Jacob, 'Give me children, or I'll die!'

"Jacob became angry with her and said, 'Am I in the place of God, who has kept you from having children?' ([Gen. 29:31-32; 30:1-2](#)).

Rachel had what Leah wanted—Jacob's love. But now she was jealous of

Leah because she wanted what Leah had—children. In that day, it was a great reproach upon a woman if she did not give her husband sons. Jacob put the blame where it belonged, on God.

The rivalry between these two sisters increased as they tried to build their families with strategies that were normal for that culture. Sometimes a wife gave her maid to her husband sexually, and the maid became pregnant. When the child was born, the wife would catch the child on her knees and thus claim him as her own. Rachel did it first, then Leah followed suit. Both of them were in this battle to the bitter end. But the difference in the characters of the two women is revealed in [Genesis 30:14-16](#): "During wheat harvest, Reuben went out into the fields and found some mandrake plants, which he brought to his mother Leah. Rachel said to Leah, 'Please give me some of your son's mandrakes.'

"But she said to her, 'Wasn't it enough that you took away my husband? Will you take my son's mandrakes too?'

"'Very well,' Rachel said, 'he can sleep with you tonight in return for your son's mandrakes.'"

## FOREVER DISSATISFIED

Apparently, Rachel even used her power over Jacob to orchestrate his sex life and keep him from sleeping with Leah so she wouldn't have any more children! In essence, Leah had to "hire" Jacob from Rachel for a night. She did so in exchange for some mandrake roots that Rachel supposed would make her fertile. But God continued to give children only to Leah. She had six sons and one daughter of her own before Rachel had her first son.

"Then God remembered Rachel; he listened to her and opened her womb. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son and said, 'God has taken away my disgrace' She named him Joseph, and said, 'May the LORD add to me another son' ([Gen. 30:22-24](#)).

Nothing was ever enough for Rachel. Instead of thanking God for her one

son, she had to have more. She had to catch up with her sister. That's a classic symptom of envy—it is insatiable.

## RACHEL'S IMMATURE SPIRIT

We see further evidence of Rachel's lack of maturity when God told Jacob to go back to his homeland. He told his wives his plans, and Rachel and Leah replied, "Do we still have any share in the inheritance of our father's estate? Does he not regard us as foreigners? Not only has he sold us, but he has used up what was paid for us. Surely all the wealth that God took away from our father belongs to us and our children. So do whatever God has told you" ([Gen. 31:14-16](#)).

After thirteen years, the two women were still bitter toward their father for the way he had exploited them and the misery his actions had caused. But there was a difference in the spiritual quality of the two women. One particular thing Rachel did demonstrates, after twenty years of knowing and living with Jacob, that his faith in God had made little impact on her spiritual understanding. We know this because we're told, "When Laban had gone to shear his sheep, Rachel stole her father's household gods" ([Gen. 31:19](#)).

Laban was a man who worshiped many gods. The fact that Rachel stole them tells us several things about her. First of all, she still had pagan tendencies if she thought these little figurines would bring blessings. She also may have thought that they gave her a right to claim her father's inheritance. Whatever the reason, she deceived both her father and her husband. When Laban accused Jacob of stealing the idols, Jacob, in righteous indignation, unknowingly condemned his beloved wife to death. He raged, "But if you find anyone who has your gods, he shall not live" ([Gen. 31:32](#)).

Rachel was saved from discovery only because she hid the idols in her camel saddle and sat on it, then lied and claimed she couldn't get up because she was having her period. No one would search her saddle, because anything a woman sat on during her menses was unclean.

Rachel was both a liar and a thief; she deceived her father and her husband.

Rachel was lovely on the outside, but her character wasn't very beautiful. External beauty can be a hindrance to character development, and Rachel was envious, jealous, selfish, manipulative, greedy, and unsatisfied. Still, her husband's passion and preference for her lasted all her life.

Notice also how Jacob arranged his family in order of preference when he thought Esau still wanted revenge: "Jacob looked up and there was Esau, coming with his four hundred men; so he divided the children among Leah, Rachel and the two maidservants. He put the maidservants and their children in front, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph in the rear" ([Gen 33:1-2](#)).

How do you think Leah felt? No matter how many children she had, Jacob would never love her as much as he loved Rachel. Meanwhile, Rachel could have been gracious and generous to her unloved older sister, but she wasn't. We don't read of her doing a single kind, unselfish act. Finally she became pregnant with the second son she wanted, but this time it cost her her life to bear him: "And as she was having great difficulty in childbirth, the mid-wife said to her, 'Don't be afraid, for you have another son.' As she breathed her last—for she was dying—she named her son Ben-Oni. But his father named him Benjamin" ([Gen. 35:17-18](#)).

Jacob's favorite wife was buried by the wayside. Leah was eventually buried by Jacob's side in the cave at Machpelah with Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah. What havoc jealousy and envy wrought upon this family!

**Are those same destructive emotions doing a number on you? In case you aren't aware of the symptoms of jealousy and envy, give yourself this test taken from material developed by Les Carter in his book *Mind Over Emotions*:**

**Do you work extremely hard to come out looking good?**

**Do you examine others with a critical eye?**

**Do you have hidden feelings of inferiority?**

**Do you complain about not getting fair treatment?**  
**Do you have an insatiable desire for success?**  
**Do you need a lot of recognition for your achievements?**  
**Do you tend to be status conscious?**  
**Do you find it hard to pay compliments to others?**  
**Do you keep score of your own good deeds and those of others?**  
**Are you willing to pass along negative rumors about a successful person?**  
**Do you put on a false front in order to appear impressive?**  
**Do you base your self-image on your performance?**

**If you answered yes to some of these questions, you may be having trouble with envy, even though you haven't recognized it.**

## **Causes of Envy**

**Like many other emotions, envy is a symptom of other, underlying issues that need to be resolved. Les Carter includes these examples as sources of envy: being overly concerned with personal rights, taking other people's success personally, desiring selfish gain, yearning for status and achievement, and an inability to share. Let's take a closer look at each of these sources.**

### **BEING OVERLY CONCERNED WITH PERSONAL RIGHTS**

We hear a lot about rights today. It appears that **individual rights are increasing at the same time personal responsibility is decreasing.** We are moving rapidly toward the idea that government is supposed to meet every need of the citizen and society is to blame for every crime.

Individuals blame their difficulties on their parents, their poverty, their lack of education, a past traumatic experience, or any number of other culprits. At the same time, they never seem to take the responsibility for their own actions.

**Personal rights must be balanced with personal responsibility.** There's a difference between the "right to life, liberty, and happiness" and the right to

pursue life, liberty, and happiness. Pursuit involves effort on the part of the pursuer. Everyone does not have an inalienable right to wealth, a new car, and a college education. We are responsible to pursue these goals, but they are not rights.

## TAKING OTHER PEOPLE'S SUCCESS PERSONALLY

Suppose someone you know is good at doing something, and it's something at which you aren't very gifted. When that happens, watch out. Envy can rear its ugly head, and you'll find yourself resenting every success the other person has.

I would love to be able to arrange flowers the way my friend Sarah Mitchell does. I've even tried to have her teach me. But I will never be able to arrange flowers with the creativity and ease she demonstrates. So I have a choice: I can resent Sarah's success when I compare it with my failure, or I can acknowledge her skill and be thankful that she will arrange flowers for me!

## DESIRING SELFISH GAIN

**Envy starts with desire. We all want things we don't have:** money, a nice figure, a better home, or more clothes. We long for a happy marriage, successful children, a secure, pleasurable job. There's nothing wrong with these desires as long as we are realistic, recognizing that they do not bestow value on our lives.

However, if and **when these things become essential to us, we will look with the green eyes of envy at everyone who has what we want. We'll keep working harder and more desperately to reach our goals without ever being content.** Eventually, we will be under the full-time control of envy, a brutal taskmaster. We should never forget what **John D. Rockefeller** said when he was asked how much money is enough. "Just one more dollar," was his sage reply.

## YEARNING FOR STATES AND ACHIEVEMENT

There's nothing wrong with wanting recognition for our achievements. But at

times that craving can become a competitive spirit that has to outdo everyone else. When that happens, you can be sure envy is at the root.

**Today's society values people for their appearance or their achievements. It is very difficult not to be envious of the woman with a beautiful figure when you struggle daily to not gain a pound. It's hard to feel good about ourselves when we've been driving the same car for ten years while others are enjoying this year's luxury models. We don't accept ourselves as we are; we are unable to recognize our own strengths. Instead, we compare our weaknesses with others' strengths, and consequently we feel envious.**

#### AN INABILITY TO SHARE

It's difficult for the envious person to share in the joys of other people, especially when someone else is getting what the envious one wants and doesn't have. I admire women who are struggling with infertility when I see them attending baby showers for others and sharing their joy. They may go home and weep afterward, but they are genuinely happy for their friends.

#### Overcoming Jealousy and Envy

Perhaps as you've read this, you've seen indications that jealousy or envy is an unwelcome aspect of your character. Of course it is God's will for you to overcome that negative emotion, and there are some concrete steps you can take to do so.

#### RECOGNIZE THAT YOU ARE ENVIOUS OR JEALOUS

**Acknowledging your envy means looking at yourself honestly. [Galatians 5:19-21](#) tells us that envy is a product of our sinful human nature. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you whether your ulterior motives are for selfish gain or to achieve status in other people's eyes. Name envy for what it is. Blow away the cover-up.**

#### CHOOSE WITH YOUR WILL TO GET RID OF IT

**Harboring envy keeps us from hungering for God's Word, and God's Word is vital for us to continue to grow spiritually. *"Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good"* ([1 Pet. 2:1-2](#)).**

**Galatians 5:26 says envy will also keep us from living the Spirit-controlled life** God wants for His children. It's a deadly deterrent to spiritual growth. **By making a choice of the will then asking God to empower us, we can decide to overcome envy or jealousy. With His help, we will do so.**

CONFESS IT AS SIN AND ACCEPT FORGIVENESS

We've already learned the value of [1 John 1:9](#). God promises to forgive and cleanse us from all sin if we agree with Him that what we are doing is sin. **Once we've accepted His forgiveness, we are able to start on a new path.**

ACCEPT YOURSELF AS YOU ARE WITH GRATITUDE

**Develop a thankful heart. Thank God every day that you are just the person He created you to be.** Thank Him that He chose you to be His own. Thank Him for your face and figure, your health, your abilities, your family, your job, your bank account, your friends. Thank Him for the spiritual gifts that make you necessary to the body of believers. While thanking Him, **don't compare yourself with others.**

LEARN THE JOY OF GIVING TO OTHERS

**Envy is rooted in selfishness. It's only concerned with satisfying the cravings of the envious person.** There's a way to show that we are **changing on the inside. When we share our material possessions, praise the success of others, and encourage others in reaching their goals, we will begin to experience the joy that comes from giving.** By doing the opposite of our sinful nature, we change our habit patterns and demonstrate to God that we are working with Him in renewing our **minds.**

## KEEP EARTHLY ACHIEVEMENTS IN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

**When our lives are over, we're going to leave everything behind.** The body we spend so much money on will return to dust. The wardrobe, the beautiful home, the bank account, the advanced degree, the recognition—all those things that we give our lives to are going to remain on Planet Earth long after we've departed.

There are no pockets in a shroud. That's why **it's essential to remember that only two things on earth will enter eternity—people and God's Word.** If we **give priority to giving God's word to people and living it,** we'll have something that will last forever.

## SET YOUR HEART ON HEAVENLY THINGS

**When we trusted Jesus Christ, we received a new nature. And we became citizens of a new homeland—heaven. "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things" (Col. 3:1-2).**

**It's God's intention that our hearts and minds ought to be focused on new goals, and that our conduct should be controlled by new standards. As we deliberately turn away from the old and embrace the new, we are not going to keep looking over our shoulder to see who's catching up with us. Instead, we'll follow the Spirit's leading for our own lives and choose to be grateful for everything God does for us. This will ultimately be the way envy is routed out of our hearts.**

Once it is removed, we will begin to experience joy and contentment and the sense of personal significance that Jesus brings will blossom beautifully and fragrantly in our lives.

Pretext =

ch.19 = crucifixion

ch.20 = resurrection

\* miraculous encounters

\*\*\*\* John 20:21 = Grt Commission

\* doubting Thomas

\*\*\*\* John 20:29

\* purpose of book: John 20:31

Text: John 21:20-22

v.20

- identify John (in context)
- highlight Judas ref (odd)
  - \* God/John/Peter emphasis...
  - Why? A: closing points

[See 1&2 Peter](#)

1 Peter KEY flow of verses:

Chapter 1:

- 1-2
- 3-4
- 6
- 8-9
- 12
- 13-16

- 17-19
- 20-21
- 22-23
- 24-25

### Chapter 2:

- 1
- 5
- 8-10
- 11-12
- 13-14
- 15-16
- 17
- 18
- \*\*\*19-21\*\*\*
- \*\*\*23-25\*\*\*

### Chapter 3:

- \*\*\*8-11\*\*\*
- \*\*\*12\*\*\*
- \*\*\*13-16\*\*\*
- \*\*\*18\*\*\*

### Chapter 4

- \*\*\*1-2\*\*\*
- \*\*\*4-5\*\*\*
- \*\*\*6\*\*\*
- \*\*\*8\*\*\*
- \*\*\*9\*\*\*
- \*\*\*10\*\*\*
- \*\*\*\*\*12-14\*\*\*\*\*

- \*\*\*16-17\*\*\*
- \*\*\*\*\*18\*\*\*\*\*
- \*\*\*\*\*19\*\*\*\*\*

## Chapter 5

- \*\*\*\*\*1-5\*\*\*\*\*
- \*\*\*\*\*6-10\*\*\*\*\*
- 12

## 2 Peter

### Chapter 1

- \*\*\*1-2\*\*\*
- \*\*\*\*\*3\*\*\*\*\*
- \*\*\*5-8\*\*\*
- \*\*\*10-11\*\*\*
- \*\*\*\*\*12-13\*\*\*\*\*
- \*\*\*\*\*14\*\*\*\*\* (Jn.21:20-22)
- \*\*\*\*\*15\*\*\*\*\*
- \*\*\*16-18\*\*\*
- \*\*\*19-21\*\*\*

### Chapter 2

- 1-3
- 4-8 (examples of God's wrath)
- \*\*\*9-10a\*\*\*
- \*\*\*\*\*10b-17\*\*\*\*\* (false teachers)

12

13c

14

15

\* 17-19

\* 20-22

### Chapter 3

- \*\*\*\*\*1-3\*\*\*\*\*

- \*\*\*\*\*9\*\*\*\*\*

- \*\*\*10\*\*\*

- \*\*\*\*\*11\*\*\*\*\*

14 (answers question of v.11)

15-17 (links in Paul)

18 (grow I. The grace of knowing)

CONSIDER:

Peter asked "Who"

Job asked "Why"

Abe asked "Where"

Noah asked "When"

Paul asked. "What"

Examples of losing faith & focus:

- parable of workers
- older brother

We must understand the “progression of grumbling”

1. Rebellion
2. Repent
3. Restoration
4. Relationship

Follow = Faith

Obedience = Abide

Fruit = Root

Grumbles = God-less

See common thread in all those who said: " Yes Lord" & "send me"

- Abe
- Noah
- Job
- Isaiah
- Jeremiah....
- Peter
- John
- Paul
- Philip
- Stephen...
- Hebrews 11 (2nd half)