

No. 4 **Avoid Sowing to the Flesh (Symposium)** —Fight the Spirit of Envy (Local elder)

Note to speaker:

This is the third talk of a four-part symposium. In an upbuilding and positive way, warn the audience of the danger of envy and provide practical counsel on how to fight it. (See the *Ministry School* book, pages 202-204.) This talk includes a scripted demonstration

ENVY THREATENS EACH OF US (3 min.)

Christian love moves us to be interested in others

We notice the blessings, privileges, and prosperity of our brothers

We rejoice with them when they receive blessings (Ro 12:15)

A danger exists that our interest in others could lead to envy, a feeling of resentment over the things others have and wanting them for ourselves

We have an inherent disposition toward ‘envious longing’ that we must fight [**Read James 4:5**]

Envy is one of the works of the flesh and leads to disaster (Ga 5:19, 21)

BIBLE EXAMPLES CAN HELP US IN OUR FIGHT (8 min.)

Cain envied the favor that his brother received from God (Ge 4:3-5)

Jehovah told Cain to “turn to doing good” (Ge 4:6, 7)

We can fight envy by unselfishly doing things for others, including preaching the good news

Asaph envied the wicked, who seemed to enjoy a problem-free life (Ps 73:3-5)

We can successfully fight envy, just as Asaph did

Attend Christian meetings, and benefit from fine association (Ps 73:17)

Focus on the final outcome for wrongdoers rather than on their temporary gains (Ps 73:18, 19)

Strengthen your relationship with Jehovah (Ps 73:28)

We can cultivate contentment by focusing on the blessings we have received rather than comparing ourselves with others and what they have received (Gal 6:4)

Because of our Christian unity, the success of one of us is a blessing for all of us (1Co 12:25, 26)

Religious leaders envied Jesus because he enjoyed favor with the people (Mt 27:18)

Their envy was related to their own desire for prominence and their competitive spirit (Mt 23:6)

We should avoid trying to outdo others (w05 6/1 15 ¶4)

Do not measure yourself by comparing yourself with others

DEMONSTRATION (2 min.)

[Note: You may make minor adjustments to the script for naturalness. Participants may use their own names if desired. Rehearse thoroughly so that the participants will be conversational, neither comical nor overly dramatic. Select participants who are exemplary and are appropriate for their parts in age, manner, and appearance]

[A young pioneer couple has just finished hosting another pioneer couple for a meal. The guests have recently returned from an expensive vacation and moved into a new home]

Joe: That was nice. I’m glad we had Brother and Sister Bailey over. Things really seem to be going well for them.

Jasmine: You can say that again! They are pioneers like us, and I have no idea how they keep up that lifestyle. Maybe it’s all those rich friends they seem to find.

Joe: ***[Pauses]*** You may be right. I guess I’m just not good at getting into the right circles. ***[Participants freeze]***

Speaker: Did you notice a spirit of envy in this conversation? How might Joe and Jasmine have fought it? Let’s give them another chance.

Joe: ***[Participants unfreeze]*** That was nice. I’m glad we had Brother and Sister Bailey over. Things really seem to be going well for them.

Jasmine: You can say that again! They are pioneers like us, and I have no idea how they keep up that lifestyle. Maybe it’s all those rich friends they seem to find.

Joe: Honey, I can see why you feel that way, but I am trying to look at our situation differently.

Jasmine: What do you mean?

Joe: Well, as servants of Jehovah, we are not in competition with anyone. Instead of feeling hurt over something we don’t have, I want us to appreciate the blessings we do have—like the joy that comes from having a full share in the ministry and keeping our eyes focused on spiritual things.

Jasmine: You’re right. I guess I just lost sight of what’s really important. We’re free to serve Jehovah fully because we don’t have any debt. And we are hoping to be invited to the School for Kingdom Evangelizers.

Joe: Exactly. Let’s keep working hard toward our spiritual goals. ***[Participants exit]***

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YOU CAN AVOID SOWING TO THE FLESH (1 min.)

As imperfect humans, we cannot completely eliminate the spirit that “keeps enviously longing” any more than we can eliminate *every* weed from a garden

However, we can avoid sowing the seeds of envy in our heart

With God’s help, we can fight the spirit of envy and ultimately defeat it

Brother _____ will now consider the last part of this symposium, “Avoid Sowing to the Flesh—Invest in a Secure Future”

(Speaker does not need to read or comment on every cited text)

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TO BE COVERED IN 14 MINUTES

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