



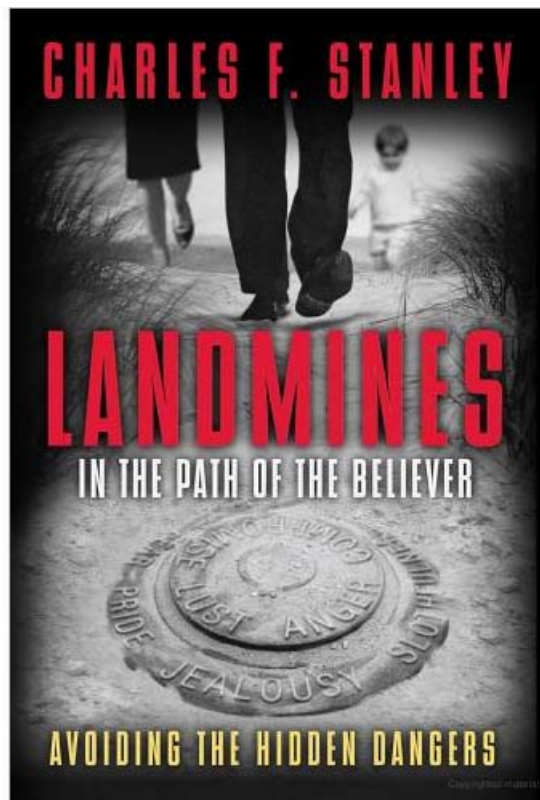
DEAN WELCH – TEACHER



# WEEKLY SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

AUGUST 8, 2010

LESSON #2 FROM THE *MASTERWORK* SERIES STUDY OF:





AUGUST 8, 2010

**P**hannelview, Texas was a neat middleclass suburb of Houston. It's a typical bedroom community of nice homes, nice cars, and nice families. Competition is fierce in all sports, but in the mid-1990s the competition got more than a little intense—not in football or in basketball, but in cheerleading. Amber Heath and Shanna Holloway lived right around the corner from each other. They had been friends for years. Amber was president of the Student Council and Shanna was Vice President. Their mothers were also wonderful friends. The girls both went to the same private Christian school and the moms would even take turns driving the kids to school. Everything was fine between the two families—until the sixth grade. The girls were 13 years old and that's when Amber beat out Shanna for cheerleader.

The two girls had always competed against each other, but Amber had been competing in beauty contests since she was four, and she always seemed to get the edge over Shanna. Shanna's mom, who attended a local evangelical church several times a week, and, in fact, was the church organist, began to resent the pattern of her daughter consistently losing out to Amber. She even tried unsuccessfully to get Amber disqualified from the cheerleading competition by invoking a technicality in the rules. One year she showed up at school the day students were voting for cheerleader candidates, and handed out rulers and pencils bearing the slogan, "Shanna Holloway—cheerleader." But as a result of her mother's actions, Shanna was disqualified. Finally, Shanna's mother could take it no longer. She allegedly tried to hire a hit man to kill both Amber and her mother. Trying to find someone to do it, she mentioned it to her former brother-in-law, who notified the police, who wired an officer who posed as the hit man. According to the

tape recording the hit man told her that he would kill the mother for \$5000 and the daughter for \$2500. Mrs. Holloway couldn't come up with that much money in cash, so she gave the "hit man" a pair of diamond earrings as a down-payment for killing just the mother. She was arrested for solicitation of capital murder and sentenced to 15 years in jail, though she later got off after only six months on a technicality.

As shocking a story as it is, it was what has been called "the green-eyed monster"—jealousy—that made a monster out of this mother, Wanda Holloway. You wonder why, but listen to these words from **PROVERBS 27:4**: "*Anger is cruel, and wrath is like a flood, but jealousy is even more dangerous.*" One of the most destructive emotions of all is jealousy. In *Othello*, Shakespeare called it "the green-eyed monster."

Today, as we wrap up Week Two of our study from Dr. Charles Stanley's book *Landmines in the Path of the Believer*, we're talking about that *slaying that green-eyed monster* and how we as Christians have to really be careful about this particular landmine. Dr. Stanley reminds us that if our entire focus is **not** on God, then there's going to be trouble handling Satan's landmine here. We have to remember that Satan's primary goal is "*to shift focus away from God and onto your circumstances.*" He wants you to become jealous, distracted and prideful.

So, as we begin, turn to **GENESIS 37: 1-11 (NASB)** and let's read about this *green-eyed monster* in the life of Joseph: "*<sup>1</sup>Now Jacob lived in the land where his father had sojourned, in the land of Canaan. <sup>2</sup>These are the records of the generations of Jacob. Joseph, when seventeen years of age, was pasturing the flock with his brothers while he was still a youth, along with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives And Joseph brought back a bad report about them to their father. <sup>3</sup>Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the son of his*

*old age; and he made him a varicolored tunic. <sup>4</sup>His brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers; and so they hated him and could not speak to him on friendly terms. <sup>5</sup>Then Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more.*

*<sup>6</sup>He said to them, "Please listen to this dream which I have had; <sup>7</sup>for behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf rose up and also stood erect; and behold, your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf."*

Kind of makes for wonderful family relationships. *<sup>8</sup>Then his brothers said to him, 'Right.'*" My version says that. **"Right."** *"Are you actually going to reign over us? Or are you really going to rule over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words. <sup>9</sup>Now he had still another dream, and [told] it to his brothers [again]. **Hello!** Didn't work well the first time. Keep it to yourself this time. But no, he told it to his brothers **again** and said, "Lo, I have had still another dream; and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me." <sup>10</sup>He related it to his father and to his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have had? Shall I and your mother and your brothers actually come to bow ourselves down before you to the ground?" <sup>11</sup>His brothers were **jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.***

There's that word again—jealous! And we know the "rest of the story" with Joseph being sold into slavery by his brothers and they, in turn, telling their father (Jacob) that a wild animal must have ravaged and eaten Little Joe because they found his multi-colored coat shredded and covered with blood. After this, the brothers' lives sort of spiraled downward. **What went wrong in this story of Joseph?** As we learned last week about our adversary, the devil, we really **DO** have a **dream smasher** in our lives who seeks to devour and destroy us anyway he can—especially with hidden

landmines, like jealousy. **So, who's to blame here? Jacob? Joseph? Or, the brothers?** [ALL...]

Joseph's brothers were arguably put in a bad situation because of the preferential treatment of Joseph by their dad. Joseph didn't help matters with his attitude. The brothers felt left out, overlooked and unappreciated by their father. Joseph, on the other hand, had been given whatever his heart desired. Also, he had just received a multi-colored coat which represented his father's love and favor. **So, are the brothers to be blamed for their jealousy?** Everybody has to take responsibility for their own lives. Admittedly, they were not put in the best situation, but they are still responsible for their reactions.

Satan will do all he can to fan the flame of jealousy. Satan's goal is to shift your focus away from God and get you to focus on your own circumstance. Satan wants you to be envious and jealous. And the Bible warns us about falling into the trap of comparing ourselves with others. Remember what Dr. Stanley said in your study this week about comparing ourselves to others? Turn to **2 CORINTHIANS 10:12 (NLT)** and follow along: *"Oh, don't worry; we wouldn't dare say that we are as wonderful as these other men who tell you how important they are! But they are only comparing themselves with each other, using themselves as the standard of measurement. How ignorant!"*

Satan will try to steal the joy of service from you in a couple of ways: by tempting you to compare your ministry with others, and by tempting you to conform your ministry to the expectations of others. Rick Warren says that both are deadly traps that will distract you from serving in the ways God intended. Whenever you lose your joy in ministry, he says to start by considering if either one of these temptations is the cause.

We know that wisdom comes from above and that jealousy is not one of the fruit of the Spirit. Listen to these words from **JAMES 3: 13-16 (CEV)** about this: *"<sup>13</sup>Are any of you wise or sensible? Then show it by living right and by being humble and wise in everything you do. <sup>14</sup>But if your heart is full of bitter jealousy and selfishness, don't brag or lie to cover up the truth. <sup>15</sup>That kind of wisdom doesn't come from above. It is earthly and selfish and comes from the devil himself. <sup>16</sup>Whenever people are jealous or selfish, they cause trouble and do all sorts of cruel things."*

Oscar Wilde tells this powerful story about how the devil works using jealousy: *The devil was once crossing the Libyan Desert, and came upon a spot where a number of small fiends were tormenting a monk. The sainted man easily shook off their evil suggestions. The devil watched their failure and then he stepped forward to give them a lesson. He whispered to the monk 'Your brother has just been made bishop of Alexandria. A scowl of malignant envy at once clouded the monk's serene face. The devil then turned to his workers and said, "This is how you do it."*

Think back to our passage about Joseph and his brothers. **Rather than plotting against their brother, how could Joseph's brothers have dealt with their jealousy?** *D. L. Moody told of two merchants between whom there was great rivalry and bitter feelings. One of them was converted and went to his minister and said, "I'm still jealous of that man, and I don't know how to overcome it." "Well," said the minister, "if a man comes into your store to buy goods, and you cannot supply him, just send him over to your neighbor." He said he wouldn't like to do that. "Well," said the minister, "you do it and you will kill jealousy." Sure enough, when he began sending customers over to his rival for goods he himself could not supply, the rival began to send customers over to this man's store, and the breach was healed.*

Let me ask if jealousy is **bad** or **good**? Turn to **JOSHUA 24: 19-20 (ESV)** and listen to what scripture says: *<sup>19</sup>But Joshua said to the people, "You are not able to serve the LORD, for he is a holy God. **He is a jealous God**; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. <sup>20</sup>If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm and consume you, after having done you good."* If jealousy is a bad thing, how is it that God is jealous? Our God is a consuming fire and He is satisfied only when His love totally consumes us. We usually think of a jealous person as someone resentful and suspicious, but the Lord's jealousy on our behalf is something that should be precious to us! He has the complete right to our lives. He gave us life, and He wants to protect us from anything that could harm us. That is why He has commanded His children to worship no other gods, allowing nothing to distract us from His consuming love.

According to **DEUTERONOMY 6:15**, the Lord opposes anything that hinders our relationship with Him. Dr. Henry Blackaby, in his devotional *Experiencing God*, reminds us that God knows the danger of other gods—how they will lure us away, deceive us, and leave us empty. God will tolerate **nothing** that takes precedence over our love for Him. Our faithfulness to God assures us of the abundant life He wants to give us. If we reject Him, He will pursue us until we return to Him.

The consequences of jealousy and envy are deadly. As Dr. Stanley says in his book, all of us know what it feels like to come upon a yellow jacket's nest in the late summer. These fast-moving wasps are relentless. Disturb their nest, which is usually located in the ground, and you will never be able to outrun them. And they know exactly how to focus their energy. In a similar way, if you step on a landmine of jealousy or envy, you will have an entire nest of consequences coming toward you—much like Joseph's brothers—and you will feel as though there is no escape route.

Let's look at another example. Turn to **JOHN 21: 18-22 (NLT)**:

*<sup>18</sup>"I tell you the truth, when you were young, you were able to do as you liked; you dressed yourself and went wherever you wanted to go. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and others will dress you and take you where you don't want to go."*

*<sup>19</sup>Jesus said this to let him know by what kind of death he would glorify God. Then Jesus told him, "Follow me."*

*<sup>20</sup> Peter turned around and saw behind them the disciple Jesus loved—the one who had leaned over to Jesus during supper and asked, "Lord, who will betray you?" <sup>21</sup>Peter asked Jesus, "**What about him, Lord?**"*

*<sup>22</sup>Jesus replied, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? As for you, follow me."* **What is Peter thinking when he says, "What about him?"**

When he learned about his own death, Peter apparently glanced at John and asked a question about which he may have felt embarrassment for the rest of his life: Lord, what about him? He might have meant, "I'm more concerned about my brother John." More likely, however, the Peter we know and love would have responded to the prophecy by saying, "If I have to die, so does John." Have you ever said or thought something similar—*But, Lord, that's just **not fair!***

So, let's go to the bottom line and ask what can we do? How do we effectively deal with jealousy in our own individual lives? Dr. Stanley gives us seven ways to disarm this landmine:

**FIRST**, we need to **admit** that we are envious. If your best friend, co-worker, neighbor, or a relative comes home with, say, a big, new \$50,000 boat decked out with everything, or a new luxury car or whatever—you need to acknowledge it to the Lord in prayer. Jealousy, as Dr. Stanley points out in Day Four, is really not being happy with what the Lord has given YOU! Your memory verse today is from **MATTHEW 6:33 (ESV)** and should help you keep

your priorities: *“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”*

**SECOND**, we need to **acknowledge** that we are in conflict with God. In other words, as long as **we THINK we** can patch up the situation, we won't deal with the true issue—which is a heart full of envy. Only when we willingly admit that there is a problem **and** that we need God's help will our hearts begin to heal and those feelings of jealousy begin to fade.

**THIRD**, we need to **thank** God for what He has done in our lives and even for the people who are the *“problem.”* Praise Him for the good things He has given you and resist the temptation to compare yourself to anyone else. Remember that's how the devil plays with this particular landmine. He gets us to take our focus off God!

**FOURTH**, **pray** and ask God to help us see the heart of the other person at the center of the conflict. You may be jealous of a person being *just the person* God has created him or her to be. When another person is living God's plan, we never have an excuse to be envious of him or her. So, ask God to help you **rest in His presence** in accepting His Plan for the other person.

**FIFTH**, we need to be willing to **wait** for God to work. It's during times of waiting that we grow the most. And that's one of the hardest things for us to do. The words of **ISAIAH 40:31 (NKJV)** are a good reminder for this step: *“But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.”* It's in this step that we are open to God's guidance and ready to obey Him at all times.

**SIXTH**, we need to ask God to help us **hear** His voice over all the noise and everything else that's going on in the world. It's easy to

get sidetracked by the world'. A great verse here is from **PSALM 46:10**, *"Be **still** and know that I am God...."*

**SEVENTH**, we are to **delight** ourselves in Him. As we learned in our recent John Piper study about *Desiring God*, and even again last week, the words of **PSALM 37:4** should be memorized and repeated often to remind us of this: *"Delight yourself in the **LORD** and He will give you the desires of your heart."*

Although this all sounds simple, it's not. It takes something we really don't like to do—**SURRENDER** our all! That leads to victory over this landmine. In order to deal with your jealousy, Dr. Stanley reminds you to keep your focus on the **LORD**. Then, when something distracts you and you feel the slightest twinge of jealousy or envy, be honest, fall on your knees and pray. Remember, if you **seek** Him first, everything else will fall into place and you will experience His blessings.

**Let's Pray.**



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2

1. **PROVERBS 27:4** says, "Anger is cruel, and wrath is like a flood, but jealousy is even \_\_\_\_\_."  
\_\_\_\_\_."   
  
\* Satan's primary goal is "to shift \_\_\_\_\_ away from God and onto your \_\_\_\_\_." (Dr. Charles Stanley)
2. Everybody has to take \_\_\_\_\_ for their own lives.
3. Satan will try to steal the joy of service from you in a couple of ways: by tempting you to \_\_\_\_\_ your ministry with others, and by tempting you to \_\_\_\_\_ your ministry to the expectations of others. (Rick Warren, *Purpose-Driven Life*)
4. Our God is a \_\_\_\_\_ and He is satisfied only when His love totally consumes us.  
  
\* God will tolerate \_\_\_\_\_ that takes precedence over our love for Him.
5. **MATTHEW 6:33** says, "But seek \_\_\_\_\_ the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."
6. In order to conquer the landmine of jealousy and envy, it takes something we really don't like to do, \_\_\_\_\_ our \_\_\_\_\_!

IF YOU **SEEK HIM FIRST**, EVERYTHING ELSE WILL FALL INTO PLACE AND YOU WILL EXPERIENCE THE LORD'S BLESSINGS!