

WEEKLY GAME PLAN

From Envy to Contentment

Read Genesis 4:1-5

Context: Cain was caught up playing the comparison game. It has been said that comparison is the thief of joy. This is primarily because we are no longer focused on doing what we can for God. We are instead focused on, “why isn’t God giving us, or doing for us, what He’s giving others?” Even if we offer to God the exact same thing as someone else, maybe that’s not what He wants from us. It is up to us to be God-focused, not looking for what God has given others.

Reflection Question: How many times have you been happy, or content, with something until you see what someone else has? What does this tell you about your focus? How can you determine to have gratitude in all circumstances?

Read Genesis 4:6-7, Proverbs 3:11-12

Context: God warned Cain where the path of his heart would lead him. The Lord called attention to the fact that God had told him what He wanted from him. God did not leave Cain wondering. He was clear in His expectations of Cain and gave him an opportunity to repent and correct his heart. He told Cain that Cain was capable of ruling over the sin that was crouching at the door. The next move was Cain’s.

Reflection Question: When has God given you clear warning about what you were about to do? What made you listen to Him, or not listen to Him? How did things work out? What hope do you have knowing that God gives you warnings before you are going to fall to sin?

Read Genesis 4:8-12

Context: Cain bold-faced lied to God after murdering his brother. Envy for how God interacted with Abel and his sacrifice led to ignoring the caring warning of the Lord, premeditated murder, and then doubling down on his poor choices. By the time Cain called Abel into the field, his heart was so hard to the voice of the Lord that there was nothing he wouldn’t do.

Reflection Question: Have you ever wondered how you ended up making a really poor decision? Did it start with the seed of envy? Looking back, how did God take the time to warn you away from the sin that was crouching at your door? What did not listening to God's warning cost you? Was it worth it?

Read Proverbs 14:30, 2 Corinthians 10:12

Context: The heart at peace with God is healing to our bodies. This is not just platitude. Science has proven that gratitude lowers blood pressure, improves immune function, promotes better sleep and can add to longevity. While we know, even just by personal experience, that envy exhausts us, it strips us of joy and steals our focus. Before all of our scientific "discoveries" God told us what envy, our way, would do to our bodies. But then He encourages us that He has a better way and it will give us peace.

Reflection Question: What envy are you holding onto? How exhausted is it making you? How much time have you given over to envying someone else's life, talents, belongings, or experiences? What lasting benefit has come from measuring your life against someone else's?

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:18, Hebrews 12:24 NLT

Context: God calls us to thankfulness in all circumstances. This is for our benefit. He tells us that this is for us. He knows that when we take the time to be thankful in each and every situation we are showing that we trust what He is doing in our lives and how He is choosing to work His will in our lives. This not only increases our faith, it builds the faith of those around us and shows unbelievers that we don't trust God just in the good times. We believe He is for us and loves us at all times. Where Abel's blood cries out to God for justice, Jesus's blood calls for forgiveness and mercy.

Reflection Question: For what do you have to be grateful this week? What are you experiencing that is making it hard to have gratitude? How does choosing to thank God during the hard times increase your faith? How have you seen this play out in someone else's life?

End in prayer. Don't let envy rot your bones. Choose to thank God in everything and watch your contentment improve.