

attributes of *God*

WEEK 17 — GOD IS JEALOUS



J. I. Packer

“The jealous God – doesn’t it sound offensive? For we know jealousy, the green-eyed monster, as a vice, one of the most cancerous and soul-destroying vices that there is; whereas God, we are sure is perfectly good. How, then, could anyone ever imagine that jealousy is found in Him?”

ISAIAH 48 : 6 – 15

- ⁶ "You have heard; now see all this; and will you not declare it? From this time forth I announce to you new things, hidden things that you have not known.
- ⁷ They are created now, not long ago; before today you have never heard of them, lest you should say, 'Behold, I knew them.'
- ⁸ You have never heard, you have never known, from of old your ear has not been opened. For I knew that you would surely deal treacherously, and that from before birth you were called a rebel.
- ⁹ "For my name's sake I defer my anger, for the sake of my praise I restrain it for you, that I may not cut you off.
- ¹⁰ Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction.
- ¹¹ For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another.
- ¹² "Listen to me, O Jacob, and Israel, whom I called! I am he; I am the first, and I am the last.
- ¹³ My hand laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens; when I call to them, they stand forth together.
- ¹⁴ "Assemble, all of you, and listen! Who among them has declared these things? The LORD loves him; he shall perform his purpose on Babylon, and his arm shall be against the Chaldeans.
- ¹⁵ I, even I, have spoken and called him; I have brought him, and he will prosper in his way.

JEALOUSY

How do you define jealousy?



Can jealousy be positive?

There is a good type of jealousy that longs to protect a love relationship.

2 Corinthians 11:2 – “For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.”

WHAT IS GOD’S JEALOUSY?

The Hebrew and Greek words used to describe God as “jealous” in Scripture mean “a passionate zeal to guard the exclusiveness of a marriage relationship.” (John Frame)

“He continually and earnestly seeks to protect his own honor.” (Wayne Grudem)

“God’s jealousy is not the sinful emotion of envy that characterizes human jealousy. It is God’s righteous concern to protect the truth that he is the Creator of the universe and that he alone, not ‘gods’ of human invention, deserves human praise. Those who worship idols provoke God’s jealousy and receive his wrath, as Israel had experienced in the wilderness.” (ESV Study Bible)

God’s jealousy is God’s passion that His people worship Him only.

GOD’S JEALOUSY IS SEEN THROUGHOUT SCRIPTURE

“When God brought Israel out of Egypt to Sinai, to give them his law and covenant, his jealousy was one of the first facts about himself which he taught them.” (J. I. Packer)

Exodus 20:5 – “You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God...”

Exodus 34:12-16 – “Take care, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you go, lest it become a snare in your midst. You shall tear down their altars and break their pillars and cut down their Asherim, (for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God), lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and when they whore after their gods and sacrifice to their gods and you are invited, you eat of his sacrifice, and you take of their daughters for your sons, and their daughters whore after their gods and make your sons whore after their gods.”

1 Kings 14:22 – “And Judah did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins that they committed, more than all that their fathers had done.”

Ezekiel 8:3-6 – “He put out the form of a hand and took me by a lock of my head, and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the gateway of the inner court that faces north, where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provokes to jealousy. And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, like the vision that I saw in the valley. Then he said to me, “Son of man, lift up your eyes now toward the north.” So I lifted up my eyes toward the north, and behold, north of the altar gate, in the entrance, was this image of jealousy. And he said to me, “Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations that the house of Israel are committing here, to drive me far from my sanctuary? But you will see still greater abominations.”

Psalm 78:56-58 – “Yet they tested and rebelled against the Most High God and did not keep his testimonies, but turned away and acted treacherously like their fathers; they twisted like a deceitful bow. For they provoked him to anger with their high places; they moved him to jealousy with their idols. When God heard, he was full of wrath, and he utterly rejected Israel.”

Zechariah 1:14 – “So the angel who talked with me said to me, ‘Cry out, Thus says the LORD of hosts: I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion.’”

Zechariah 8:2 - “Thus says the LORD of hosts: I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I am jealous for her with great wrath.”

1 Corinthians 10:22 – “Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?”

James 4:4-6 – “You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, “He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us”? But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

IMPORTANT TRUTHS ABOUT GOD’S JEALOUSY

1. God’s Jealousy Is Directed Toward His People

Joshua 24:19-20 – “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. 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.’”

2. God's Jealousy Is Specifically Directed Toward His People's Idolatry

"Idolatry originally meant the worship of idols, or the worship of false gods by means of idols, but came to mean among the Old Testament Hebrews any worship of false gods, whether by images or otherwise, and finally the worship of Yahweh through visible symbols; and ultimately in the New Testament idolatry came to mean, not only the giving to any creature or human creation the honor or devotion which belonged to God alone, but the giving to any human desire a precedence over God's will." (International. Standard Bible Encyclopedia)



God's jealousy cannot be envy like it often is for us.

God deserves and requires exclusive worship.

Therefore, His jealousy is directed toward His people when they fail to worship Him alone.

Exodus 20:3-5 - "You shall have no other gods before me. "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God..."

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 – "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."

3. It is Very Good for God to Be Jealous for His Own Honor

"We must remember that those elements in human qualities which show the corrupting effect of sin have no counterpart in God.... God's jealousy is not a compound of frustration, envy and spite, as human jealousy so often is, but appears instead as a (literally) praiseworthy zeal to preserve something supremely precious." (J. I. Packer)

Revelation 4:11 - "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."

Ezekiel 39:25 – "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel, and I will be jealous for my holy name"

Isaiah 48:11 – "For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another."

God's jealousy is good because He alone is good!

4. God's Jealousy is Often Accompanied by Judgment

Deuteronomy 4:23-24 – “Take care, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make a carved image, the form of anything that the LORD your God has forbidden you. For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.”

Deuteronomy 6:14-17 – “You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you-- for the LORD your God in your midst is a jealous God-- lest the anger of the LORD your God be kindled against you, and he destroy you from off the face of the earth. "You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested him at Massah. You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies and his statutes, which he has commanded you.”

Ezekiel 23:25 – “And I will direct my jealousy against you, that they may deal with you in fury. They shall cut off your nose and your ears, and your survivors shall fall by the sword. They shall seize your sons and your daughters, and your survivors shall be devoured by fire.”

“In the Bible’s emphasis on God’s jealousy, we see that there is a profound analogy between God’s covenant and the marriage relationship. Idolatry is like adultery. The same attitude of covenant disloyalty lies behind both sins.... So God’s jealousy clearly manifests his lordship.” (John Frame)

5. God's Jealousy is Consistent with His Love

“His jealousy is one aspect of his love. Although God has some love for all of his creatures, as we have seen, he has an exclusive love for his own people, and he demands the same of them. When they violate that love, he behaves like a godly husband – he becomes jealous. There is nothing wrong with that jealousy. It reflects the intensity of his love. When a man’s beloved wife turns away and loves another man, he is rightly jealous. If he were not, that would be evidence that he does not care for her.” (John Frame)

God would not be loving if He let us settle for the worship of anything or anyone besides Him.

God knows we find the most joy when we are satisfied in Him.

Therefore, God’s jealousy is also love because He demands we worship Him alone for His glory and for our joy!

James 4:4-6 – “You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

CHALLENGE – How should God’s jealousy affect us?

1. It should lead us to be jealous (and zealous) for His honor

Remember, this is a communicable attribute.

Numbers 25:6-13 – “And behold, one of the people of Israel came and brought a Midianite woman to his family, in the sight of Moses and in the sight of the whole congregation of the people of Israel, while they were weeping in the entrance of the tent of meeting. When Phinehas the son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose and left the congregation and took a spear in his hand and went after the man of Israel into the chamber and pierced both of them, the man of Israel and the woman through her belly. Thus the plague on the people of Israel was stopped. Nevertheless, those who died by the plague were twenty-four thousand. And the LORD said to Moses, "Phinehas the son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, has turned back my wrath from the people of Israel, in that he was jealous with my jealousy among them, so that I did not consume the people of Israel in my jealousy. Therefore say, 'Behold, I give to him my covenant of peace, and it shall be to him and to his descendants after him the covenant of a perpetual priesthood, because he was jealous for his God and made atonement for the people of Israel.'”

1 Kings 19:10 – ““I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts.”

“Zeal in religion is a burning desire to please God, to do His will, and to advance His glory in the world in every possible way. It is a desire no man feels by nature – which the Spirit puts in the heart of every believer when he is converted” (J. C. Ryle)

Do we feel jealous for God’s honor when we hear His name used flippantly or as profanity, or when we hear Him mocked and belittled?

2. It should lead us to strive, by God’s grace, for holiness in our lives.

Do we want to be pure and faithful for Him?

“The Lord very frequently addresses us in the character of a husband... As He performs all the offices of a true and faithful husband, so He requires love and chastity from us; that is, that we do not prostitute our souls to Satan... As the purer and chaster a husband is, the more grievously he is offended when he sees his wife inclining to a rival; so the Lord, who has betrothed us to Himself in truth, declares that He burns with the hottest jealousy whenever, neglecting the purity of His holy marriage, we defile ourselves with abominable lusts, and especially when the worship of His deity, which ought to have been most carefully kept unimpaired, is transferred to another, or adulterated with some superstition.” (John Calvin)

Deuteronomy 29:18-20 - “Beware lest there be among you a man or woman or clan or tribe whose heart is turning away today from the LORD our God to go and serve the gods of those nations. Beware lest there be among you a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit, one who, when he hears the words of this sworn covenant, blesses himself in his heart, saying, 'I shall be safe, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart.' This will lead to the sweeping away of moist and dry alike. The LORD will not be willing to forgive him, but rather the anger of the LORD and his jealousy will smoke against that man, and the curses written in this book will settle upon him, and the LORD will blot out his name from under heaven.”

“Oh Lord, I confess that I am constantly putting things and others before you. I worship idols more than I even realize. I go to others for help when I have you to go to. Moreover, I use your name in ways that I should not. I repent of these sins that I commit again and again, and I will take the help that comes from your Holy Spirit.”
(Rosemary Jensen)

3. It should lead us to worship.

“It is healthy for us spiritually when we settle in our hearts the fact that God deserves all honor and glory from his creation, and that it is right for him to seek this honor. He alone is infinitely worthy of being praised. To realize this fact and to delight in it is to find the secret of true worship.” (Wayne Grudem)

1 Chronicles 16:25-34 – “For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the LORD made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and joy are in his place. Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength! Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering and come before him! Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth; yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved. Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice, and let them say among the nations, “The LORD reigns!” Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it! Then shall the trees of the forest sing for joy before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth. Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you previously heard God's jealousy taught? Is it something you have thought about much? Why is it not an attribute we often consider?
2. How can we praise God for His jealousy? What would that look like in our prayers?
3. Last Sunday morning as we looked at 1 Thessalonians 2:1-13 we saw that "God calls us to speak His Word to each other as we share life together." How should the attribute of God's jealousy be a motivation for us to do so?
4. God's jealousy is a communicable attribute. When we hear God's name used as profanity or flippantly, or when we hear His character mocked, do we feel a God given jealousy? How can we avoid becoming desensitized to those things?
5. What can we do to increase our jealousy for God's honor, fame, and glory?
6. It is unlikely that any of us bow down to carved idols. Yet, we can have different types of idols in our lives. What are the idols most common in our lives, about which God feels a holy jealousy?
7. What songs do you know that describe God's jealousy?

