



## Lead Your Heart - Part 3

### INTRODUCTION

The heart, as referred to in Scripture, is not an organ of the body, but the centre of our being. We are often told, and even encouraged to follow our hearts, but we also need to remember that the 'heart is deceitful above all things' (Jeremiah 17:9). It is important, therefore, that we pay attention to what lies in our hearts.

Like anger and greed, envy or jealousy can often cause our hearts to fall into sin. Quite often, we are not aware of these tendencies, and we justify our feelings by claiming that it is the fault of others. We can feel envy/jealousy over another person's wealth, relationship, career, children etc. It is far too easy to compare our lives with others, but jealousy is never about these people we resent, but about the condition of our hearts. Envy or jealousy causes us to find fault with others, and prevents us from celebrating and encouraging them.

In Luke 15, we read of three different situations of 'loss'. The final parable, famously called 'The Prodigal Son', describes the return of a son who squandered his father's inheritance in wild living, but concludes with an exchange between the father and older son, who resented his brother's return. In the conclusion of the parable, our attention is drawn once again to the problem of envy/jealousy, and how we ought to respond to it.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Recall an event where you experienced either envy or jealousy. What were the circumstances that led you to feel this way? How did you respond?
2. What is the impact of envy/jealousy on our spiritual growth? How does it affect the way we regard the people in our various communities (e.g. church, family, colleagues)? What are some of the tangible things we can do to celebrate and encourage them?
3. Read Luke 15:11-31. Do an inductive bible study (observations, interpretation and application). You can use the following as a guide.

- a. Posture your heart. Spend some time in prayer and ask the Holy Spirit to be your teacher. Open your heart to the Lord to speak to you.
- b. Read the passage aloud
- c. Ask some context questions of the passage:
  - What sort of writing is this? (a letter, a poem, a narrative etc?)
  - Are there any clues about the circumstances under which it was written?
  - What has happened so far in this particular book of the Bible?
- d. Some observation questions of the passage:
  - Are there any major sub-sections or breaks in the passage?
  - What is the main point or points?
  - What surprises are there?
  - What are the key words? What words or ideas are repeated?
- e. Some leading questions of the text:
  - How does this passage relate to other parts of the book?
  - How does the passage relate to Jesus?
  - What does this teach us about God?
  - How could we sum up the meaning of this passage in our own words?
- f. Some application questions of the passage:
  - How does this passage challenge (or confirm) your understanding?
  - Is there some attitude I need to change?
  - How does this passage call on me to change the way I live?

## **WHAT WOULD YOU DO?**

Envy/jealousy can be confronted by acknowledging that God is sovereign, and that he bestows favours to anyone as he wills it. As his children, we should bear in mind that everything God has is *in fact* ours (Luke 15:32), and so we ought to cherish, as well as be grateful for what he has given to us. In giving thanks and celebrating others, we lead our hearts out of jealousy, and bring them closer to his divine love.

## **CHANGE YOUR MINDSET**

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. – 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7 (ESV)