

TOTAL REVOLUTION of VALUES

Session #2 – From Jealousy to Joy

Session Objective: We want! Whatever our circumstances, from deep inside us and the call of the world around us, our wants can easily lead to jealousy.

This session will:

- Highlight the root causes and associated costs of jealousy
- Present God as the rightful centre of the universe
- Contrast God as a God of abundance – with himself as the most precious gift.
- Offer joy as a revolutionary response to jealousy

Extended Prep:

- Movie Clip: “**Toy Story**”. Little Andy’s favourite toy cowboy Woody discovers a new toy and nemesis – Buzz Lightyear. Woody’s jealousy is evident when Andy becomes enthralled with all the gadgetry of his new toy. (Start 25:05, End 31:02)

Session Outline

Leader Preamble:

Keeping with the theme, Revolution of Values, we are going to read or act out one of the most famous stories in the bible.

Read or act out story of the Prodigal Son

(Luke 15:11-32 characters needed: prodigal son, father, older son, and narrator)

Leader Note: Background: Back in ancient days, a son asking for his share of the family inheritance before the father had died was an act of huge disrespect – equivalent to hoping the father as dead.

Small Group Questions:

1. Why was the older son so upset at his father for throwing a welcome home party for his ‘lost’ son?

Possibilities: The younger brother was totally selfish and reckless only to receive a reward. The older brother didn’t see any reason to be faithful himself. The older brother saw his father as stingy. The older brother regretted being faithful himself.

Leader Say: Behind all the possible reasons behind the older brother's response is his primary concern – HIMSELF. He looks at the situation with himself as the center and as a result, he becomes jealous when someone or something else is central.

2. After the oldest son's outburst, his father responds back (read Luke 15:31-32). What had the older son overlooked?

Intimacy and relationship with his father, 'everything I have is yours'.

3. This story is often told with the focus on the younger son, but isn't it easy to feel like the older son? Why is it so easy to be jealous?

Possibilities: Marketing media preys on building up our WANT, etc.

Leader Say: *We naturally see ourselves as the centre of things. When that position is challenged, we are tempted to become jealous.*

4. What are the consequences of jealousy?

Options: Blinds to truth, you can miss the blessings that are right in front of you (like the older son), can lead to bitterness, focus on possessing etc.

5. In the Old Testament (Exodus 20:5, 34:14, etc.), God is deemed 'jealous'. Why is it okay for God to be jealous and not us?

God's rightful place is at the center of the world – he created the world for his glory. Our job is to put God at the center of our lives – not ourselves. Since he is also 'truth', he sees things as they really are (isn't blinded by jealousy as we often are). And, he is 'holy' and 'righteous', so his actions are always right (whereas our actions of jealousy are often not).

Leader Say: *One person who could have been jealous was John the Baptist. He was sent by God to deliver a message of repentance and to announce the coming of God's Son. However, when Jesus came on the scene, John needed to step into the background. Here's part of John's story...*

Read: John 3:22-36

6. Instead of jealousy, how does John respond (v. 27-31) to Jesus' popularity? Why?

- John saw Jesus as the center of life – not himself. Therefore, as John said, "the friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and

- is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine and it is now complete. He must become greater; I must become less.”
- John had joy not jealousy when God has his rightful place and when his purposes were being fulfilled

6. In applying the story of the Prodigal Son and John the Baptist's example to our own lives, how we avoid the older son's jealousy and like John the Baptist, live a life of joy instead?

- *Remember that putting ourselves at the centre of life leads to our defending that position and becoming jealous of anything that challenges our position.*
- *Like John, we need to put God at the center and seek to serve his purposes. As a result, joy will grow in our lives.*
- *Remember and focus on God's abundance. God's abundance isn't a limited or non-renewable resource – it's unlimited and unchanging. Also, God's abundance isn't just about what He does, it's more about who He is. We need to guard against focusing on others or ourselves and focusing on diminishing things or temporary things.*

To help remember and focus on God's abundance, let's make a list of eternal things we can take joy in...

Leader Note: Share examples from personal lives and/or, read Ephesians 1:3-14 and make a list together.

7. One of the best ways to combat jealousy is to bless or encourage the people you've been jealous of...can you think of someone you could bless or encourage this next week?

Extended Application Option: Another option is to join with some of the psalmists – write a psalm of lament – i.e. Psalm 73. These psalms often ask: **Why God?** and argue that “this doesn't seem fair God, but I trust in you.”) and destroy it as an act against jealousy.

Prayer Options: Silent confession of being like the older brother in jealousy, ‘popcorn prayer’ of thankfulness for specific areas of God's abundance and gifts to us, close with prayer for fruit of spirit – specifically joy to be evident in our lives regardless of circumstances.

Comments and Feedback

Leader Note: This is your place each week to record significant sharing or growth in the lives of your students for subsequent follow up. You can also use this space to provide feedback on the material. All suggestions are welcome.

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Please see the following handout. You have permission to reproduce these handouts for your group.