

## Getting Over Envy Andy Stanley

**As we get started, a quick survey and I'd for you to raise your hand and everybody play along and if you're watching at home, play along or if you're driving keep one hand on the steering wheel. How many of you actually are on Instagram? I'm just curious. Not right this minute but like, you do Instagram. Yeah, okay. Yeah, most of us. But I was kinda late to the whole Instagram thing. It seemed like a girl thing to me to be honest and then I realized, oh! There's all kinda cool stuff on here. And the great, the great thing, the great thing about Instagram is, I mean, like, the really, really great thing about Instagram is...**

Anyway, the problem, really, if I'm just honest, the problem with Instagram is that now that I'm on Instagram, I find I'm constantly needing a new pair of shoes and this is embarrassing to talk about because I never really thought about shoes and every once in a while at Christmas or something, Sandra would show up with some shoes. I'm like, are those cool? Okay, I'll wear those. I never thought about it. Now that I'm in Instagram, I have more shoes. Okay. I have almost as many shoes, I think sometimes, as Sandra. It's just ridiculous. And I, again, I just never gave them any, much thought to shoes or shiplap.

Now we have shiplap in our house, okay? I never gave much thought to that. I never gave any thought to your cute kids and I can't go back and redo all of our family pictures 'cause they're on film. You remember that. Like, what can you do with that? So now I take pictures of pictures to put on Instagram. It's so lame. I'm also bothered by all the incredible vacations you have. Like, they look amazing. You go places I've never been. In fact, I've gone to some of those places but it didn't look near as cool as it was when you went with your cool pictures. I'm very bothered by the cool young preachers and they're overpriced sneakers. That's starting to bother me a little bit too. You know? So I thought well the way to solve this is I'm just not gonna look. So I just, I just quit. I thought I'm gonna get off Instagram.

Then I though, wait a minute. I'm not a quitter. So I got back on. I thought, no, I'm not a quitter. I'm just gonna up my game and I'm gonna make you as discontent with your life as you have made me with my life and so I'm gonna start using better filters. I'm gonna crop it a little bit closer and kinda, you know, edit out all the stuff and I'm just gonna take it over and over and over and over until I get the perfect picture and I'm gonna put on Instagram the highlight reel of my life so that it'll make your lame life look even lamer, right? No, the great thing about Instagram, it really is, the great thing about Instagram is that it is a constant reminder, and we all need reminding of this, it is a constant reminder that there really is no win in comparison.

There is absolutely, you've hear me say that before. There really is no win in comparison and the reason I talk about that is because we are in part three of this series called, "You Are Not the Boss of Me". You're not the boss of me and the subtitle says it all. How to, because this is a how to series, how to say, "No", to the emotions that compete for control. How to say, "No", to the emotions that compete for control because all of us have two or three emotions that compete for control of our lives. Specifically, they compete for control of our mouths and then our mouths get us into trouble because we let those emotions be the boss of us. Jesus said it perfectly. Here's how he set up and this is where we're going for the rest of the series. He said this, he said, "Don't

you see", talking to his disciples, "Don't you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and out of the body", to which they said as we said last week, yes, we see that.

**We see it two or three times a day. Or, is this gonna be in the Bible? Are we gonna, anyway, he says, "I'm just getting your attention". He says, "But, here's the real point", "But the things that come out of a person's mouth", the other end, "the things that come out of a person's mouth they actually come from the heart", what comes out of your mouth comes from your heart, and what comes out of your mouth from your heart actually is what defiles you. Eating the wrong things doesn't defile you before God it's what comes out of your mouth that defiles you before God because what comes out of your mouth puts you at odds with God when it puts you at odds with other people and God is most concerned about what comes out and how it effects people then he is about what goes in and in a culture that was all about a dietary law, this was like what?**

He goes, "Yeah". God is not petty. God is not small. God is not overly concerned with what you accidentally eat but he is very concerned about what comes out of your mouth if it hurts other people because if you hurt people God loves, you set yourself up to be at odds with God. And then he makes this brilliant insight that it took us a long, long time to catch up with. He says this, "For out of the heart come evil thoughts". He kind of equates the and our mind. "For out of the heart come evil thoughts", and our thoughts are what instigate, our thoughts are where all of these behaviors come from.

Everything you've ever done, began, for the most part with a thought. It began with your mind or it began with your heart. He uses these words interchangeably. "For out of the heart come evil thoughts and those thoughts are what bring about murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander", and then in another gospel, he adds other words. He says, all of these things that you at odds with people, that puts you at odds with God, all of this comes from your heart. Our words and our deeds, actually reflect, he says, what is in us and we don't like this because I wanna think that the thing I said that I didn't mean to say is an exception and doesn't reflect poorly on me. It's just, it was an accident so I say, "Well, I didn't mean to say that", right? And I didn't mean to do that. And, you know, I'm not sure where that came from.

Jesus says, "I know. I'm sure". And if what Jesus says is true, and I just think anybody that predicts their own death and resurrection and pulls it off, I just go with whatever they say so I think that what he says is true. And what says is true is that these things come from your heart. They come from my heart. And so we dare not, we dare not allow these destructive forces that reside within us to come out of us and undermine our own success, undermine our marriages, our relationships, our futures, our dating and you know, whatever it might be. That we can't just go along in life as we said the last two weeks simply monitoring our behavior.

Jesus calls us to do something far more significant and something that all of us need to learn to do and if you're a parent, especially if you're a father, you gotta teach your children to do this and that is to monitor your heart, to monitor what's going on on the inside because what's going on in the inside is eventually gonna come out on the outside. And if all we do is try to put a filter over our mouth, from time to time, as you know, we're gonna fail. Then we're gonna be like, Oh, I didn't mean it. I didn't mean to say that. And we treat our words as if, you know, an accidental,

saying something accidental, and then taking it back or proving its an accident removes the hurt but that's just not true, right?

**If I accidentally back into you with my car, right? And I get, and I say, hey, it was an accident. You don't jump and go, oh, well if it's an accident, I'm fine. No, it hurts just as much. Same with our words and those words, he says, You can fool yourself all day long. The reason you said them is because they were already in there. So we need to go after this stuff and rid out hearts and cleanse our hearts. And that's what this series is all about.**

So last week we talked about guilt, how to say, guilt, hey guilt, you're not the boss of me. Shame, you're not the boss of me. And today, we're gonna talk about this ugly word. Envy. Envy. To me, this is just me, I think this is the ugliest thing in human nature. I know it is the ugliest thing in me. There is no bright side, upside, positive side to this word. And we can put the word jealousy. I like envy 'cause it sounds, I don't know, a little bit more sinister. Envy is that thing, and I'll just, you know, if confessions good for the soul, I'm about to do my soul a big favor, 'cause there's a lot of you to confess to. The thing that I don't like about me the most and if you can't relate to this, please don't judge me too harshly, the thing I don't like about me the most is that every once in a while, someone will fail and my initial emotion is like, yes. And I hate that about me.

Now eventually get over it and like, Andy that's terrible, but I hate that every once in a while, somebody goes down or somebody makes a mistake or trips up. I don't know if it's public figure or private or whatever. Have you, has any, don't raise your hand. Have you ever had this experience where you are? Okay, it's not just me. Even folks on the front row, right? At home, you know? Somebody and that your initial emotion, the first thing that pops up is, yes. Like, that'll show them. Or somehow that made me feel better about me 'cause, and then you immediately, if you're, you know, if you're sane, you're like, oh, that's horrible. I just think for me, that is the ugliest, ugliest, ugliest part of me. And imagine if that became the boss of you. Imagine if that is the boss of you. That's an ugly thing. That will ruin what is most valuable and most important to you. And I think it resides in all of us.

King Solomon, considered the wisest man who ever lived next to Jesus, said this, he just goes right at it. He says, "Envy rots the bones". Envy rots the bones. In other words, when we are envious, we're focused on someone out there and what they've done and what they have and who they raised and how smart their grandkids are and how cool their car is and Solomon says, don't kid yourself. The consequences of envy, they may be a little bit out there but at the end of the day envy rots the bones and here's why. It leaves us competing. This is the joke. This is how ridiculous this is. It leaves us competing with people that don't even know there's a competition and we're striving so hard to drive cooler, live cooler, you know, be smarter, do better, perform better, you know.

**I mean, we're competing with people. They don't even know there's a competition and it makes us arrogant because we're successful and we accomplished more than they did or it makes us depressed and we despise ourself because we fall short. I mean, again, there's no upside. There's no positive side to envy. It rots the bones. It ruins relationships. It'll make you a not very good friend, a not very good sister-in-law or bother-in-law, or cousin, or child or bother or sister or whatever it might be and so if you have to leave early or you**

## **lose electricity here's the bottom line.**

So just knock it off, all right? Just stop with that. If only it was that easy, right? But this isn't gonna go away. I mean, it suddenly we feel it. We don't mean to feel it. We don't know where it comes from. Jesus says, I'm telling you where it came from. It came from within you. It is in you. You just dare not allow it to be the boss of you.

So even if it never goes away, it doesn't have to control us. It doesn't have to drive us. We can begin to monitor heart and deal with it. Because this is just my opinion. I don't think envy is a problem to be solved. I think it's a tension to manage because we're human and we're fallen and it's just natural to compare and it's natural to, you know, allow our self-esteem to be built upon what other people are doing as opposed to what God has perhaps called us to do. So, the great news is, Solomon, who gives us the envy rots the bones statement, Solomon also gives us a way forward. In fact, in his writings, he gives us a place to go. This is how I think about it. He gives us a place to go mentally so that when you find yourself drifting emotionally toward envy or you find yourself drifting emotionally toward comparison or jealousy, whatever word you wanna use.

When you find yourself drifting there emotionally or suddenly that ugly, ugly part of you crops up and starts to, I mean, he says, let me tell you somewhere you can go mentally and when you start to lean that way emotionally, and he gives you a word picture to help us regain our balance because one of the things that's important to remember throughout this series is that all of these emotions, the reason they get in control is they throw us off balance. Anger throws you off balance. That's why you come back and you're like, I can't believe I said that, did that. Envy, it throws you off balance. Suddenly you're acting on things or saying snarky things and you're like, where did that come from? I'm off balance. Lust throws you off balance. All of these emotions throw us off balance.

So Solomon gives us kind of a, a word picture and it gives us a phrase we're gonna get to in a minute and I'm hoping that as a result of our time together, that you would take this phrase, that you would take this imagery that he gives us and this would become so instilled in your thinking that when you begin to have those feelings, when you're tempted to say that thing, when everybody else is going on and on about them and you're tempted to join in, that you would find yourself saying, "No, no, no, no, envy. Uh-uh. I caught you. You are not the boss of me and you are not the boss of my mouth". Here's what Solomon writes. He said, "I saw that all toil", that is all work and labor, "and all achievement spring from one person's envy of another".

So this is King Solomon. He's got all this perspective, all this wealth, go anywhere, do anything. He's been there, done that, seen it all. He says, here's my observation. For the most part, and this is a little bit of hyperbole, but, for the most part, he says, as I've observed people, everybody is competing with everybody else. And everybody is determining how successful they are by measuring themselves and their success by everybody else's success. This is going on 3,000 years ago. It's just human nature. They're determining where they are based on where everybody else is. Sound familiar? They're determining where they are, based on where everybody else is. And then he says, this is ridiculous, but he uses a different word. He says, this is meaningless. This is meaningless.

**And then, he gives us this word picture. These are, these next few words are the words that I hope you'll just grab ahold of and that this will become part of your internal vocabulary so that when you start having those internal, you know, imaginary conversations with people. Do you ever do this? Where you're having an imaginary conversation with people? Yeah. And how you always say the right thing in your imagination, right? And they always look stupid? Is that just me? Sometimes I have imaginary conversations with people and there's a crowd, you know? And they're like, Andy, yes! You know, then I just drop the mic and walk off like Jesus and the Pharisees, you know? But we always sound good.**

So this is, this is a phrase that I think we should all incorporate into our, our repertoire so when we start having these imaginary conversations, this is where we go. Here's what he says, he says, "I saw all this toil, all this achievement spring from one person's envy or another. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind". Let's just say this together. A chasing after the wind. Everybody, one more time. A chasing after the wind. Now, I want you to think of that. That is powerful imagery. Chasing the wind. It's endless. There's no finish line. There's no peace. There's no ultimate satisfaction. There's no contentment. It's like an unquenchable appetite. Chasing after the wind. There's always an -er. We've talked about this. There's always an -er because his is newer and hers is nicer, and her kids are smarter and theirs is bigger and his is faster. There's always an -er. There's always somebody with a bigger -er, right?

And so if you're chasing the wind, if envy becomes the boss of you, you're just chasing the wind. It never, never, never ends. There's never any satisfaction. There's never contentment as we're gonna see. You can't even enjoy your own accomplishments. Dissatisfaction guaranteed if you chase the wind, if you allow envy to become the boss of you in any area or as we're gonna see, even in a single relationship. It steals the joy from our accomplishments because there's always someone who's accomplishing more, right? And so when you catch yourself looking in that direction, when you catch yourself drifting in that direction, when your emotions begin to go in that direction, that's when you have to step back and say, "No, no, no, envy. Envy. Listen to me. You are not the boss of me. That is simply chasing the wind and I don't chase the wind".

That is just chasing the wind and I don't chase the wind. Envy, you're not the boss of me. No, I'm not even going there. Uh-uh, envy, I'm not going there. That's just chasing the wind. I don't chase the wind. That's sideways energy. It's a waste of my time. I'm not gonna waste my time which is my life chasing the wind. Your time is your life. But on the other hand, Solomon was a very accomplished person. I mean, he was a King. He accomplished more in his lifetime than anybody else ever accomplished in his lifetime.

So this isn't, he's not trying to bait us into being lazy or to do less or to accomplish less. He says, "No, only a fool would fold their hands and ruin themselves". This is his imagery of somebody who's like, Well, I'm not even gonna try. Well if I can't be making 100%, I don't care what percent. I'm not even gonna try. If I, if I can't compete at all, why, you know, if I can't win, why compete at all? I'm just not even gonna try. It's like, no, no. That's not the answer either. This isn't about being passive. This isn't about doing your best. This isn't about trying to accomplish something in the world. This is not about being un or non-productive.

**And then, he's so wise, he brings these two ideas together. On one hand, you don't just give**

**up and do nothing. On the other hand, you don't stress yourself out trying to be someone you're not. Then he gives us, again, more imagery that's so powerful. He says, "Better". And for some of us, this is good news. For others of us, this is gonna be a struggle because of the way you're wired, because of your temperament, because of your personality. He says, "Better one handful with tranquility than two handfuls with toil and chasing after the wind". It's better to have one handful of what you were designed to do and what you were created for than to have two handfuls when one of those handfuls is causing you, is just stressing you out because you're trying to keep up with someone you'll never keep up with. He says, at the end of the day, tranquility, even if you have less, is better than having more and losing your peace and losing your tranquility and losing your sense of self and losing yourself.**

Tranquility, what is tranquility? It's a word we don't use a lot. It's just satisfaction. It's contentment. It's going home in the afternoon and going, I did my very best and that's, I'm fine with that. It's laying in bed at night knowing, I have peace because I'm not stressed out trying to be somebody I can't be and trying to accomplish things that maybe I wasn't called or designed to accomplish. But chasing, chasing leaves us wanting more. Again, it's an appetite that can't be satisfied. It's chasing the wind. His point is simply this, that less, less is actually more, that less is actually more when it leads to contentment because the result is peace. The result is peace with yourself and ultimately, it's brings greater peace with the people around you, especially the people that are most important to you.

Better one hand full with tranquility than grasping and striving and pretending and editing and cropping and retaking, no, that's not it, retaking, no, that's not it, retaking, no, that's not it. This is why some of you have gone off of social media, isn't it? It was just driving you crazy. You just found yourself thinking about it all the time. I'm a loser, I'm a loser, I'm a loser, I'm a loser, I'm a loser. No, I'm a loser, I'm a loser, I'm a loser, I'm a loser. Oh, my husband's a loser. My wife, loser, my kids, oh my kids. You just, and you're like, you know, I just can't deal with it anymore and some of you, you know, have been wise enough to decide, you know, I'm just gonna take a vacation.

So here's my suggestion when it comes to that. Now, I've been saying this a long time. Anything, anything that stirs up discontentment in you, just remove it out of your life. Now, I'm not talking about being inspired to do great things and be your best. That's different. But the thing that just leaves you feeling less than, discontent it may be something you subscribe to, maybe a magazine. It may be a website. It may be some social media. But anything that stirs up envy in you, anything that stirs up discontentment in you, anything that stirs up jealousy in you, just remove it because it's feeding that thing that resides in you and resides in me that will be the boss of me, if I allow it to be. Just get rid of it. Cancel that. Quit looking. Quit taking. Quit watching. Quit scrolling. Whatever that might be.

**Now, Solomon's not done because he's got so much to say on this subject and now he takes us a little bit different direction and he says this, he says, Let me tell you something else I've seen. "Again I saw something meaningless", or we would say just ridiculous, "I saw something else meaningless under the sun". Under the sun was his way of saying in this world. There was this guy and he was all alone. "He didn't have a son and he didn't have a**

**brother". Now, in this context when you read a phrase like this, here's what it meant. He didn't have anyone to leave his stuff to because women could not inherit in this culture.**

So here's this guy and he has no son and he has no brother. He has no one to leave his stuff to and Solomon says, but I watched this guy and there was no end to his toil. I mean, he just would not let up, yet his eyes were not content with his wealth. He was just going after it and after it and working and working and working and accumulating and doing more and more and more and just, just, you know, just killing it but just going for it, just had so much focus on what he was doing. And then Solomon says, this guy finally stopped and asked a question, a really important question.

If you're an ambitious person like me, if you love progress like me, if you love accomplishment like me, here's a question you need to ask. Here's a question I need to ask. Here's a question we probably need to ask from time to time. He said, I saw this guy who has, he doesn't have anybody to leave this stuff to and he finally pauses and he asks this question, "For whom am I toiling"? In other words, who am I doing this for really? Well, why am I doing this? What's, this is it. What's really driving me? What am I trying to prove? And here's the tough part, who am I trying to prove it to? Or if you don't like prepositions at the ends of sentences, to whom am I trying to prove it, right?

So here, let me ask you, this is something to think about. This is a question to wrestle to the ground. Why are you, why do you stress yourself out to do everything that you do? Really. And now, again, the fathers, it's like, doing it for my family. Really? So your family's pushing you. You get up in the morning and your family's at the door going, come on, Dad. Get out there and come on, Dad. You can do this. You're doing this for your family. Maybe you are. But maybe there's a deeper answer to that question. Come on, men. Maybe there's more going on. Why are you doing this? Why are you doing this really? For whom are you doing this? Are you internally competing with someone and your competition with the person out there that doesn't even know you're competing with them or the industry out there, they don't even know you exist much less you're competing with them. And in your competition, you're actually alienating the people you say you're doing this for. It happens all the time, doesn't it? This is a great question. For whom am I competing? For whom am I toiling?

For some of you, there's a name. For some of you, there's a face. For some of you, it's your father. For some of you, it's your mother. For some of you, this happens all the time, I'm not trying to, you know, stir up any emotion. For some of you, it's for a deceased parent. You're still trying to prove yourself to someone who's not even around to see. This is an important question because until we have an answer to this question, we may in, be internally striving, envying, we are desiring or we are jealous for their approval. We are jealous, we're jealous for that pat on the head. We're jealous for something we can't even get and we have given up our one handful of tranquility because we have opted for two handfuls of striving and chasing after the wind. Phew. He says this, going, talking about this imaginary person. He says, "And why am I depriving myself of enjoyment".

**Do you ever ask yourself this question? Do you ever come to the realization, oh my goodness. I'm not even enjoying what I have. I don't pause long enough to stop and, you**

**know, just to use that old phrase, smell the roses. I mean, I love my kids. I just don't spend any time with them. I love my wife. I don't spend much time with her. I love my husband but I'm just, I just gotta go, go, go, go, go. I don't even, he says, I don't even enjoy what I'm doing. See, this is the death spiral, isn't it? This is the relational and family death spiral and sometimes we don't understand what's driving it, is something on the inside of us and for some of us, it's envy. And for some of us, it's jealousy. For some of us, it's comparison or just the quest. We're jealous for the approval of somebody or a group of somebodies, in most cases they don't even know we're competing with them. He couldn't enjoy what he had and he didn't know why.**

Solomon says, "This is ridiculous, isn't it"? I mean, hearing me say it, this is just ridiculous. "This to", he says, "is meaningless". I love this phrase. "It is a miserable business". Isn't that great? In other words, it will make you miserable. You'll put a check in every box. You'll accomplish everything on your to-do list. You'll get the award. You'll graduate at the top of your class and you'll go home and you will be miserable because something's driving you and you never put your finger on it.

Now, if you're not a Christian or a religious person, let me just say this to you, okay? You'll never be. You'll never be what you were created or designed or what you have the potential to be. You will never be what you were designed or created or have the potential to be as long as you're looking over your shoulder at what everybody else is becoming. Now, if you're a Christian, this is even more serious because you'll never, you'll never experience, you'll never experience God's purpose for your life if you're distracted by God's purpose for someone else.

Now, this is a big deal. This is a really big deal to me. I grew up with a very successful father and I don't know any other way to say this. I followed him in the family business, so to speak, okay? I mean, my dad is a pastor. There was a time, you know, when I was thinking about ministry and looking at what he was doing. You're gonna think I'm exaggerating. This is, once upon a time, there was no internet. Does anyone remember this? Okay, yes. It was a terrible time, right? This didn't mean anything. In fact, half of the words we use didn't mean anything before the internet, right? In fact, they meant other things. This is kinda funny to think about.

So, before there was an internet, my dad, I mean, this would be amazing now. My dad was on television, short wave radio or radio, preaching in every country of the world every day of the week. He was preaching in every country of the world, every day of the week by television, radio or short wave radio because radio stations would blast his preaching across national boundaries. I'm sure this is somehow illegal and people with short wave radios could listen to him preach when it was illegal to preach in some of those countries. And then I come along, I'm like, yeah, I'm gonna go and be in the ministry. Well, what are you gonna do? I think he did it all. I think it's pretty much all done. I mean, if you're dad's preaching in every country of the world every day of the week then what is there left to do?

**And I just remember struggling. I felt like this is something I wanna do but to fall into the comparison trap, and he was so great. He never put that on me. He never, ever put that on me. I put it on myself and I found myself, like some of us find ourselves, kinda competing with someone who doesn't know there's a competition. Competing with people who would**



**be shocked and feel like, wait, wait. Why do you feel like you're competing. But to find the race that God has called you to run and to find the lane that you're to run in and to quit looking over your shoulder and looking at all the other lanes to see what other people are doing, it is so extraordinarily liberating. And do you know what it does? It allows you to work harder with more peace. You work harder, you get more accomplished with more contentment and you begin to measure success differently.**

Now, I'm still trying to figure this out because this is a tension to manage. So every day, in some capacity, I find myself saying under my breath, "Envy, mm-mm, you're not the boss of me". I'm not going there. I'm not chasing the wind. So here's the phrase that Solomon began all this with. I just gave you the second half. Here's the entire sentence. Here's what he says. This is so powerful. "A heart at peace gives life to the body but envy rots the bones". A heart at peace, that is, this is this internal thing. Finding peace, finding contentment, finding that sense of, I've done all I know to do. I've done my very best. I will be content with one handful and tranquility. He says, "A heart at peace gives life to the body, but it's envy that rots the bones".

In other words, you cannot compete. You cannot compete or compare your way to peace. You cannot compete or compare your way to peace. You cannot win by chasing the wind. Now, here's the thing if you're a Christian. God has given you a race to run, as a parent, as a professional, as a student, as a mentor, as an athlete, as a coach, as the teacher, as whatever it might be. God has given you a race to run. He's given you a lane to run in. So stay there and thrive there. And here's the most important part. And change somebody's world from there because the moment you get out of your lane, and the moment I allow envy and comparison and jealousy to be the boss of me, do you know what I quit doing? I quit being concerned about other people because envy is extraordinarily self-centered. Jealousy is extraordinarily self-centered. I'm gonna have a difficult time caring about you if I'm overly worried and concerned about me.

That's why that ugly, ugly, ugly, embarrassing thing that pops up every once in a while when somebody else fails, where does that come from? That comes from this false sense that the lower you go the higher I get. The less you succeed the more I succeed. What a lie that is. But that's what envy does. That's what jealousy does. Jealousy says if someone else will tear you down, I can feel better about myself. How extraordinarily self-centered is that. And you have been called to live a better life and your better life is found in the lane that God has called you to run in and from that lane, you can do more for other people because you will be less concerned about who and where you are compared to other people.

Sure, there's a time to look to other people. You look at other people for inspiration, not imitation. Read biographies. Be inspired by their stories. Don't be afraid of their success. Envious and people who are eaten up with envy, they don't even like to hear about other people's success. They have a hard time celebrating with other people. Use other people's stories as inspiration not imitation. Celebrate, even in areas where you can't participate. Jordan Peterson says this. I love this statement from his book. He says this, "Compare yourself to who you were yesterday, not to who somebody else is today", from "12 Rules of Life". Isn't that good? If you're gonna do the comparison thing, compare yourself to yourself. Compare yourself to where you were yesterday. In other words, making progress.

**Again, this isn't about sitting on your hands and doing nothing. This is about, to use the phrase, being all you can possibly be and being that God has called you to be. But you compare yourself to where you were yesterday. Love progress. Pursue progress. But don't compare yourself to where somebody else is today or to use some old school language, count your blessings, not your neighbor's. Yeah, right? Count your blessings. Have you ever actually done this? I mean, this may seem so strange, to sit down and to make an actual list of all the things in your life that are a blessing. Do you know what happens when you begin to count your blessings? Something happens on the inside of you. You become grateful. Grateful people are generous people because grateful, generous people are not self-centered people.**

So just count your blessings. Don't worry about everybody else's blessings. God has called you to do something specific and you don't wanna miss it. Don't miss the life that God has for you. You'll never experience. You'll never experience life to the full as long as you are trying to get in on the lane of somebody else around you. You'll never experience your life to the full until you focus on the life that's right in front of you.

So, this afternoon, maybe before you leave here, maybe before you turn, you know, as soon as you go to the next browser, you know, just today, when you find your mind and you find your emotions drifting towards that sense of envy and comparison, and I don't measure up and I'll never have and I'll never drive and I'll never live and I'll never look like that. When tempted to compare, when tempted to compare, then you just really need to stop and declare, and maybe out loud, maybe under your breath, "Envy, you're not the boss of me". Envy, you're not the boss of me. I will not chase the wind. Envy, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. Envy, you're not the boss of me.

In fact, envy, let me show you what I'm gonna do. I'm actually gonna write her a letter and congratulate her on the very thing that makes me hate her, okay? Because you are not the boss of me. I'm not gonna hate her. Watch this, I'm gonna write a letter and I'm going to hand her and congratulate her because, envy, you are not the boss of me. You know what? When he gets home, I'm gonna celebrate him, even though he gets all the attention and I do all the work. Even though she gets all the attention and I do all the work. Whichever way that goes. You know what, envy? I'm not gonna be jealous. I'm not gonna allow jealousy to be the boss of me. I'm going to congratulate him and congratulate her. I'm going to cheer them on until you finally shut your mouth. You are not the boss of me.

**So let's just say this together out loud. Ready? Ready? Everybody, even if you're watching online. Envy, you are not the boss of me. I will not chase the wind. Now, this time with a little more attitude, okay? 'Cause you gotta tell envy, now, real quick. This is not spooky. We're not talking to people or demons or spirits, okay? This is just an exercise to help us get perspective in those moments when our emotions wanna take control.**

So one more time with a little bit more attitude. Ready? Envy, you are not the boss of me. I will not chase the wind. Besides, if you're a Christian, you already have a boss of you and Jesus have you some very specific instructions. I'm gonna read you the implication and then the instructions. The implication is this, now this is such a big deal if you're a Jesus follower. Ready? Don't compare yourself to one another. Love one another. And you can't do both very well. Don't

compare yourself to one another. I've called you to something so much higher and greater. You are to love one another and envy always gets in the way of love.

So this is not a nice to-do. This is mission critical. Jesus said it. I mean this is an amazing statement that I, it should just cause us to wonder every time we hear it. He said, by this, this is how people are gonna know that you're my follower. If you love, if you celebrate, if you cheer on, if you refuse to give in to, if you love one another, that's where peace and that's where purpose is found. It's living out and staying in your lane, head down to the thing that God has called you to do. Celebrate what everybody else is doing and leverage who you are and the opportunities that come your way in order to serve and celebrate other people. That's where the peace is found. And ultimately, that's where purpose is found as well.

So last question and we're done. Is it possible, this is so hard to admit. This is so hard to see in the mirror. Maybe it's impossible to see in the mirror. Is it possible that in some area of your life, envy has become the boss of you? Let me be specific. Is it possible in one relationship that envy has become the boss of you? It's your sister-in-law. It's your bother-in-law. It's your older brother. It's your older sister. My older sister's so smart she doesn't even have to try. I try and I try and I try and she just gets up and it just all works out. Maybe it's just one relationship, in one relationship, in a relationship has envy become the boss of you? What can you do about that? Maybe it's one environment. It's just school. It's on that team. It's at work. Hopefully it's not at home.

**Is there an environment where envy has become the boss of you? You gotta deal with this. Or you'll end up chasing the wind. If you chase the wind, that's meaningless. If you do what's meaningless for too long, your life becomes meaningless. If you do what's meaningless for too long, your life becomes meaningless. If you chase the wind for too long, if you do what's meaningless for too long, your entire life becomes meaningless. Because as I've told you before, the way you find meaning is by becoming a means to an end that's not you and envy will draw you in and suck you in to self-centeredness that drains your life of meaning. You don't want that. You don't wanna model that. The world doesn't need any more of that. So, let's follow Jesus. Unlike envy, he will make your life better and unlike envy, he will make you better at life.**