



## Brown Community Group Discussion Guide

### 7 Deadly Characteristics to Your Godly Peace, Joy and Contentment

August 29, 2021 Lesson 7

As we continue our series today with the **"7 Deadly Characteristics to Your Godly Peace, Joy and Contentment"** we will be focusing primarily on Competitiveness with wrongly placed motives. You will remember from last couple of weeks, we have covered Pride and Selfishness. This week we are exploring a different topic that some will immediately related too, while others may have a hard time grasping this characteristic.

Each of these characteristics can and will totally destroy your Christian Spirit and God's ability to work through you for a Victorious, Peaceful and Content Christian Life:

1. Perfectionism
2. Comparisons
3. Pride
4. Selfishness (Your relationship with God and what serves as its basis)
5. **Competitiveness With Wrongly Placed Motives**
6. Not Recognizing and Using Your God Given Spiritual Gifts
7. Control

As we step through each of these deadly characteristics to our Spiritual conditions, we need to remind ourselves that this whole series is about each of us **Freeing our Heart, Mind, Body and Soul!**

#### **A. Introduction of Competitiveness with Wrongly Placed Motives**

Let me say right up front, so that no one is confused about this topic and lesson today, this is not a lesson to try and discourage competition, your competitive spirit or inner drive to be the best in anything you do! God expects everything we do to be done to its fullest and to the best of our ability. Whether that is something at work, with your family, serving others or some type of sporting activity; you should absolutely try be your best! Reach for the stars and your full potential!

So if you are saying to yourself about now, wow this lesson is really not for me, let's take a second to help all of us understand what some of those wrongly placed motives might look like before you dismiss this characteristic as "your" problem!

With that said, it is very easy to begin to allow extreme competitiveness to seep into every aspect of your life. Over time it can begin driving who you are, how you act and what you focus all your energies on. Let's look at a few situations where your motives begin to affect your competitiveness and poison your actions. Have you had a situation where you cannot be happy for someone who beats you or are better than you at something? This is a problem. Were you not content and at peace when someone else gets that promotion or looks better than you at work? This is a big problem. Have you been in a race, game or competition and could not bring yourself to be happy with someone else winning and you lost? This could be a real problem.

Do you find it hard to find real joy and contentment if someone else is "succeeding", "beating you" or "being better at something" when you feel as if you deserve that prize, position or recognition? These are real danger signals and red flags for your life!! We must critically examine ourselves and our heart! What is truly driving us from the inside?

## **A. Scriptures for Lesson:**

**Ecclesiastes 4:4-6** Then I observed that most people are motivated to success because they envy their neighbors. But this, too, is meaningless—like chasing the wind. “Fools fold their idle hands, leading them to ruin.” And yet, “Better to have one handful with quietness than two handfuls with hard work and chasing the wind.”

**Galatians 6:4** Pay careful attention to your own work, for then you will get the satisfaction of a job well done, and you won't need to compare yourself to anyone else.

**Luke 16:15** And he said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

**Philippians 2:3-4** Do nothing out of rivalry or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves. Everyone should look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

**Romans 12:2** Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

### **Don't envy**

**James 3:14-16** But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don't cover up the truth with boasting and lying. For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.

**Galatians 5:24-26** Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

**Proverbs 14:30** A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.

### **Do it all for the Lord**

**1 Corinthians 10:31** Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

### **Reminders**

**Colossians 3:12** Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

**Isaiah 5:8** Woe to those who join house to house, who add field to field, until there is no more room, and you are made to dwell alone in the midst of the land.

### **Example**

**Luke 9:46-48** *An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside him. Then he said to them, "Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For it is the one who is least among you all who is the greatest."*

**2 Timothy 2:5** *Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules.*

**1 Corinthians 9:25** *Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.*

**2 Corinthians 10:12** *For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding.*

**Romans 2:8** *but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.*

**Ecclesiastes 4:4** *I have seen that every labor and every skill which is done is the result of rivalry between a man and his neighbor. This too is vanity and striving after wind.*

#### **B. Summary Comments on Wrongly Placed Motives in Competitiveness:**

It is often said that **"Envy is the sister of competition"**. Let's think deeply about that for a second. What do you suppose is deep down in your heart that does not allow you to be content or at peace with someone else succeeding? If we are honest, we have to admit that jealousy, envy, pride and selfishness in a toxic mix begin to surface and convince you that you "earned" that recognition or place and it should be yours!

What are your motives for succeeding? What are your motives for winning? When we allow selfish ambition and envy to take hold of our heart and actions, we begin to move away from what God had intended for us. Good healthy and fun competition begins to resemble a dog eat dog war that is supposed to be won at all costs. We will also find many times that Comparisons are at the core of our wrongly placed motives.

As we try to understand and listen to God in this area, we just need to remember that we are stewards of our talents and they are to be used for his purpose. We are to focus on Him, to be fair and honest, do our best and let God control the rest. Only when we can mature and sanctify our thoughts and actions in this way, can we begin to "free ourselves" from the stress and confinement that this world always seems to competitively force us to believe.

#### **C. Questions for Small Group Discussion:**

1. How does Ecclesiastes 4:4-6 perfectly capture for Christians the dilemma that confronts us every day?
2. What does Galatians 6:4-6 tell us to focus on when we compete or work hard for something?
3. What does Philippians 2:3-4 warn us about when we are winning or competing?

4. How do comparisons enter into the equation when dealing with Competition? How do we not allow the negative part of comparisons to enter our thinking and actions?
5. If envy is the Sister to Competitiveness, then how can a person be happy and content if they are consumed or driven by envy?
6. Give me some specific names of competitors that you would say exhibited humility and grace with winning?
7. What does God say in His Word about the way to change our sinful desire of envy or comparison?