

# ENEMIES OF THE HEART SERIES OVERVIEW

What does God want more than anything else? Our heart. Jesus names our heart as the source of our actions, so in order to , we've got to go to the heart of the problem – to the four enemies of our heart – anger, guilt, jealousy, and selfishness.

April 15 // Anger –

Anger comes from being wronged by another person, and is the belief that you owe me. Like a poison, it begins to infect all of our relationships until everyone owes us. The biblical remedy is forgiveness.

April 22 // Guilt –

Guilt is the belief that I owe you, I have taken something from you. When we carry guilt in our life, we can become trapped in shame, and believe that we are not worth forgiving, and doomed to repeat our mistakes. God wants us to be free! The biblical remedy is confession and making things right.

April 29 // Jealousy –

On the outside, we are jealous of what other people have, but deep down, jealousy is the belief that God owes me. Why hasn't God given me what they have? Jealousy hardens our heart towards God and ruins our friendships as we concentrate on all that we don't have. The biblical remedy is to celebrate with those we envy.

May 6 // Selfishness –

Selfishness is the belief that I owe me. I become consumed with having everything that I want, and I put myself first. I can be selfish with my stuff, money, time, or future. This is the opposite of the greatest commandment to love God and love others. The biblical remedy is generosity.

# ENEMIES OF THE HEART

Bottom Line: Anger is the attitude of “You owe me” and is destructive to our relationships, and gives Satan an opening into our lives. The biblical remedy is forgiveness.

Scripture: Ephesians 4:26-32

1. When and where do you find yourself becoming angry? Are there certain people or situations that trigger you?
2. Have you seen how destructive anger can be in someone’s life?
3. How do you deal with anger when it comes?
4. When is it right to be angry? When is it wrong to be angry? (*see Ephesians 4:26*)
5. What happens when we do not deal with our anger? (*Ephesians 4:27, we give the devil an opening to our heart*)
6. How does Jesus’ forgiveness towards us compel us to forgive others?
7. What keeps us from forgiving others?
8. How does it change your perspective when you focus on how God has forgiven you?

## Closing

Encourage your students this week to read Matthew 21:18-35. God can only forgive you as much as you forgive others – so if you don’t forgive others, he cannot forgive you. How does this truth compel you to forgive those who have hurt you?

## Dealing with Anger

Forgive just as Christ forgave you.

# ENEMIES OF THE HEART

Bottom Line: Guilt becomes a heavy debt of “I owe you”, and affects all our relationships. The biblical remedy is confession & making things right.

Scripture: Luke 19, 1 John 1:9, Numbers 5:5-7

1. What is your earliest memory of doing something that made you feel guilty?
2. When in your life has guilt been used to motivate you? At home or church? Did it work?
3. Does God want us to feel guilty? Is there a difference between feeling guilty and holding on to guilt for past sins?
4. Why can't we just ask for God's forgiveness and move on? See Matthew 5:23-24 below.

*“If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.*

5. How does the Bible say that we should deal with guilt? (1. confess to someone who can hold you accountable, 2. confess to the person you have sinned against, 3. when possible, make it right)
6. Why does the Bible ask us to confess to people and make things right?
7. Have you ever confessed to a person before?
8. How does hiding our sins cost us more than confessing them?
9. How does confession lead to a changed life?

## Closing

If appropriate, have your students break into smaller groups and pray for one another, citing the verse below.

*James 5:16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.*

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Bottom Line: Jealousy says “God owes me,” and isolates us from others. The biblical remedy is to celebrate with those we are jealous of.

Scripture: James 4

1. When you were growing up, who were you jealous of?
2. What makes you jealous now – popularity, money, appearance, stuff, a different family, relationships?  
*(Leaders – go around the circle and have everyone answer this question).*
3. How is jealousy dangerous to our friendships?
4. Who do you usually blame for what others have and you don’t when you are jealous?
5. Fighting jealousy begins with going right to the source – God. How does it make you feel to admit your dissatisfaction with God?
6. What do you believe that God owes you – something others have, but you don’t? in your family? At school? Within your own talents?
7. How do you react to God when he doesn’t give you what you want, like James talks about?
8. James tells us that if we ask God, he will give us what we want. What does he mean by this?
9. How does celebrating with someone that we are jealous of help us have a change of heart?

Closing

Have the students privately choose one person that they struggle being envious of and pray for that person every day this week.

# ENEMIES OF THE HEART

Bottom Line: Selfishness says, “I owe me”, I deserve whatever I want, and it puts what I want ahead of loving others. The biblical remedy is a generous heart.

Scripture: Luke 12:15 - 21

1. When you think of selfishness, who or what comes to mind?
2. What are some ways that you notice selfishness or greed in your own life? (*phones, ipods, clothes, having the newest and the best, needing to buy what we want right away*)
3. Why is selfishness an appetite that can never be satisfied?
4. Another way to look at greed is an attitude of never being satisfied. Are there other things in your life that you cannot get enough of besides stuff and money? (*time, food, etc*)
5. Why is selfishness not an issue of getting stuff or money, but a heart issue?
6. What does a greedy attitude say about our trust that God will provide?
7. The most important command God gives us is to Love God and Love Others. How does a selfish heart get in the way of this most important thing?
8. Have you ever personally been generous in a way that was sacrificial? How did being generous affect your heart?
9. What can you do this week to guard your heart against selfishness and greed?

Closing

- If it works for you, have your students break into smaller groups to discuss one thing they can do this week to give themselves away.
- Encourage them to find their own place on the global rich list to put things into perspective.