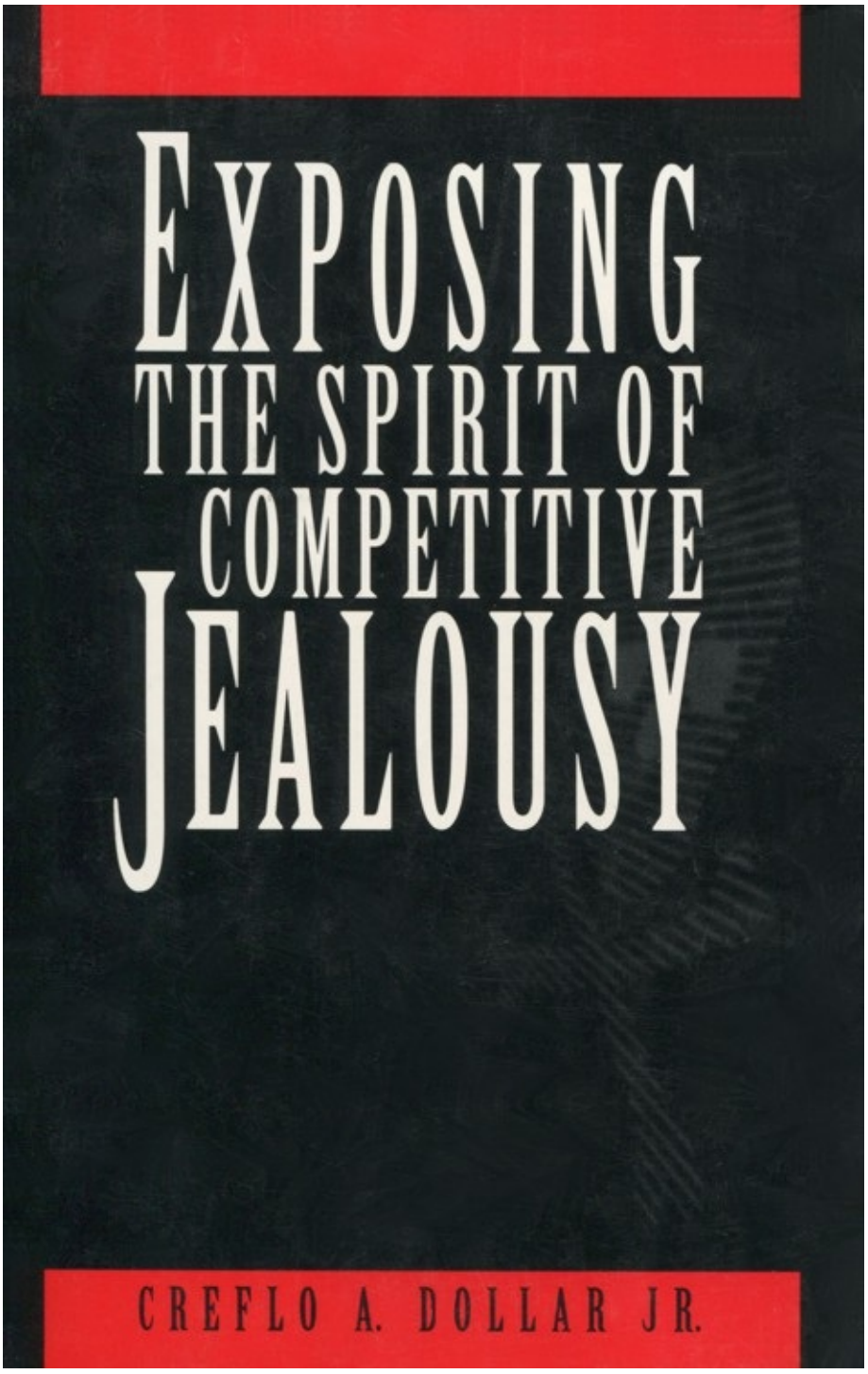
EXPOSING THE SPIRIT OF COMPETITIVE JEALOUSY

CREFLO A. DOLLAR JR.



Exposing the Spirit of Competitive

Jealousy

By

Pastor Creflo A. Dollar Jr.

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Chapter 1

The Spirit of Competitive Jealousy

1

There is a deadly spirit at work in the earth today. It is

a force that is doubly dangerous because it is so subtle. Allow it to operate unchecked in your life and it will destroy everything God wants to do in you. It is the spirit of competitive jealousy.

The spirit of competitive jealousy has been seducing God's people since the beginning of creation. It is vital that you understand this spirit because of its insidious cunning and its potential to do enormous damage if allowed to work its destructive way.

In fact, it could be harming your life right now and you not really be aware of it, because you do not know what the problem is or what is causing you to do the things you do.

The spirit of competitive jealousy is a deceptive enemy which steals in unnoticed and does great damage to your soul and your relationship with others. Yes, even if you are a Christian.

First, let's define terms.

Competition

The words competitive and competition come from the root word to compete which simply means "to seek or to

strive for the same things as another, to carry on a contest or a rivalry for a common objective." It is competition or rivalry to seek to obtain the same goal or the same objectives as another.

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Exposing the Spirit of Competitive Jealousy

Competition, in and of itself, can be good or bad. Like anything else, it depends upon your perspective or context.

For example, there is a correct context for hate. I pray that God would give me a hate for the presence of sin in my life. When I hate sin, I am walking in the fear of the Lord. In this context, hate is acceptable.

If, however, I hate my brother or sister, then I am walking in sin. There are right and wrong contexts to these things.

The same is true for competition. At the most basic level, competition or competitiveness, is striving for the same things as another or carrying on a contest or a rivalry for common objectives. This is neither good nor bad. It is the context that makes the difference.

Jealousy

Jealousy is the sense of uneasiness or anxiety that stems from the fear of preference being given to another. If, for example, a mutual friend invited you over to his house for dinner and not me, I might become uneasy. I could get into fear trying to figure out why you preferred him over me.

Why is this so dangerous? Because as I begin to compare myself with my brother in Christ, an uneasiness creeps in, stemming from the fear that you prefer someone else over me. A rivalry has developed. There now exists a contest between me and this other person to gain your attention and win your approval.

Competitive Jealousy

Take the powerful drive of competitiveness, combine it

with the volatile poison of jealousy and you have a lethal combination. But competitive jealousy is more than an emotion, it’s a spirit. A spirit that has been confronting God’s people since the very beginning of time.

It was competitive jealousy that triggered Satan's forcible ejection from Heaven. Cain killed his brother Abel in a fit of competitive jealousy. It was competitive jealousy that separated Jacob and Esau for so many years. And it was the force that moved Joseph's brothers to sell him into slavery in Egypt.

The objective of this very subtle spirit is to deceive you and to keep you from reaching your full potential in God. Child of God, please understand this. When you allow the spirit of competitive jealousy to control your life, it will stop you from being all that God has designed you to be. The spirit deceives you and that deception blinds you from seeing what God has prepared you to be. It hinders you from being all you can be in Christ.

If I am concentrating on why I don't measure up to Brother Jones, then I am not fulfilling nor reaching my full potential that God would have me achieve in the things He has called me to do.

Competitive jealousy urges me to compare my clothes, my house, my financial position or my ministry with others. Competitive jealousy drives me to compare myself

with someone else. It always provokes me to compete for favor, for position, for power, for authority, for influence. Ultimately, the spirit of competitive jealousy will compel me to criticize others in order to make myself look better.

The Comparison Trap

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Exposing the Spirit of Competitive Jealousy

The media is constantly bombarding us with images of the so-called “perfect man.” We’re told what we’re supposed to look like and how we’re supposed to dress. All are part of the false image of what it takes for a man to have the right to feel good about himself..

Then, when you look at yourself and compare yourself to that image promoted by TV and to your great surprise, you discover that you do not measure up—you bust your gut in a quest for that firmer physique, knowing full well that you will never have bulging biceps or a washboard stomach like those body-builders on TV.

You waste a tremendous amount of time and effort chasing an illusion in an attempt to raise yourself to the

standard to which you are comparing yourself.

The same is true of women. There is in the mind of the popular culture, the idea of the perfect woman. She looks nothing like anyone I know in real life.

Starving yourself cannot create what nature has not supplied. As a result, many women are trapped in a cycle of guilt and denial concerning their physical appearance. This not only affects the body, but the mind and emotions suffer as well.

Who knows how much depression among women in this country is caused by trying to compete with the false images of Madison Avenue. It is simply not fair.

In fact it is not God's will for you to get caught up in a devastating quest to measure up to phony standards of perfection. He did not intend us to endlessly compare ourselves with these images. These are not His standards.

Many Christians, frustrated by the lack of success in measuring up and the real inner knowledge that such standards are false, resort to criticism.

We say, “Look at that girl! She’s probably anorexic. Who needs such a tiny waist anyway?” We think if we cut others down it will make us look better at their expense.

The spirit of competitive jealousy is a subtle, but very active enemy of the people of God. It will provoke a person to compete for favor, position, authority and influence. This unnecessary competition sidetracks us from seeking the true goals God desires us to achieve. Competitive jealousy causes us to lower our standards from the divine to the false and corrupt images which this world promotes.

The end result of chasing the artificial dreams of this fallen world is always ruin and despair. Thank God that we do not have to remain in such a state. There is a way of rescue from the destruction of competitive jealousy.

Before we examine the way out, we must realize how we got in.

It’s essential that you understand how this insidious spirit operates.

Chapter 2

The Nature of Competitive

2

Jealousy

You'll find the origin of competitive jealousy described in the book of Isaiah. There, we discover even Heaven was not immune from the ravages of this destructive force. Read beginning in verse 12 of the 14th chapter of the book of Isaiah, taking special notice to the repetition of the word "I":

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. (Isaiah 14:12-15)

Whenever you encounter an "I" minded person, you will also encounter the subtle spirit of competitive jealousy. This caused the downfall of Satan. He compared

himself to the Almighty God and actually believed that he could compete with the sovereign of the universe.

The world may call such talk “confidence,” but God calls it pride. For this folly he was cast out of the presence of God and now seeks to spread his vile addiction to man.

You encounter his influence everyday. Competitive jealousy is one of Satan’s primary legacies to mankind.

This is so important. We must know the origin and

nature of this spirit if we are to combat its influence in our lives.

The Demonic Pecking Order

Look with me at Ephesians 6:12.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

This makes it perfectly clear that our battle is not with one another, although it may seem that way at times.

What we are examining goes much deeper than surface

relationships. Dealing with the spirit of competitive jealousy means cutting to the root of why individuals act the way they do. We are exploring what motivates us to act and react. There are underlying causes to our behaviors which at first glance are not readily apparent.

In the passage in Ephesians, there are four classes or ranks of demonic forces, defined from lowest to highest. The lowest are the principalities; the highest rank is spiritual wickedness in high places.

The lower class demons are the type that cause somebody to curse, act foolishly, spin around and spit green stuff.

The high class demons are those that are much more sophisticated in their operation. They function more on an intellectual level. They want their work to go on unnoticed until it is too late. They function very subtly and maintain an undercover type of status. They seek to sneak into your life with stealth and deception to destroy you. These are the spirits which cause the most damage.

A Subtle, Sophisticated Spirit

The Nature of Competitive Jealousy

Competitive jealousy originates with spiritual forces in high places—the highest order of demonic power. It is a very sophisticated type of spirit. Let me illustrate the nature of this demonic force from the passage of scripture found in Ezekiel 8:3-6.

And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy. And, behold, the glory of God of Israel was there, according to the vision that I saw in the plain. Then said he unto me, Son of man, lift up thine eyes now the way toward the north. So I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north, and behold northward at the gate of the alter this image of jealousy in the entry. He said furthermore to me, Son of man, seest thou what they do? even the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go off from my

sanctuary? but turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations.

Here the prophet describes where the forces of spiritual wickedness in high places reside. In this vision Ezekiel sees the seat of jealousy.

God finds jealousy is disgusting. It is an abomination in His eyes. I emphasize this in order to reveal the deception into which a lot of Christians become trapped. You may have heard someone say, “I don’t kill. I don’t do drugs. I don’t do horrible things. I may have a little problem with jealousy, but so what.” Perhaps you have caught yourself rationalizing sin away in this manner.

The truth is, if you don’t rid yourself of competitive jealousy, it won’t be long before you are killing and doing drugs and behaving in all sorts of horrible ways in order

to compete with the false standard you’ve set up for yourself.

You will become preoccupied with comparing yourself with others only to discover you have failed to reach the

very thing for which you have been competing. Envy, depression and shattered self-esteem are just around the corner.

It may not be long before you're reaching for pills to change the way you feel. This spirit of competitive jealousy is so very subtle. You can be ruined before you are even aware of your real motives.

Equal Access

If you've seen yourself in any of the things I've just described, take heart. All is not lost. God sent His Son, Jesus, who suffered, bled, died and went to hell so that we all could be His joint-heirs. His death enables us to enjoy all the rights, privileges and access to God that Jesus has. That's right! As a result of what Christ has done for us, God has given us equal access to His throne room. But when you get caught up in comparing yourself to someone else, you undo all that Christ has done. He died so that you don't have to compare yourself with anyone else ever again.

God's grace not only makes the playing field level; it allows every pitiful sinner to be raised up from the gutter

to a seat with Jesus at the right hand of the Father in heaven.

This acceptance from God is not based on talent, looks or any form of conduct. God's approval of any man comes only through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. His blood applied to our hearts makes us acceptable.

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The Nature of Competitive Jealousy

Our competing jealousies of one another and one another's ministries are idolatry in the sight of God. They shift our focus from worshipping God to worshipping self. Competitive jealousy wraps us up in trying to come up to par with what we are comparing ourselves.

Instead of all that focus being given to worshipping God, it is wasted on futile attempts to measure up to some false standard of the image to which we are comparing ourselves.

Giving all of our attention to something is worshipping another god. That is idolatry. Remember that God said, **"I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God."** God is jealous for

our attention and worship. Why else did He send His only son to die for folks who seem to be oblivious of Him at best and outright hostile at worst?

Competitive jealousy turns us into gods of self-worship. We are trying to perfect ourselves according to a self-made plan of what we think is right. We are comparing ourselves to what we see in this world. We have ceased to know and live by the truth that Jesus has made us joint-heirs with Him and that He has given us equal rights and access to the throne of God based on His finished work on the cross.

It is the nature of the spirit of competitive jealousy to divert the attention of the believer from this beautiful fact of the Christian life. This unholy spirit steals in and says that you do not measure up to some man-made image of perfection. Desiring to be accepted, you fall into deception by believing the lie.

The deception deepens until your whole being is concentrated upon reaching for the illusion of perfection that you have devised in your heart. Yet, all your efforts are doomed to fail because the image is false.

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Exposing the Spirit of Competitive Jealousy

So much wasted energy has been spent on striving for something that you already have in Jesus. It is the nature of this spirit of competitive jealousy to divert your attention from worshipping the one true God to dedicating your mind and energies to seeking to measure up to some false standard of perfection.

Acceptance will never be gained by your hard work. It can only be yours by surrendering yourself to Jesus Christ.

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Chapter 3

A Classic Example of Competitive

3

Jealousy

Every believer wants to find success in the Christian life. But to be successful, you must understand how success is measured.

For the Christian, success is not measured in the same way as the world measures it. Success in God’s eye is measured by three things: obedience, faithfulness and the

attitudes of the heart. King Saul is a classic example of failure through the deception of competitive jealousy.

He Failed to Obey

Samuel also said unto Saul, The Lord sent me to anoint thee to be king over His people, over Israel; now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass... And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and of the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them; but everything that was vile and refuse that they destroyed utterly.... (I Samuel 15:1-3, 8-9)

Exposing the Spirit of Competitive Jealousy

“Now therefore hearken unto the words of the Lord.”

Hearken means to hear and to do. There is always the element of obedience implied in a Word from God.

Saul did not hearken to the words of the Lord. He didn’t do what he was told. Why? Because he was dominated by competitive jealousy.

The objective of the spirit of competitive jealousy is to keep you from reaching your potential in God. It does this by deceiving you. That is how it operates to hinder you from achieving all that God has designed for you. It functions through deception.

Deception is thinking that you are right when you are wrong. The instructions of the Lord were clear and precise, easy to follow; but Saul thought he knew better.

His Disobedience Exposed

... Then came the word of the Lord unto Samuel saying: It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king; for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the Lord all night.

And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set him up a place, and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal. And Samuel came to Saul; and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the Lord; I have performed the commandment of the Lord. And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed. (I Samuel 15:10-15)

A Classic Example of Competitive Jealousy

It is always refreshing to see God's sense of humor revealed in the Bible. You can almost see the prophet's facial expressions, as he puts a hand to his ear and asks the king in his most sarcastic vocal tones, "If you have obeyed the Lord, then why do I hear the sounds of animals?"

If Saul was to utterly destroy everything—sheep, oxen-

everything; then just what was making those sheep and oxen sounds? Competitive jealousy puts you in a position where you are always trying to explain your own deception and cover your sin.

His Deception Was Deep

Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the Lord hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, say on. And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel? And the Lord sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the Lord? And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which

should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in Gilgal. (I Samuel 15:16-21)

The situation ceases to be funny as the deception of the king is made clear. He actually thinks that he has carried out the commandment of the Lord. Tragically, King Saul thought he was being spiritual when he was only being religious.

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Exposing the Spirit of Competitive Jealousy

It was a tradition to return from battle with the spoils of war. It was a sure sign of success. Victory in battle was proven by displaying the best of the enemy's property. Naturally, some of this "cream of the crop" spoil was given to the priests to make sacrifices to the Lord for granting the victory. This was a tradition—a religious custom.

In this case, Saul was following the customs of his people. The Bible says that the traditions of men have made the Word of God of no effect. Saul acted religiously, but he did not obey God.

The king's crime is further compounded by his attempt

to shift the blame from himself to the people. He attempts to explain his deception, but the prophet would hear no excuses.

God's Preference

And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. (I Samuel 15:22)

Samuel clears away any confusion in the mind of King Saul by laying out the facts. Under normal conditions, the king might have been within his rights to keep the sheep and oxen as spoils of war, but in this instance to do so meant disobeying the voice of God.

Given the choice between some old burnt offering and obedience, which one do you think God would prefer? Clearly, God prefers obedience.

Partial obedience is no different than outright disobedience. Delayed obedience is disobedience. When God tells you to do something, you had better do it.

If God says, “Join that church,” and you say, “I’ll do it next week.”; that is disobedience. When God tells you to do a certain thing, you cannot get away with only doing half of it. Partial or delayed obedience is no different than rebellion.

No Small Thing

For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king. (I Samuel 15:23-26)

The prophet puts things in perspective as far as God is concerned. This oversight on the part of the king was no small thing. This was not simply a harmless mistake in judgment that could be easily dismissed.

The reason God could not just sweep this incident under the rug was that this action revealed the true motivations of King Saul’s heart. His actions spoke clearly concerning his attitudes and motivating thoughts. This is a classic case of competitive jealousy.

Finally, Light! But Too Late

And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I

have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice. (I Samuel 15:24)

Now, we get to the nitty gritty of Saul's problem. The king admits that he feared the people and chose to obey their voice over the voice of God. Out of fear he allowed the people to keep the spoils of the battle.

Saul got his eyes off of what he was supposed to be doing—destroying the Amalekites—because he was

looking at the wrong thing in comparison. He wanted approval from the people and out of fear of their disapproval refused to make them stop.

When God speaks, there can be no comparison with it. When God tells you to do something, you don't look around to check to see what the other folks are doing. "Why does God have me praying for four hours a day? Why isn't Brother Jones having to pray, too?" Don't fall into that trap. When you start making comparisons you are headed for trouble. Do what God told you to do.

Saul didn’t. As a result of his transgression, he lost his anointing to be king over Israel. It was too late for Saul to change his fate, but it is not too late for you.

Learn from Saul’s example. Take a long look at the man. He was deceived and was prohibited from fulfilling the potential that God had for his life.

Are You Hearkening?

Are you listening to and obeying the Word of the Lord? Are you doing what God has called you to do? Or are you delaying obedience because the thing God has told you to do seems small or insignificant to you?

Child of God, as far as the Lord is concerned there are no small things when it comes to the issue of obedience. When God asks you to do something, He doesn’t see it in terms of being great or small. He sees it as a vital question of obedience. But rest assured, those who are faithful in small things will be entrusted with much more (Luke 19:17).

Are you content, regardless of whether the call God has on your life is a public or private one? In other words, does it bother you that God is using you behind the scenes

A Classic Example of Competitive Jealousy

where nobody notices and nobody can see?

When you start comparing your private call with someone else's public, high profile call, you will find yourself moving out of your anointing and focusing on things you can do publicly. You'll connive and scheme until what you are doing is noticed by others.

When that happens you've stepped out of the will of God, out from under the anointing, out of His covering of grace. At that point you are not achieving any of the things God has called you to do. You are not reaching your potential in Christ Jesus.

You had better learn to prefer to scrub floors in private and receive the crowns of glory, than to move into the spotlight and do something you're not called to do. Are you content with a private call? The Bible promises great blessings for those who serve in secret.

King Saul serves as a great example to us of what not to do. But we must not judge him without first applying the truths of his experience to our own lives.

You don’t have to suffer the loss of position or the humiliation that Saul did. You can learn from his example and save much pain.

Guard yourself against the spirit of competitive jealousy. It’s a dangerous poison that can contaminate even the purest in heart.

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Chapter 4

The Results of Competitive

4

Jealousy

What does competitive jealousy look like? It takes many forms, some more blatant than others. In this chapter we’ll examine some of the varying ways this destructive force can appear.

Self-Promotion

Let me bring our examination of the spirit of competitive jealousy closer to home by posing a question. Are you trying to climb a corporate spiritual ladder of success?

In the corporate world you know how important it is

to climb that ladder of success. You're aware of all the politics involved in climbing that corporate ladder. If your superior doesn't like you, your career is doomed. No matter how good a job you do, if you are not liked; you will go nowhere. That's just the way things are.

Tragically, a similar manipulative spirit has attached itself to the church. You can seek to impress people in their presence and act entirely different when they are not around. You can rub elbows with the pastor, hoping to gain some special place in his heart.

A good pastor will not be affected by such scheming. He will only do what God tells him to do. If he can be influenced by your behavior, he can be controlled by other things more powerful and more lethal.

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Exposing the Spirit of Competitive Jealousy

The good pastor has discovered that God-ideas are always better than good-ideas because God's ideas are already anointed and will get results. Good ideas may be only that, good ideas. They may go nowhere and produce nothing.

Are you serving in the church only to promote yourself? Do you have an agenda to advance in order to receive glory from men? The first step in defeating the spirit of competitive jealousy is to examine your motives. As you do, remember, competitive jealousy can take many forms.

Young pastors may begin to compare their churches to those of other pastors. That is competitive jealousy. They need to keep their eyes on Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Nothing but more stress and futile efforts result from watching statistics and comparing their congregation to that big church down the street.

Women often try to run the pastor's wife or attempt to usurp authority by pushing their agenda for the women's ministry. A battle ensues between those competing for attention and limited funds. Church fights can get ugly. Women controlled by the spirit of competitive jealousy can wreak great havoc in an otherwise healthy body.

Associate Pastors with big dreams and visions don't always remain satisfied with submitting themselves to the pastor. Many fall into the trap set for them by Satan.

“What does he have that I don’t have,” they say to themselves. “I can preach just as good as he can. God speaks to me, too.”

A lead singer may attempt to overrule the choir director because she knows she is the only one in the choir with the range to sing a certain song. Everybody in the choir begins to compare themselves to her. Following her

example, there are suddenly too many chiefs and not enough Indians. A soloists whose voice cracks every once and while, but sings from her heart is much better than one who sings flawlessly but is motivated by competitive jealousy.

Secretaries can become possessive of their job duties. They can be heard to remark, “why is she doing that? That is my job. I wonder why I wasn’t told about this.” It is truly amazing how fast words can run. The fastest thing in this world is not some supersonic jet. It is gossip whispered by competitive lips to jealous ears.

Entry level staff members frequently try to elevate

themselves on the organizational chart. When they join the staff, they try to figure out ways to stroke their superiors to gain approval.

These are just a few of the manipulative ways the spirit of competitive jealousy can be manifested.

Personal Offenses

One of the most common examples of competitive jealousy is when one church member becomes offended over the promotion of a newer member to a role of leadership.

This is competition among the rank and file. Entire church bodies may be involved in this on some level. This is such a subtle thing; it can take over the hearts of people with the best intentions.

Department heads can feel their programs deserve priority over the others. Competitive jealousy can turn a normally docile, compassionate man into a bitter old goat, bent on vengeance.

When a leader feels like he has been passed over or

slighted, his offended attitude can be contagious. The wedges of many a church split have been driven by men in leadership who hold on to an offense. This is just another expression of the spirit of competitive jealousy at work.

Wrong Values Let me illustrate with a biblical example. Look at the book of Luke, the tenth chapter, beginning in verse 38:

Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone?"

Martha was saying of Mary that she needs to get up off of her bottom and get in the kitchen and help! Martha was making a comparison based on the values in her heart. Martha saw herself as more spiritual based on her works. She may have even reached a point of criticism with her sister. "Who does she think she is?" But before you

begin to look down on her, check your own heart and actions. Have you ever said in your heart, “Well, now I’m a leader. I can’t possibly be troubled with cleaning up after the fellowship.” Or “I have received a revelation from God, I am above waiting on tables.”

We criticize to make ourselves look better when all along we know we should be in the same place. It is so easy to criticize. Again, the root of the action is competitiveness and jealousy.

It is important to note how Jesus puts things in perspective on one occasion. Remember when Martha was upset because Mary had left her to do all the work?

The Results of Competitive Jealousy

Martha thought the most important thing at the moment was to get things cleaned up. Jesus’ response was much different. In contrast to Martha’s complaints, Jesus probably shook his head, thinking that she just had not gotten it yet.

With masterful tact, the savior replies , **“Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things.”** (Luke

10:41)

Stress and busy-ness are two sure signs that competitive jealousy is involved.

Jesus pointed out to Martha what was necessary. **“One thing is needful...”** He told her (Luke 10:41).

Christ paints a vivid picture with this word “needful.”

In the natural we all have certain physiological needs. There are things that one must have to sustain life. Jesus was using this example from everyday life to describe spiritual needs. Just as there are things which are needful to sustain physical life, there are certain things which are needful to sustain spiritual life.

Jesus says THE WORD IS NEEDFUL. If you will find yourself involved in that which is needful, rather than finding yourself involved in comparison and competitive jealousy, that which is needful will guard your heart and your mind and keep you in a position of obedience to God.

Comparing myself to the Word of God produces positive change in me. When I get into the Word I must continue to adjust my attitudes and actions to remain obedient. I recognize that comparing myself to the Word

of God is a continuous thing. I know that I am not going to be like Jesus until I see Him, but when I see Him I know that I am going to be just like Him.

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Chapter 5

Overcoming Competitive Jealousy

5

Maintain a Proper Perspective

By now you may have begun to identify with the damage competitive jealousy can do.

Perhaps you recalled the way you felt when you saw some rich or attractive person on TV. Of course, there is nothing wrong with wealth or good looks—as long as things are in perspective. Just make sure that whatever you do, you do it because you got it from the Word of God. You don't want to do anything simply because you are comparing yourself with someone else.

Paul said **"Follow me as I follow Christ."** (I Corinthians 11:1) You can follow a man, but when you follow that person to the point where you neglect to allow those beautiful characteristics that God has put in your life

to come forth, things are out of perspective.

People have been heard to say, “Oh, I want to be just like Mr. and Mrs. Jones when I get married.” They don’t understand. There may be some beautiful qualities that God has given that couple. Yes, you are to follow their example as far as the Word of God is concerned.

But to try to duplicate those very special qualities that God has given them at the expense of ruling out those unique qualities God has given you is wrong.

If you do, the Body of Christ will not have the opportunity to be affected by the attributes God has given you that the other couple does not have. You have to keep

it in balance or you could miss out on something very remarkable that you have to offer the Body as you attempt to copy someone else’s walk with Jesus.

Follow them as they follow Jesus. You can do that without hindering the work of the Holy Spirit in your life. God wants you to be the very best you that you can be for Him.

Chapter 6

Eight Steps to Freedom

6

Perhaps, as you've read the preceding pages, you've recognized some of the symptoms of competitive jealousy in your life. If so, you'll want to get it out of your life right away. The good news is you can.

These eight steps will break the grip of competitive jealousy on your life and heart. You can be free from the subtle spirit of competitive jealousy.

Number One: Take Stock of your Motives, Honestly.

Take a personal inventory of the motivations behind the things you do. Are your motivations right or wrong? As you look inward, do you sense some involvement of competitive jealousy? Take stock of your motives and your life; do it honestly.

You are going to have to be totally honest with yourself and God in order to be delivered of the awful shadow. Don't walk around denying that it is not there.

Don’t try to convince yourself that this doesn’t apply to you, when you are the very one who needs to hear it most. If you do, someday, somewhere, the vile spirit of competitive jealousy will raise its ugly head. By then it may be too late; not too late for salvation, but too late to salvage the potential that God had planned for you.

The first step to freedom is to honestly take stock of your motives.

Number Two: Repent!

After you have examined yourself, repent in the areas in your life where you have found the influence of competitive jealousy. Repent means to change your mind, change direction. In this case, it is a change of heart concerning comparing yourself to others. Repent and forgive others who have competed jealously against you. First, you must repent of competitive jealousy in your life; then, if you know of anyone who has been involved in competitive jealousy with you, forgive them as well, because it has been putting pressure on both parties.

Number Three: Exercise Authority Over this Evil Spirit

Exercise your authority over the spirit of competitive jealousy in the name of Jesus. You have authority in His name not to have your life controlled by this vile spirit. Exercise your authority. Yes, you can help it. You have been given authority in the name of Jesus to help it.

Number Four: Exercise the Spirit of Understanding

Learn to exercise the spirit of understanding in every situation. Begin to see things from God's perspective. When you begin to see things from God's vantage point, you're no longer seeing it from the world's view.

Begin to have spiritual understanding of certain areas in which you had previously tried to compare yourself with others. Understand that it is the will of the Father that you keep your eyes on Him. Don't look to the right or to the left and you will not get off into those things which are according to the world's system.

Number Five: Guard Your Heart

Guard your heart by setting a watch over what you see and what you hear. That is where it starts. What you see and what you hear becomes your influence.

Watch over your eyes and ears. Stop comparing yourself or your ministry with others and be content to do what God has called you to do. Stop comparing your hairdo with others. Be content. Wear what you wear; don't get caught up in keeping up with the Joneses. Look good, but concentrate on obeying the voice of God.

Quit comparing yourself with others—the car they drive, the house they live in—and learn how to do just what God has told you to do. Be content with what God has given you and what He has called you to do. Watch what you hear and see. Guard your heart.

Number Six: Major on Being a Servant

Major on being a servant and let God exalt you in due time. Hold on to the promises of God through faith and patience. The Bible calls exalting yourself pride and pride guarantees one thing: a shameful fall. It is inevitable. It may not happen this month or the next, but it will come.

A man who operates in pride and competitive jealousy

will be brought down low and feel the shame. Let God exalt you in due time, in His time. Don't be comparing your small ministry with somebody else's big ministry. The Bible says that the end is better than the beginning. Your beginning may not be looking so good right now, but stay in faith and the end is going to be better than the beginning.

Major on being a servant and let God exalt you according to His timing.

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Exposing the Spirit of Competitive Jealousy

Number Seven: Be Glad when a Brother or Sister is Exalted.

Instead of saying, "You think you're too good to hang around with me now that you got a new car." Rejoice with them. Be glad when a brother is blessed. Don't compare what you have with what they have received. **"Rejoice with those who rejoice."**

Don't get caught up in asking, "Why them and not me?" Be glad. What you should understand is that you have no business comparing yourself with them when it

was God who has done this thing. Your due season will come if you keep on keeping on where God has called you.

The fact is, you may not be ready yet. Continue to be faithful and content where God has placed you and operate in that. When others are blessed or get a promotion, rejoice with them. Be glad for them. Shout the victory; do a dance!

I remember when I bought my last home. A friend came over, walked through it, and began to weep. I said, "Man, what is wrong with you?" He said, sobbing, "I am so happy. I am so happy for you. It is just as if I got blessed."

I said, "Wow! this guy is setting himself up to get blessed in the future like nobody's business." It happened, too. Be glad. Don't sit there and compare yourself with other folks. Be glad.

Number Eight: Build Confidence in God's Love for You

Build up your confidence in the knowledge that God loves you by spending time with him in praise and

worship and reading the word. Listen to His voice and

obey. Build up your faith in God’s love for you by getting to know Him. Spend time in prayer and reading scripture. Build up your confidence in God’s love by spending time with Him in praise and worship and reading the word.

There it is. These eight simple steps can take you from the bitter bondage of living under the influence of the spirit of competitive jealousy to joyous freedom in Jesus Christ.

If you’ve discovered signs of this spirit’s presence in your life, make a quality decision to be free. Don’t let this subtle spirit remain unchallenged in your life another day. Just get your eyes on the Lord and let His love change you.

A Practical Confession for

Overcoming the Spirit of

Competitive Jealousy

Wanting to be as practical as possible with this truth, I have developed a confession which will assist you in

ridding yourself of the influence of the spirit of competitive jealousy. It is simple and brief. Read it; repeat it. Use it and apply its truths as often as needed. Learn to walk in freedom and compare yourself only to the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the name of Jesus, I make a decision of quality, and I now renounce the spirit of competitive jealousy. In the name of Jesus, I will not be deceived or hindered from reaching my full potential in God. In the name of Jesus, I will not allow competitive jealousy to urge me to compare myself or my ministry with others. I will not allow competitive jealousy to provoke me to compete for favor, position, power, authority or influence.

In the name of Jesus, I will not be compelled to criticize others to make myself look good. I declare now by the power of God that I am free from competitive jealousy. I walk in a spirit of love. I walk in the fruit of the spirit. My motives line up with the Word of God. I repent of all areas where competitive jealousy is found.

I exercise my authority in the name of Jesus. Spirit of competitive jealousy be gone! I guard my heart by watching

what I see and what I hear. I major on being a servant and allowing God to exalt me in due time. I hold on to the promises of God through faith and patience. I am glad when my brothers

and sisters are exalted by God. For I have confidence in God's love that He cares for me.

Now, in the name of Jesus, I am redeemed of the Lord, I have said it. It is so. I am free from the spirit of competitive jealousy. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Now, thank God for your deliverance.

EXPOSING THE SPIRIT OF COMPETITIVE JEALOUSY

There is a subtle yet deadly spirit at work in the earth today. Allow it to operate unchecked in your life and it will destroy everything God wants to do in you. It could be harming you right now without you being aware of it.

It is the spirit of competitive jealousy.

In *Exposing the Spirit of Competitive Jealousy*, Pastor Creflo A. Dollar Jr. lays open the workings of this dangerous force and shows you how it has seduced the church since the beginning of creation.

This important book will help you understand how to recognize the spirit of competitive jealousy in your own life and in the lives of others. More importantly, you'll learn how to defeat this evil, insidious enemy and drive it from your life forever!

Don't be robbed of your full potential in Christ by this subtle spirit. Read this book and move on to victory.

Creflo A. Dollar Jr. is pastor and founder of World Changers Ministries Christian Center, a non-denominational church located in College Park, Georgia. Formerly an Educational Therapist, he began the ministry with eight people in 1986. He is now an international teacher and conference speaker with a congregation of over 7,000 people. Creflo Dollar has been called by God to teach the Gospel with simplicity and understanding. He can be seen and heard throughout the world on "Changing Your World" broadcasts, via television and radio.

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