Avoiding Jealousy in Marriage – Part One: A Word to Wives

This is part of a special series of teachings aimed at helping married couples thrive according to biblical principles. If you missed the previous parts of this series, feel free to reach out to us through the contact information listed at the end of this message.

Today, we will explore how jealousy can significantly affect the health and peace of a marriage—especially how it can be stirred unknowingly through a woman’s words.

The Two Types of Jealousy in Scripture

Biblically, jealousy appears in two distinct forms:

1. Sinful (Demonic) Jealousy

This is a form of envy that arises from bitterness or resentment toward another person’s success or blessings. It’s rooted in selfish ambition and covetousness, where someone desires what another

has but does not want them to have it.

The Bible sternly warns against this kind of jealousy:

> *“Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy.”*
> — Romans 13:13, ESV

> *“Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy.”*
> — Acts 5:17, NIV

This was the same jealousy that religious leaders had toward Jesus and His apostles when they saw the grace of God powerfully at work in them. Rather than rejoice, they sought to silence and destroy them.

2. Relational (Godly) Jealousy

This type of jealousy is natural and even God-ordained within covenant relationships, especially in marriage. It is a protective zeal that seeks to preserve exclusive love and loyalty within the marital union.

God Himself describes His relationship with His people as jealous, meaning He does not tolerate divided affections:

> *“You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God…”*
> — Exodus 20:5, ESV

This form of jealousy, when awakened or violated, can lead to severe consequences. It is more intense and dangerous than even anger or rage:

> *“Wrath is cruel, anger is overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy?”*

> — Proverbs 27:4, ESV

In the context of marriage, this is the kind of jealousy that arises when one spouse feels emotionally or relationally displaced, whether through comparisons, flirtations, or misplaced praise.

A Woman’s Words Can Ignite Dangerous Jealousy

Let us now examine a biblical story that illustrates how a woman’s words, even when truthful, can ignite jealousy with grave consequences. Although it’s not a marriage story, it holds valuable insight for married women.

The Story of Saul and David

1 Samuel 18:5–9

> *“And David went out and was successful wherever Saul sent him, so that Saul set him over the men of war. And this was good in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul’s servants.*

> *As they were coming home, when David returned from striking down the Philistine, the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with songs of joy, and with musical instruments.*
>
> *And the women sang to one another as they celebrated,*
> *‘Saul has struck down his thousands,*
> *and David his ten thousands.’*
>
> *And Saul was very angry, and this saying displeased him. He said, ‘They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed thousands, and what more can he have but the kingdom?’*
> *And Saul eyed David from that day on.”*
> — 1 Samuel 18:5–9, ESV

Here, we see that Saul initially loved David, but that affection turned into hatred, driven by jealousy. What sparked it? The praise of women.

Their words were not false — David had indeed achieved great victories. However, the timing and manner of their praise lacked wisdom. Their careless comparison wounded Saul’s pride and

stirred insecurity. The outcome? Saul began to view David as a rival and tried repeatedly to kill him.

One can only imagine that even David himself may have wished they kept silent, knowing their celebration brought unintended harm.

The Lesson for Wives Today

Women, your words carry power — especially in marriage. When you praise other men, even casually, more than your own husband, it can spark relational jealousy, insecurity, and even conflict between friends, relatives, or neighbors.

Even seemingly harmless comments like:

> *“Honey, your friend really dresses well — he’s so sharp!”*

…can plant seeds of resentment or competitiveness in your husband’s heart, even if you meant no harm.

Men deeply desire to be admired and respected by their wives. The Bible instructs wives to honor and submit to their husbands (Ephesians 5:22–24), and part of that honor involves guarding your praise.

Let your husband be, in your eyes, the best man alive. Even if others seem to surpass him in some areas, don’t highlight those areas openly. Instead, protect his heart by affirming him, appreciating his efforts, and speaking respectfully about others in his presence.

> *“The wise woman builds her house,*
> *but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down.”*
> — Proverbs 14:1, NIV

Words spoken without discernment can create division where there was peace, and jealousy where there was love. Therefore, weigh your words carefully, especially when they involve another man — whether it be someone on television, a co-worker, or a neighbor.

Remember, jealousy is ignited by small sparks — and you hold the match.

A Final Word: Are You Born Again?

The greatest security you can ever have — in marriage and in eternity — is found in Jesus Christ. The signs of His soon return are all around us. This is not the time to take salvation lightly.

> *“Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.”*
> — Luke 13:24, ESV

Repent from your sins, believe in the Gospel, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38). Only in Christ is there true peace, restoration, and eternal life.

Maranatha — The Lord is coming.

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