

How to keep desires in harmony with God

By **Jabril Muhammad** - July 9, 2002

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Brother Jabril Muhammad: Brother Minister, as you know, the scriptures teach that the evil move that was made against Joseph, by his brothers, was out of envy. Jesus, of course, suffered envy. A great deal of what happens today, in America and elsewhere, is motivated by jealousy and envy. What gives rise to jealousy and especially envy?

The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan: All of us, as human beings are creatures of desire. God, in order to move us toward any goal, first must create in us a desire.

Every human being who is blessed with a bit of the divine, it creates within us desire for greatness; desire for recognition; desire to be known; desire to leave behind us a great witness of our presence.

All of these desires are found in God. He was not known. He desired to make Himself known. He wanted those who sought Him to come closer in finding Him. It was not out of a spirit of vanity but it was out the timeliness of man's knowledge that man could grow closer, and to move faster, toward the goal of perfection.

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Having said that, each of us has to cope with our desires and the possible disappointment and frustration of our desires. Sometimes we may desire more than what we're capable of achieving. Sometimes we, in recognition of our own greatness, think more of ourselves than we should. So these emotions that accompany desire—it's fulfillment or frustration—leads to other dangerous emotions.

If I desire something, but someone else has what it is that I desire, then this person's having it and my not having it but desiring it, becomes a test for me. I can reason with myself and say "Oh Allah, maybe this was not for me. But I thank you for giving it to A, B or C. At least someone has what I had desired. Let me help them to accomplish the desire." That then, disallows envy, jealousy or enmity. Then it allows the person who has the desire, but someone is fulfilling desire, to grow even greater in the manifestation of his own gifts but in service to the one whom God has chosen to fulfill such a desire.

It is when we cannot cope with someone else having what we desire and therefore, feeling a frustration and disappointment and not being able to handle that, then the ugly disposition of envy manifests.

At first it's passive—"I just dislike this person." But as God raises that person more and more into that which I desired for myself, which I feel that person is really unworthy of, then the envy turns to hatred. The hatred then becomes active. Then my mind, as it was with Cain, turns toward murder.

So understanding what God has for us and praying the prayer that the Honorable Elijah Muhammad asked us to say seven times a day, becomes so important in fulfilling the answer to this question.

"O Allah, I seek Thy refuge from anxiety and grief." Because when someone has what you desire and you're not handling it properly, then when you see that person there's anxiety. Then it is accompanied by grief because he has what you think belongs to yourself. "O Allah, I seek your refuge from anxiety and grief, from the lack of strength and laziness."

You know, it takes great strength, an inner strength, to recognize one's own limitations and to rejoice in what God has given to me, and to rejoice in what God has given to my Brother or Sister. The same God that gave to me gave to them. If I can rejoice in what God has given me, then I can rejoice in what God has given to others. So my thanks and gratitude for His gift to me makes me grateful for the gifts that He gives to others. That sense of gratitude, which takes inner strength to realize, undermines the wicked emotion of envy.

"O Allah I seek your refuge from cowardice and niggardliness." It is an act of cowardice that disallows us to face the reality of our own incapacities; inabilities; shortcomings. "I don't want to face myself." So in not facing myself I can never summon the strength to deal with myself. Therefore, that increases my hatred for the other person who has what I desire.

"Niggardliness" gives you an uncharitable spirit. "I cannot help you with your gift that may be good for all of us. "I'm niggardly." I not only won't help you but I'll work to hinder you in what it is that God has gifted you with an assignment to do."

“O Allah, I seek your refuge from being overpowered by debt and the oppression of men.” We are all debtors. But when you know that your debt is to God, that debt cannot overpower you if you are working in His cause as a re-payment for your debt. But you can get overpowered by debt if you’re not doing what it is that you owe God. That, of course, puts you in a position to be oppressed, either in the way you think or in reality.

Lastly, “Suffice thou me with what is lawful.” I only want what is lawful to me. “Suffice Thou me with what is lawful and keep me away from what is prohibited. And with thy grace make me free from want, or desire, of that which is beside God.”

So if I can keep my desires in harmony with what God wants and if God did not want this for me, then there is something that God wants for me. So let me keep my desire in that framework and I will never be envious of my Brother or Sister.

So in answering that question, there are some times things may look like envy but it is [really] a great misunderstanding. The person that is evilly motivated and hateful, because of envy, that’s one thing. But when a person misunderstands the motivation of what his Brother says or does, and attacks his Brother out of that misunderstanding, this doesn’t necessarily have to be envy.

It could be the impact of an action, or the lack thereof, and it affects the heart and mind of one, whose desire is now frustrated by what you’ve said or did not say; what you’ve done or did not do, which brings up anger out of the frustration. That anger is then what causes a person to act out of uncontrolled anger because of disappointment and frustration of desire.

So these are twins too—envy the worse of all. A misunderstanding can be cleared. When one misunderstands, then that one can repent of what he did in anger, due to misunderstanding. But once we have entered that field of envy, then hatred, then murder—it will take the intervention of God to change our heart. Sometimes He does. Sometimes He uses your envy as a means of manifesting even more greatness of the one whom you envy.

Brother Jabril: As in the case with Joseph and his Brothers.

Minister Farrakhan: Yes.

More next issue, Allah willing.

