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# Jealous

What is God so jealous about? Moses had looked toward God quizzically. God had been so patient and gentle for the last 40 days as He had explained the law and the tabernacle. And then, God's countenance had changed so much! He had become grieved and pained. Then angry words spilled out of God's mouth and His wrath waxed hot (Ex 32:10, 11)! God was slow, very slow to anger. But now God was angry; very angry! "Let me consume the whole nation in my hot wrath and start over with you!"

Now, as Moses climbed down the mountain he wondered what could possibly have caused God to become so angry. He didn't have to wonder long. Upon approaching the camp, he couldn't believe his eyes. In wild jubilation and frenzied devotion the Children of Israel were worshiping a golden calf! Unthinkable! Worshiping a molded lump of gold when they could be worshiping the God of Abraham, the true and living God! His eyes flashed and his wrath waxed hot! God deserved their love and devotion! God had showered upon them His amazing love and rich goodness in their amazing deliverance from Egypt. This blatant betrayal of God's deep love and focused affection towards the Children of Israel stirred Moses' wrath. How could they do this? No wonder God was angry!

Since God can make and do anything, you might wonder what could possibly make God jealous. God wants to be the object of your affection. God knew what it was to receive worship from stones and trees or the stars. The worship of millions of angels had washed across His throne since the day they had been created. But God wanted worship from a free moral agent. He didn't just want worship because it was commanded or by instinct, or because it was our nature. He wanted creatures that were totally free to love whoever they wanted, and being free to choose would choose to love and worship Him unlike a stone or a tree that has no will. He wanted affection from someone who had the freedom to place their love wherever they chose. He created such a being. It was intelligent, beautiful, in His very image, and fully capable of fellowship with God. He lavished His love, His wisdom, and His goodness on mankind like He had never done to any other creature. He loved what He had created. Certainly, given a choice, they would return the affection and love He had poured out on them! Being so richly blessed how could they possibly turn away from Him? But they did. They didn't love Him. They didn't trust Him. They complained. They despised Him. And then they worshiped a lump of gold. It was not just a mediocre worship of the calf, but enthusiastic, unbridled worship! Did God care? Did it really matter to Him if they didn't worship Him? They had no idea how much He cared for them, how much it hurt Him, and how jealous He was of their love. They were the apple of His eye (Deuteronomy 32:10) and the love of His heart (Jeremiah 31:3). He couldn't get His mind off of them (Psalms. 40:5)! But they didn't reciprocate that love. They didn't understand God's deep love for them and how well He could fulfill the desires of their heart. They didn't care for Him. They didn't trust Him. They were angry with Him. They loved the golden calf. God was so hurt! He was so jealous! He was so angry! It is proper to describe God as jealous. He told Moses "My name is Jealous" (Exodus 34:14). But He

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is not a selfish, undisciplined God given to whims of jealousy. When God warned the Children of Israel not to worship idols He would often remind them that He is a jealous God. The worship of idols always produces jealousy in God's heart.

Jealousy is a very powerful passion. "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame" (Song of Solomon 8:6). God wants our undivided love and uncompromising loyalty. When we place our affection anywhere else besides God, the flame of jealousy burns in God's heart. It is hard for me to comprehend that God has that intense of a love towards me! His love is not distant. His interest is not mild. God's love for me is genuine and personal, intense and direct. Any affection I place anywhere else produces jealousy in His heart! He yearns for my love!

Jealousy is the result when God's great love for us is betrayed. Tremendous love betrayed produces powerful jealousy. So great is the love of God to us that when we are cleansed spotless through the blood of Jesus, God sends His Holy Spirit to live in us. God in us! What a supremely priceless gift to lowly mankind, that God would be pleased to dwell in us! If we, in this happy state of "God in us", look with desire to the world; it produces a most powerful response from God. "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world means enmity to God?" Therefore, whoever is bent on being friendly with the world makes himself an enemy to God. Or do you suppose that it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "The Spirit which He has caused to dwell in our hearts yearns jealously over us"(James 4:5b WNT)? The Holy Spirit, which dwells in us, yearns jealously over us when He sees us looking on the world with delight and pleasure. We, who have entered into a covenant relationship with God, are considered adulteresses when we fraternize with the alluring world. Friendship with the "harmless" world means enmity with God. Therefore, champion God's people, God's customs, God's dress, and God's truth. God is a jealous God. He is watching you intently to see if He is the joy of your heart, or if your affection for Him has waned and something else has captured your heart. After showing Himself so powerfully to the Children of Israel, His heart was crushed when they quickly turned aside to worship the golden calf. And God's jealousy will burn towards us also if we too, who have also been so richly blessed, do not give Him our enthusiastic and heartfelt devotion.

Burning jealousy means a passionate love. Moses understood that jealousy and that love. As he bid farewell to the Children of Israel after their forty years of wanderings, he pointed them to the One who loved them with all His heart. "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deuteronomy 33:26,27a).

What could possibly make God jealous? There is only one thing in all the world that could and that is if you and I, the crown and rejoicing of His creation, would spurn Him and His love. But why would we? He wants to give us all the goodness of heaven and earth. And when we give Him our love and devotion it does something for God that nothing else in all the world can do. God's love fills our hearts with joy. And amazing as it may sound, giving Him our love and affection fulfills the deepest desires and longings of His heart.

-Vernon Martin

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