
The Secret

Admiration and Worship

Competition often comes from the fear of losing one's identity or worth if another is better than I am. It often leads to envy. Envy is when I am sad when I see some good or excellence in another person. There is a way to escape envy: through admiration and worship. Saint Paul points to the way Jesus refused to play "the game" by "emptying himself" and choosing the lowest position (the form of a slave).

Discussion Questions

1. What was the secret that Saint Paul offers to escape the "game"?
2. Have you ever been pained by seeing someone excel? Why do you think that is?
3. Competition can often come from a certain fear of personal worth. Does it *always* have to come from fear? What are some other sources of a desire for competition?
4. Do you think that a spirit of competition can sometimes be good? When stemming from a desire for excellence? What is the difference between simply wanting to be excellent at something and being envious?
5. In the effort to escape the "envy trap", do you see any other ways to combat resenting other people?
6. What are the challenges in trying to admire the good in others? What are the challenges to bending the knee at the Name of Jesus?

God in Real Life

1. Admiration is when we recognize the good in another and rejoice that it exists. Worship is when we recognize that God is the Good and give him glory. Choose someone this week who has a good that pains you. Strive to put on the "mind of Christ" and rejoice that this good exists in the world and that they have it. Also, choose at least one time to enter into the Presence of the Eucharist and adore Jesus as Lord to the glory of God the Father. This might simply mean saying the words, "Jesus Christ is Lord" or "I do not have to win...Jesus wins."

Be Transformed

There are countless stories of competition and envy in the Bible. It might be helpful for your small group to go over one or two in order to become familiar with them. Here is a sampling:

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- A). Cain and Abel. Genesis 4:1-12
- B). Joseph and his brothers. Genesis 37:11
- C). David and Saul. 1 Samuel 18:8-10
- D). David and Jonathon. 1 Samuel 18:1-4 (actually, this story is about the opposite of envy. Jonathon had every cause to be envious of David, but he chose to admire him and ultimately to be incredibly close friends with him).
- E). Ahab and Naboth. 1 Kings 21
- F). Jesus and the Pharisees. Mark 15:10

To the Heart

“Rejoice with those who rejoice...weep with those who weep. Have the same regard for one another; do not be haughty but associate with the lowly.” Romans 12:15-16

“Do nothing out of selfishness or vainglory. Rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but [also] everyone for the needs of others.” Philippians 2: 3-4

Litany of Humility

O Jesus! meek and humble of heart, Hear me.

From the desire of being esteemed, Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being loved, Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being extolled, Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being honored, Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being praised, Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being preferred to others, Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being consulted, Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being approved, Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being humiliated, Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being despised, Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of suffering rebukes, Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being calumniated, Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being forgotten, Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being ridiculed, Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being wronged, Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being suspected, Deliver me, Jesus.

That others may be loved more than I, Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be esteemed more than I, Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That, in the opinion of the world, others may increase and I may decrease, Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be chosen and I set aside, Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be praised and I unnoticed, Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be preferred to me in everything, Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may become holier than I, provided that I may become as holy as I should, Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

~ Cardinal Merry de Val