



# The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V21 N42 October 27, 2019

## TOXIC

“The Septic Spirit of Envy”

Proverbs 14:30

### THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

#### Peace

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

*“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

**Ephesians 4:6-7**



What results from envy?

What wisdom says about envy is right; it “rots the bones” (Pr 14:30). Envy or jealousy is a negative emotion that surfaces when you compare what you have to what others have. *Envy* is when you want what someone else has; *jealousy* is when you're worried someone's trying to take what you have. If left unchecked, either will make your life miserable. Jealousy can make you feel hard done by, and this “victim mentality” can be damaging to your physical and mental health. Envy can foster distress, lead to resentment, and set virtually anyone on the road to depression. On the latter, one clinical psychologist writes:

“Envy can be a destructive emotion both mentally and physically. Envious people tend to feel hostile, resentful, angry and irritable. Such individuals are also less likely to feel grateful about their positive traits and their circumstances. Envy is also related to depression, anxiety, the development of prejudice, and personal unhappiness. Not surprisingly, these negative mental states can impact physical health. Envious people can feel stressed and overwhelmed” (*Natalie Staats Reiss, “The Nature of Envy,” mentalhelp.net/blogs/the-nature-of-envy*).

By definition, envy is rooted in unhealthy comparisons, which nowadays are enabled by social media, so much so that “Facebook envy” has its own definition: “The painful feeling you get when you come across your friends on Facebook and realize that their lives are much more interesting, joyful, and worthwhile than yours” (Sandip Roy, “How to Overcome Facebook Envy,” [happyproject.in/facebook-envy](http://happyproject.in/facebook-envy)). Are your Facebook friends always somewhere you would like to be, doing

something you would like to do? And are they always celebrating something? Mine are. And mine are perpetually on vacation in exotic places. Every day for them all is a good day.

In the same article, the author cites the findings of research done in 2013 on the subject of Facebook envy; among other things, he reports:

1. Facebook makes users dissatisfied and envious. One-third of people felt worse and more frustrated with their lives after going to Facebook.

2. Envy on Facebook leads to an “envy spiral.” That is, those who felt envy often took to dressing up their timelines with pictures and statuses that would further make others envious.

3. Vacation images were the most common cause of animosity on Facebook, as the researchers conclusively found. Holiday shots sparked more than 55% of the envy incidents on Facebook.

And then he concludes: “Just think: Facebook was devised to raise people’s happiness levels by making social interactions easy. But in truth it does just the reverse. Envy on Facebook in its ubiquitous presence sabotages the life satisfaction of users.”

Perhaps you’re not a Facebook user; perhaps the findings of this research don’t apply to you. But if the social media shoe fits, you might consider a social media fast. Take some time off social media of all 65+ kinds; your soul will thank you.

# 1

## EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

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### Proverbs 14:30

29 *Whoever is patient has great understanding,  
but one who is quick-tempered displays folly.*

30 *A heart at peace gives life to the body,  
but envy rots the bones.*

### READ in other translations

30 *Peace of mind makes the body healthy,  
but jealousy is like a cancer. (GNT)*

30 *A peaceful heart leads to a healthy body;  
but jealousy is like cancer in the bones. (NLT)*

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle "heart" in line one.
- Underline "peace" in line one and "envy" in line two.
- Box "but" indicating *contrast* in line two.
- Double underline "gives life" in line one and "rots" in line two.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What is one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about \_\_\_\_\_."



## DIG DEEPER

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Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. Some commentators see a connection between verse 29, which *contrasts* being “patient” and being “quick-tempered,” and verse 30. Do you? Explain.
  2. How can you tell that the kind of *parallelism* exhibited in verse 30 is *antithetical*?
  3. Given *that* kind of parallelism, isn’t “contented heart” rather than “heart at peace” a better translation? Explain why or why not.
  4. “Gives life” is used *figuratively*. A *discontented* heart won’t actually kill you, will it? Explain.
  5. “Body” and “bones” appear to be *synonyms*. Do you sense that “bones” has a slightly different nuance in line two? If so, describe it.
  6. “Rots the bones” is used *figuratively*. *Envy* won’t actually cause osteoporosis, will it? Explain.
  7. Proverbs 14:30 touts contentment and warns against envy. Can envy ever be *benign* or even *beneficial*? What do you think?
  8. Envy is *every* person’s problem – more or less. What are you most inclined to envy in others?
  9. Identify what you consider a prime example of envy in the Bible. Be sure to identify how the envy story ends.
  10. **Discussion:** Talk about how to guard against envy and its damaging effects.
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### Commentary On The Text

Envy isn't good for you. What's more, it doesn't make any sense. The first observation is confirmed repeatedly in the book of Proverbs. It warns specifically against envying the wicked, saying: "Do not envy the violent or choose any of their ways" (3:31); "Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always be zealous for the fear of the LORD" (23:17; and "Do not envy the wicked, do not desire their company" (24:1). And it gives one good reason why: "for their hearts plot violence, and their lips talk about making trouble" (24:2). What's more, Proverbs 14:30, the text in question in this study, says: "A heart at peace gives life to the body, *but envy rots the bones.*"

The second observation is confirmed in the book of Ecclesiastes. In 4:4-6, Solomon writes: "I have also learned why people work so hard to succeed: it is because they envy the things their neighbors have. But it is useless. It is like chasing the wind. They say that we would be fools to fold our hands and let ourselves starve to death. Maybe so, but it is better to have only a little, with peace of mind, than be busy all the time with both hands, trying to catch the wind" (GNT). I quoted the Good News Translation because it captures the sense of the text with little additional explanation. Work motivated by envy is "like chasing the wind" because this selfish "motive can never be satisfied, so it leads to ceaseless work and despair" (Tremper Longman III, *The Book of Ecclesiastes*, NICOT, 137). "One handful with quietness" really is better than "two handfuls with hard work and chasing the wind" (4:6).

Proverbs 14:30 warns of the outcome of envy, of the seven deadly sins. The proverb is an example of *antithetical* parallelism evident in two contrasting ideas linked by the word "but." While "body" in line one and "bones" in line two appear to be synonymous or nearly synonymous, "heart of peace" in line one contrasts with "envy" in line two, and "gives life" in line one contrasts with "rots" in line two. While some researchers distinguish between benign envy, which is akin to admiration, and malicious envy, Proverbs clearly does not; it has the latter kind in mind – the kind about which Aquinas wrote: "Charity rejoices in our neighbor's good, while envy grieves over it."

Some believe the proverb in verse 30 is linked to the one in verse 29, which would affect the

interpretation of the one in verse 30, depending on how closely the two are linked. In a nutshell, if they are closely linked, the contrast between "patient" and "quick-tempered" in verse 29 would influence the interpretation of "heart of peace" and "envy" in verse 30. One commentator writes: "Verse 29 stresses the importance of *patience*. In this context an impatient king may lose his following (v. 28), and a headstrong courtier may lose his place before the king (v. 35), although the proverb applies equally well to nonpolitical situations. Verse 30 looks at patience from a different perspective: it is essential for a healthy life" (Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, NAC, 146; cf., Waltke, 605). Put differently, if the link between verse 29 and 30 is close, like verse 29, which contrasts a "patient" person to a "hot-tempered" person, verse 30 contrasts a *tranquil* or *calm* person (ESV) to a *passionate* person, namely, one with runaway emotions. That would suggest 14:30 isn't about envy per se; it's about being even keeled rather than emotional.

I don't see the link as that close, and so I understand the proverb to be about the physical consequences of envy. I take it that a "contented heart" or contented person is contrasted to an envious or as one commentator puts it, "rivalrous," person. And while on the one hand contentment leads to overall physical wellness, on the other hand, envy leads to physical unwellness that begins inside, in "the bones," and then works its ills from the inside out. Clearly, wisdom warns that envy is destructive and to be avoided at all costs.

But that's easier said than done in a world filled with media in general and social media in particular, so what is one to do? First, acknowledge your identity in Christ. Your true identity is not determined by your appearance, your income, or your possessions, especially not relative to others. Second, give thanks. Rather than crave for yourself what God has given to others, thank him for what he has given to you. Third, fast from social media regularly. Facebook, as well as other social media sites, and the comparisons they prompt are most likely not good for your soul. Fourth, spend time serving others who are less fortunate than you.

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## Word Studies/Notes

v. 30 **heart** Not a reference to the blood-pumping organ. The term is used *figuratively*; cf., “peaceful mind” (GNT); “contented heart” (EHV); “tranquil spirit” (NET). “In its abstract meanings, ‘heart’ became the richest biblical term for the totality of man’s inner or immaterial nature. In biblical literature it is the most frequently used term for man’s immaterial personality functions as well as the most inclusive term for them since, in the Bible, virtually every immaterial function of man is attributed to the ‘heart’” (TWOT, s.v., 1071a, *leb, lebab*). “The ‘heart’ is the centerpiece of human beings, and when that is sound, one truly lives” (Roland E. Murphy, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 22, *Proverbs*, 107).

v. 30 **peace, envy** The NIV translates the Heb. *lēb marphē*, “heart at peace.” In light of verse 29, which contrasts being *patient* with being *quick-tempered*, Waltke, suggests the contrast in verse 30 is between being *calm* (i.e., serene, tranquil) and being *passionate* (i.e., rivalrous) in verse 30. So one commentator writes: “While it is true that envy corrodes the mind and so has a harmful effect upon the body, the context suggests that the other sense of the word, ‘passion, hot-headedness,’ is required, the opposite of an even temperament” (A. Cohen, *Proverbs*, SBOB, 93). However, that argument seems to work equally well in reverse. If *qin’â* in line two is translated “envy” or “jealousy,” as in most translations, the context would suggest rather than “tranquil heart” in line one, “contented heart” is required, the opposite of “envy” or “jealousy.”

v. 30 **body, bones** These terms are used *synonymously*, alluding to the link between the *immaterial* (i.e., contented and discontented heart) and *material* (i.e., body and bones); in other words, the psycho-somatic relationship between the emotional and the physical. “The modernity of this verse is striking, since its observation as to do with psycho-somatic relationships – it states that the mind is the seat of health or illness. Calmness or repose is conducive to physical well-being and jealousy to a condition of sickness” (William McKane, *Proverbs*, OTL, 472). Cf., “A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones” (Pr 17:22).

v. 30 **gives life, rots** Cf., “A peaceful heart leads to a healthy body; jealousy is like cancer in the bones” (NLT). “Heart is figurative (RSV: mind), and the proverb teaches that to nurse a resentment is bad for body as well as soul” (Derek Kidner, *Proverbs*, TOTC, 111).

## Other Texts to Consider

### James 3:13-18

“13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. 14 But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. 15 Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. 16 For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. 18 Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.”



## APPLY THE TEXT

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### CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Rather than ruin your life by comparing yourself to others and how God has blessed them, revitalize your life by being content with who you are and how God has blessed you.

### CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



### 3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



## FAMILY TALK

Books are written, songs are sung, and poems recited. We laugh about the outlandishness of it all in sitcoms, and cry over its destructiveness in movies. Envy! It's a destructive monster that eats away at your happiness and robs your joy in the Lord. I remember as an elementary student being faced with envy. I wondered why my family couldn't go on ski trips or beach vacations, why I didn't have the most expensive jeans or shoes, why I had to choose activities based on family resources. There's not much difference as an adult except the toys are bigger. They got a fancy new car and I'm driving this older model. They moved to a big new house loaded with all the latest amenities and we're in this tiny house. They're vacationing in Tahiti but I'm staycationing in said tiny house with four grumpy kids. We all face envy and social media feeds the monster to an unhealthy degree. I don't have all the answers but here are a few things I do to help myself steer clear from the ugliness of envy. I recognize the growing weed of envy while scrolling through social media and immediately sign off and stay away a few days. I practice genuinely celebrating with others. I pray, remind myself of God's many blessings, and ask Him to consume my heart. What are you doing to combat envy in yourself? Your kids? We are praying for your family to seek contentment in the Lord alone this week!

### What Does The Bible Say?

Read Proverbs 14:30.

1. What two things are compared in this verse?
2. What does a heart of peace give?
3. What does envy do to a person?

### What Do You Think?

What does "gives life to the body" mean? How does your body respond to peace? Envy?

### What Do You Do?

Make a family list of at least 50 blessings this week. Bring it into the KidPix store for an extra 3 tokens per child.

### CORE COMPETENCY: Peace

I live without worry because things are good between God, myself and others.

### MEMORY VERSE: Proverbs 14:30

*A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.*

## KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: [kids@wearecentral.org](mailto:kids@wearecentral.org)

- \_\_\_\_\_ I completed my Bible Study
- \_\_\_\_\_ I memorized this week's verse
- \_\_\_\_\_ I brought my Bible to church
- \_\_\_\_\_ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

GRADE \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

# OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

## CENTRAL BELIEFS

**Authority of the Bible** (2 Timothy 3:16-17)  
*I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.*

**Church** (Ephesians 4:15-16)

*I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.*

**Eternity** (John 14:1-4)

*I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.*

**The Holy Spirit** (Romans 8:9)

*I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.*

**Humanity** (John 3:16)

*I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.*

**Identity in Christ** (John 1:12)

*I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.*

**Jesus Christ** (Hebrews 1:1-4)

*I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.*

**Life Purpose** (Acts 20:24)

*I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.*

**Personal God** (Psalm 121:1-2)

*I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.*

**Salvation by Grace** (Ephesians 2:8-9)

*I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.*



## CENTRAL VIRTUES

**Love** (1 John 4:10-12)

*I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.*

**Joy** (John 15:11)

*I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.*

**Peace** (Philippians 4:6-7)

*I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.*

**Patience** (Proverbs 14:29)

*I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.*

**Kindness/Goodness** (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

*I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others*

**Faithfulness** (Proverbs 3:3-4)

*I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.*

**Gentleness** (Philippians 4:5)

*I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.*

**Self-Control** (Titus 2:11-13)

*I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.*

**Grace** (Colossians 3:13)

*I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.*

**Hope** (1 Peter 1:3-5)

*I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.*

**Humility** (Philippians 2:3-4)

*I choose to esteem others above myself.*



## CENTRAL PRACTICES

**Bible Study** (Hebrews 4:12)

*I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.*

**Biblical Community** (Acts 2:44-47)

*I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.*

**Compassion** (Psalm 82:3-4)

*I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.*

**Disciple-Making** (2 Timothy 2:2)

*I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.*

**Evangelism** (Acts 1:8)

*I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.*

**Generosity** (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

*I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.*

**Prayer** (Psalm 66:16-20)

*I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.*

**Single-Mindedness** (Matthew 6:33)

*I focus on God and His priorities for my life.*

**Spiritual Gifts** (Romans 12:4-6)

*I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.*

**Worship** (Psalm 95:1-7)

*I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.*

**Tom Bulick** (M.A. in Educational Leadership, Eastern Michigan University, Th.M. in Old Testament, and Ph.D. in Bible Exposition, Dallas Theological Seminary). For more than forty years, Tom has served as pastor, faculty member, and administrator. Tom was Vice President for Student Life and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Trinity Western University (Vancouver, B.C.) for 12 years before accepting the position of Spiritual Formation Pastor at Central Bible Church in 1998. He and his wife Ruth have one son, Zach.

**Stephanie Thomas** (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. She and James are Shepherds of the Bailey Community Group. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

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**CENTRAL  
BIBLE CHURCH**

8001 Anderson Boulevard  
Fort Worth, Texas 76120  
817-274-1315  
wearecentral.org