

## OUR GOD IS A JEALOUS GOD

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God spoke Ten Commandments to guide His people on how to relate properly with Him, with fellow humans, and with themselves. The Covid-19 lockdown has ushered us into testing places – in the relationships addressed in these Commandments. Let us consider the Second Commandment – which talks about our relationship to God: “You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything . . . You must not . . . worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God Who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods. I lay [these] sins of the parents upon their children . . .” (Ex. 20:4-6 NLT).

The part that usually puzzles us is: how can a holy God be “jealous”? Isn’t jealousy a serious sin? It is therefore important for us to separate this good type of jealousy from the bad one – also called envy. A person can feel bitter and unhappy because someone else has surpassed him or her in advantages, possessions or luck. It is a sinful “work of the flesh,” like “idolatry” (Gal. 5:19-21). It was “jealous” religious leaders who pursued, persecuted and killed the Lord Jesus and His followers (e.g. Jn. 11:48; Acts 5:17; Gal. 5:20). We desperately need to “crucify” jealousy, and keep on being “filled with”, and “walking in” the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:16,24).

So, the Second Commandment talks about a good type of jealousy that we should uphold, and which God practices. God’s jealousy demands total loyalty and devotion from His creatures. He possessively watches us: to see if another “husband” has stolen His “bride”; for idolatry, is spiritual adultery. And God says: “[I] will not tolerate your affection for any other gods”.

Apostle Paul imitated God by practicing good jealousy. He told his disciples, that: “I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to One Husband . . . Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to Him. But I am afraid that . . . by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may [have been] somehow led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ”. Sadly, another “Jesus”, “a different spirit” . . . and “a different gospel” had usurped the Master’s true place in some of their hearts (2 Cor. 11:2-4 NIV)!

When in life we are stripped of dependence on any other thing created by God or man, our covenant relationship to God should never be stripped away from us. On His part, God’s faithfulness to us can never be doubted. For He jealously guards His position as our Spiritual Husband. We need to live in the awareness that we can at times be “faithless [do not believe and are untrue to Him], {but} He remains true (faithful to His Word and His righteous character), for He cannot deny Himself” (2 Tim. 2:13 AMP). May we, by God’s grace, always reflect this godly type of stickability.