

**Instructions:**

Group leaders, take some time before your gathering to look over these questions. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you pick 3-5 questions to discuss that pertain to your group's unique style and needs.



**Series: Vice**

Talking about sin makes us uncomfortable. We can identify and try to avoid the "bad ones." It's easy to see in the lives of our neighbors. And evil is clearly at work out there in the world beyond us. But what about the sin and evil that arises from our own hearts? What about our own propensity to sin; those bad habits, tendencies, or traits that we would rather *not* be reminded of? Join us this Lent as we reflect on the historic seven vices in order to identify a multitude of mundane, everyday sins that can cling too closely.

**Message Description:**

It is one thing to desire something that your neighbor has; it is another to want the exact one they have. And better yet for your neighbor not to possess one at all because to seem to give them an advantage or status over you. Envy makes us sick with jealousy, greed, resentment, anger, and even hatred. It is a certain kind of sorrow that grows from feelings of insecurity, inadequacy, unworthiness. So, what's the remedy for comparison that threatens to take our sense of joy and gratitude? Remembering our foundational worth is found in Christ, and not in what we do, have, or achieve.

**Key Scriptures:**

Psalm 139:23-24

Genesis 4:1-10

Luke 22:24-30

**Additional Resources:**

- For more information on a daily practice of self-examination, check-out: <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen/>
- For a prayer practice that will lead you through study and examination, check-out <https://www.24-7prayer.com/resource/lectio-365/> or download the app, lectio365!

## Questions Related to This Week's Teaching:

1. What is the difference between covetousness and envy?
2. How is the vice of envy related to the vice of vainglory (pride)?
3. Do you agree that envy is related to a kind of sorrow or grief over what your life is *not* like?
4. Are you someone who sees life as one big competition? Why or why not?
5. Share about a time when you were jealous of a friend or family member. Did you realize the source of your envy then? How did it make you feel? How did you deal with it?

## Going Deeper: Envy

### Read Matthew 20:1-16

- Is there anything in this parable that makes you uncomfortable?
- Are you prone to want to evaluate others based on their merit, what they accomplish, and therefore what they deserve compared to other people? If so, how does this parable challenge your view of what is "fair"?
- How does this parable challenge or clarify your view of the Kingdom of God?
- Why do you think comparison, rivalry, and competition breeds in close proximity to others, even among Christians?

### Read Matthew 18:1-4

- Where do you see envy or rivalry at work in this teaching of Jesus?
- Where do you feel the temptation to be "great" in our world today?
- What do you think it means to become like a child in this teaching?

## Questions for self-reflection:

### **Consider the following list of symptoms of envy, as referenced in *Glittery Vices* by Rebecca DeYoung:**

"Feeling offended at the talents, successes, and good fortune of others; selfish or unnecessary rivalry and competition; pleasure at others' difficulties or distress; ill will; reading false motives into others' behavior; belittling others; false accusations; backbiting (saying something bad, even if true, behind another person's back); slander (saying something bad, even if true, in the open about another); the initiation, collection, or retelling of gossip; arousing, fostering, or organizing antagonism against others; scorn of another's abilities or failures; teasing or bullying; ridicule of persons, institutions, or ideals; and prejudice against those we consider inferior, who consider us inferior, or seem to threaten our security or position," (page 72).

- Do I notice any of the above behaviors, actions, or intentions in my own life?
- Do I envy or experience jealousy regarding the abilities, talents, ideas, good-looks, intelligence, clothes, possession, money friends, or family of others?
- Am I saddened or frustrated by the successes of others?
- What does this reveal to you about what you value in yourself?
- Think of a story about the way someone has helped you develop your gifts and virtues. Did they lead by example, instruction, encouragement? Why is your attitude toward them admiration and gratitude rather than envy? How did they make you want to be better, and why didn't you feel threatened by their obvious superiority? (*question from Rebecca DeYoung, 85-86*)