**God’s Name is Jealous**

If you were to tell someone, “Punctual is my middle name”, you would be using an expression that suggests that being on time comes naturally for you. Exodus 34:14 says, “You shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.” Jealousy is so fundamental to the character of Jehovah that Jealous is an appropriate name for Him.

When jealousy is mentioned in the New Testament, more often than not, it refers to petty selfishness, an irrational obsessive mistrust that is destructive to any relationship. That form of jealousy is clearly condemned as sin (Galatians 5:19-21).

God is the epitome of righteous jealousy. He is the one true and living God. He is the God who created us, who gives us life and breath and provides for our needs (Acts 17:24-28). He has every right to expect that His children will love and honor Him alone. When men fashion wood, metal or stone into images and worship them as their teachers and providers, Jehovah God is understandably upset.

God understands that we are most able to relate to His feelings by comparing our relationship with Him to the relationship between a man and wife. When a young man and woman decide to marry, they become one; they commit to an exclusive relationship. Because of their mutual trust, they feel no sense of toxic jealousy; their faithfulness to one another is simply understood and expected.

There perhaps is no greater emotional pain and grief than when a person learns that their spouse has been unfaithful to them. God uses this devastating situation to help us to understand His feelings when we are unfaithful to Him. He told the Israelites through the prophet Ezekiel, “How languishing is your heart, while you do all these things, the actions of a bold-faced harlot. When you built your shrine at the beginning of every street and made your high place in every square, in disdaining money, you were not like a harlot. You adulteress wife, who takes strangers instead of her husband!” (Ezekiel 16:30-32).

Jehovah God is not only our creator and provider, He loved us enough to give His Son to die as a just substitute for the sins we have committed so we can dwell with Him eternally. God’s jealousy is not petty, irrational selfishness, it is a reasonable expectation that we will be faithful to Him. The Christian is a loving spouse and parent, diligent employee and citizen, not because those relationships command first place, but because we are devoted to God first and those relationships are richer for it. As the apostle John put it, “We love because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

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