

# YOU'RE NOT THE BOSS OF ME

## Envy

Most of us have learned to monitor our behavior enough to maintain good-standing with those around us. But it is possible to modify our visible behavior while still harboring a heart controlled by toxic emotions like guilt. Jesus said that human beings are not tainted by external factors, but by toxic internal emotions that cause us to dishonor God and others. So it's not enough to modify our behavior. We've got to go a step further and examine the condition of our hearts before we can say no to the toxic emotions that compete for control of our lives.

### Start Talking

When was the first time you remember being aware that other people were growing up with more or less than you?

Which genre of instagram posts are the most annoying (presumably because of the emotions they inspire): Vacation pics? Workout selfies? Relationship brags? Inspirational quotes?

When was the last time you found yourself, without a prompt, listing the things for which you are thankful?

### Looking Back

1. How did you do this past week in the fight to keep guilt out of the driver's seat?
2. When did you find yourself tempted to either minimize or maximize guilt? How did you respond to this emotion?
3. Were you able to take the initiative in beginning the healing process in any of your damaged relationships?



## What About You?

1. What thoughts do you find yourself thinking when you see an Instagram “trigger,” one of those posts that causes envy to well up within you?
2. How does this envy cause you to behave?
3. When you accomplish something, what thoughts and emotions steal your healthy sense of joy in accomplishment (ex: “This is great, but \_\_\_ got \_\_\_ and they’re not even as talented as I am”)?
4. Do you think it is ever healthy to look to other people and their accomplishments for inspiration? *Follow up:* If so, what separates healthy admiration from unhealthy comparison? If not, why not?

## Look It Up

Read the Following Passages: Matthew 15:17-19, Proverbs 14:30, Ecclesiastes 4:4–8,

5. How does the idea that evil comes not from outer influences, but from *inside* the human heart make you feel? Why?
6. Why do you think the writer of Proverbs chose the metaphor of decomposition to describe the emotional effects of envy?
7. “Chasing after wind,” is a profound and poetic phrase, full of meaning. What all do you understand this line to say?
8. When do you feel like you are “chasing after wind,” stuck in a race with no finish line?
9. Why is it significant that the striver in Ecclesiastes 4:7–8 is specifically described as not having any family members to support with his toil. What does this say about the source and purpose of his efforts?

## Putting It All Together

10. In what areas of your life are you most inclined to “chase the wind?” (ex: work, money, relationship status, possessions, creative pursuits, health, fitness)
11. Why do you think those temptations are most enticing to you?
12. Do you ever find yourself internally competing with anyone? (ex: parents, siblings, friends, influencers) Why?
13. What can you do in the coming weeks to strive toward what Solomon called, “one handful with tranquility,” rather than, “two handfuls with toil” and dissatisfaction?
14. What will you tell yourself this week when you find yourself stinging with envy?
15. Is there anyone to whom you would feel comfortable confessing your envy when it feels overwhelming?

