

Capitol Commission Bible Studies are non-partisan, non-denominational. They meet weekly during session.

Exodus 20:3-6 *"You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments."*

Do you think Jesus, God the Son, is arrogant because He demands priority worship? *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind."* **Matthew 22:7**

Do you think God is petty because He is jealous for your worship? [See the text above.]

John Piper, in his article "Is Jesus an Egomaniac?" presents this struggle and those that have grappled and/or rejected Christianity because of it. He points out that reading through the Bible you come to this conclusion, "God is committed to seeing that His glory is esteemed as the supreme value of the universe."¹

So, why is it good that God is jealous of your worship?

Ephesians 1:11-12 portrays the reality that God has prioritized Himself to be glorified. *"In Him we were chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be for the praise of His glory."*

Ephesians 5 will answer the question, "Why is God's jealousy good?" But first, let's clarify what God's jealousy means.

The human action of jealousy is destructive. Shakespeare coined the often quoted phrase about jealousy in Othello,

"O beware, my lord, of jealousy; It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock."² Jealousy for our own honor is almost always wrong. Human jealousy exhibits pride, rather than humility. "The reason pride is wrong is a theological reason: it is that we do not deserve the honor that belongs to God alone."³ Furthermore, human jealousy often links arms with envy and blooms into coveting what does not belong. In this sense, jealousy becomes idolatry, and this counterfeit god breeds self-deceit and self-destruction.

But there is a positive use of jealousy. It is the sense of "protection or watching over." Paul uses the word jealous this way in **I Corinthians 11:2**, *"I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy..."*

It is just to be jealous for the safety and well-being of family or loved ones. Jealousy is not wrong when it is outward focused on that to which it is properly related. This applies also to God. Israel is God's wife and it is right for Him to be jealous for her good. (**Ezekiel 16:8**) We are also the bride of Christ and He is jealous for our good. Furthermore, it would be contrary to God's nature not to guard the good against corruption; that would be evil. But God is the greatest good and thus He must protect His own Being against corruption and dishonor.⁴

Why is God's jealousy good?

1. Darkness Destroys

Ephesians 5:8 "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord." This powerful statement almost sounds like a Star Wars reference to the Dark Side, except, this is real.

The dominion of Satan brought into the world by the entrance of sin has created a darkness upon all who have not been redeemed.

Jesus spoke of Satan as being *"the thief, that comes to steal, kill and destroy."* **John 10:10** This thief steals the vision to see the way of escape. *"The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."* **2 Corinthians 4:4**

² <https://www.shmoop.com/shakespeare-quotes/jealousy-green-eyed-monster/meaning-then.html>

³ Wayne Grudem, <https://www.monergism.com/jealousy-god>

⁴ Walter Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 576.

¹ <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/is-jesus-an-egomaniac> John Piper.

God's jealousy is for you, because He wants to protect you from the self-deceit and self-destructiveness that worshipping less than the true God brings.

How bad is the worship of the god you make up instead of the true God?

It leads to the deepest darkness being given over to a mind that cannot see the light, brazenly unashamed by immoral behavior and welcoming others to join.

Romans 1:18-32 presents the downward steps:

a) Rejection of Revealed Truth

Revealed truth is the fact of a supreme Being with divine attributes to whom worship and obedience are due, this truth being seen by all men through their observation of the created universe...⁵

The word "suppress" means to hold down, to keep back. This word was used by Jesus reproof of his disciples who held children back from coming to Him.

Romans 1:18-20 "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse."

b) Rejection of Worship

The response to the revealed reality of a Supreme Being is pushed away. There is no thankfulness to an intelligent designer for life; rather, the idea of a Supreme Maker is totally rejected or credit is given to a lesser possibility.

This viewpoint is supported by Kasemann. "The whole world even in its secularity belongs to the Creator. This is truth...The reality of the world and the basic sin of mankind consist in not recognizing God in His reality that opens itself to us. Instead the latter is suppressed in rebellious opposition to the right established therewith."⁶

⁵ Kenneth Wuest, *Romans in the Greek New Testament: for the English Reader* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), 29.

⁶ Ernst Kasemann, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 38.

How illustrating is Richard Dawkins statement, "My life and all of life is from a chemical reaction that was a mindless unguided process."

c) Rejection of Truth and Worship bring Self-Deceit

The desires of the flesh want a god who does not call to accountability. So man creates a new version of god. This new idea is self-deceit.

Romans 1:23-25 "and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen."

d) Truth is Exchanged for Human Wisdom

This replacement of God's certainties for human wisdom is exactly why God is demanding worship from man. Man is a worshipper at heart and left to himself will worship anything other than God. The result is depravity and destruction.

This is why God's jealousy for people is good. God's demand that He be worshipped is not egotistical it is love! It is love for the people He created.

e) God Gave Them Over – The Natural Result

"God gave them over" speaks of continued walking away from and rejection of God. It is a deepening darkness, a loss of shame, and an emptiness that cannot be filled. This results in shameful lusts, unnatural affections, and being filled with every kind of wickedness. **Romans 1:26-32**

God knows the terrible destructive work of sin. That is why He, jealous for you, has come to rescue!

2. The Cross proves God's Jealousy for You is Good!

Ephesians 5:1-2 "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

God being for you is illustrated by the CROSS! If God is for you to the extent that He did not spare His own Son, then how can He not be trusted?

Wednesday, June 27, **BOOKS AND BAGELS**, 7:30-10AM.
Stop by our tent, Halifax Mall (weather permitting) grab some breakfast food and a free BOOK!