

“Heart Tricks” (2)

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?” (Jeremiah 17:9)

Others Have it Better than Me

Proverbs 27:4 – “Wrath is cruel, anger is overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy?”

Ecclesiastes 4:4 – “Then I saw that all toil and all skill in work come from a man’s envy of his neighbor. This also is vanity and a striving after wind.”

Genesis 37:3-4 – ³“Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a robe of many colors. ⁴But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him.”

1 Kings 21:1-7 – ¹“Now Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard in Jezreel, beside the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. ²And after this Ahab said to Naboth, ‘Give me your vineyard, that I may have it for a vegetable garden, because it is near my house, and I will give you a better vineyard for it; or, if it seems good to you, I will give you its value in money.’ ³But Naboth said to Ahab, ‘The LORD forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers.’ ⁴And Ahab went into his house vexed and sullen because of what Naboth the Jezreelite had said to him, for he had said, ‘I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers.’ And he lay down on his bed and turned away his face and would eat no food. ⁵But Jezebel his wife came to him and said to him, ‘Why is your spirit so vexed that you eat no food?’ ⁶And he said to her, ‘Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite and said to him, ‘Give me your vineyard for money, or else, if it please you, I will give you another vineyard for it.’ And he answered, ‘I will not give you my vineyard.’ ⁷And Jezebel his wife said to him, ‘Do you now govern Israel? Arise and eat bread and let your heart be cheerful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.’”

Antidotes to this Insanity

(1) Cultivate Contentment

Hebrews 13:5-6 – ⁵“Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ ⁶So we can confidently say, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?’”

1 Timothy 6:6-8 – ⁶“But godliness with contentment is great gain, ⁷for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. ⁸But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.”

(2) Live by Heaven’s Operating System

James 3:13-17 – ¹³“Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. ¹⁴But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. ¹⁵This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. ¹⁶For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. ¹⁷But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.”

(3) Celebrate Others’ Victories

1 Corinthians 12:26 – “...if one member is honored, all rejoice together.”

(4) Keep the End in mind

Psalms 73:3-5, 12-13, 16-19 – ³“...I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. ⁴For they have no pangs until death; their bodies are fat and sleek. ⁵They are not in trouble as others are; they are not stricken like the rest of mankind. ¹²Behold, these are the wicked; always at ease, they increase in riches. ¹³All in vain have I kept my heart clean and washed my hands in innocence. ¹⁶But when I thought how to understand this, it seemed to me a wearisome task, ¹⁷until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I discerned their end. ¹⁸Truly you set them in slippery places; you make them fall to ruin. ¹⁹How they are destroyed in a moment, swept away utterly by terrors!”