



1. The Dream Killer

Where there is no word from God [vision; no revelation of God and His word, prophecy], people are uncontrolled, unrestrained [the people perish], but those who obey what they have been taught [guard the law] are happy [blessed]. Proverbs 29:18 EXB

Do you know envy is a dream killer? I found this out while preparing to speak at a Vision Board party. I had all of my to do's and checklists, and scriptures when an alarming thought came to mind. There began a mastermind session between God and me. He told me that we could have all the strategies and

scriptures and pictures and confessions in the world but if we don't get our heart right, there will be no manifestation of anything we place on the board, it will be just a pretty board with fancy letters, pictures and pretty wishes. This obviously was not good news to share at a Vision Board Party. "Okay God, how is this workshop going to go?" I asked. I then looked at my boards and posters and knew I was missing the mark somewhere. Many of the goals on my boards were taking longer to manifest than others. Why is it taking so long for me? I know the holdup is not on God's end but rather mine so where am I falling short?

I wasn't seeing the benefits of my affirmations, my vision boards, my motivation videos, the seeds I have sown be it financial or spiritual. It seemed that there was no fruit, no results from my good deeds and my hard work. Year after year, no change. I was seriously challenged emotionally. It was like a roller coaster ride; I would be good for one week or one month and then BAM! I get knocked down the hill by some crazy situation or attack. Some was by my own doing and some not. Some was just plain 'old life. As they say life happens. My emotions were an absolute wreck! I would force myself to get out of bed and drag myself to start my day. There were many days where I felt like I had been in a fight the whole night and I was fighting but it was a spiritual battle. Have you ever felt like

Mari Benning

you were in a fight all night long and you were drained before you even stepped out of the bed?

This bitter cycle was overwhelming me. I lost my joy and my will to keep going. I mean I had to keep going because it's not in my nature to give up. Even though I didn't give up physically, I had definitely checked out mentally and emotionally. I had nothing attached to my confessions, no faith, no life, no effort, nada. My words were empty and void of power. Because my words were in vain, they carried no weight and therefore were unable to complete the task assigned. Just because we sing songs or pray deep prayers at church or at home or where ever doesn't mean our heart is attached to them. Jesus says in Matthew 15:8, that we honor God with our lips, but our heart is far from Him. He also said further down that it wasn't what goes into the mouth that defiles us but what comes out. My heart had detached itself from my words and so I was carrying a pseudo pregnancy. I thought I was pregnant with the will of God but didn't consider I miscarried a year ago.

Even though I would have been labeled as spiritually sterile, I kept trying to get pregnant. I would be in church crying like a baby, feeling the presence of God and hearing the preacher spray seeds all over the congregation, hoping that the soil of my

heart was fertile enough to receive it. At times it was and others, not so much. Why was I so unstable?

We pollute our own dreams and goals by what we are speaking. As I continued with these vain repetitions and not seeing positive results, I started to speak things contrary to what I wanted to attract into my life. I was the one drawing the negativity to myself. So of course, seeing the bad things manifest were making me feel even more unsure in my pursuits. I started to question whether my visions, dreams, and goals were really supposed to be mine or was I imagining these things. Did God really want me to have what I put on my vision board, was it a God idea or just a good idea. I mean, what is the difference anyway? I was so confused!

Let me tell you something- one thing the enemy is good at is this, he's really good at causing strife, and strife brings confusion. James 3:16 says, envy and strife open the door to every evil work and boy do they come with a vengeance. Another word for strife is selfish ambition. I wasn't necessarily striving with others; I was striving within myself. In the book of James 4:1, he addresses the source of our fighting and arguing, that they are stemming from the cravings that battle within us. We fight and covet what doesn't belong to us. All because we

Mari Benning

don't ask and why don't we ask, because we know our motive isn't pure.

I was beginning to have righteous indignation about my desires that were from God, but I was confessing them out of an angry heart, and we can only bear the fruit of the seed we have planted. My bitterness had spoiled my soil and my seed went bad. So in turn my crop went bad. How can I get sugar from vinegar? You can't. How can brackish and fresh water flow from the same stream? It won't. So why do we continue to speak highly of our God one minute and curse people the next minute? We cannot love God and love money, we either love the one and hate the other. I was more in love with my vision board than the one who gave me the vision. I lost my focus and my voice.

As we said in the streets growing up, "your word is your bond." That meant you kept your promise. God was keeping his promise, but I wasn't keeping mine.

I was like Peter when Jesus called him to walk out on the water. I asked the Lord to call me and when he called, I answered but like Peter, I started sinking. Peter went out to meet Jesus but lost focus and began to sink. He was more mindful of the strong wind that was blowing and probably the fact that he

was doing the impossible. He was defying gravity and he must have asked himself, how in the world was this possible, when doubt hit him. Jesus told Peter he had little faith. I talk about this in detail in my book, “Finish the Race of Life”, which you can find on amazon.com.

What I want to point out is that Jesus told Peter and the disciples, to have courage and not to be scared. Fear is the fuel for envy, and anger. Fear is also paralyzing. I was incapable of moving forward or backward, and to be stuck in the same position year after year is a curse. You do realize that a person bound to bedrest acquires bed sores if they don't have constant movement. Could it be that you are in pain because of the bedsores you have due to fear, and a lack of courage?

Envy:

A painful or resentful awareness of an advantage enjoyed by another joined with a desire to possess the same advantage.

That day while I was preparing for the Vision Workshop, I heard God reply to my question of where I was missing it? He said, “you have envy in your heart.” Wait, what?! Envy?! No way! How is that even possible? I love people. My heart is to genuinely see others succeed in whatever their journey because I

Mari Benning

know the pain of losing and feeling rejected, so I do my best to encourage often. Then he told me that I was envious of the world and reminded me of speeches and conversations I've had. Where I was preaching my self-righteous stance about how it's our time to take over and how much we as God's children deserve to have success. That we should not live beneath our inheritance and take back what rightfully belongs to us. I was adamant about seeing the church benefit off of our biblical principles rather than the world. All of that is true and I believe we should be prospering but I was speaking from a painful place. I marched to the drum of my war and my enemy was the world. I was envying them because I wasn't influencing them. I felt as though they were enjoying what was supposed to be my enjoyment, and that they were feasting on my inheritance. They were living in our houses, driving our cars, their kids were going to our schools and they were taking over our businesses and industries. I was focusing my energy on the wrong thing. My aim was snatching back instead of creating anew. My enemy became the people when it should've been Satan. Even though he uses people to do his bidding, I was acting like the self-righteous brother of the prodigal son. I was jealous of the backsliders, the lukewarm and the lost when I was one of them not too long ago. How quickly we forget where we came from.

This was an awakening moment for me. I did not realize I was thinking and acting like the very people I despised; the hypocrites, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the prideful and religious ones.

But again, I felt more deserving of good fortune than a lot of the heathens out here. I mean, seriously, I was living right, serving the Lord, I wasn't doing all the bad things I used to do like drink alcohol until I passed out, or curse people out at the drop of a dime, I wasn't a murderer but I did murder with my words. I wasn't smoking marijuana (weed) anymore, I wasn't clubbing, etc. But you see, I was focusing on the fruit of my bad habits and not the root. Though I may have changed some habits I was still ugly at times to the people who mattered most. I was envious, which carried anger, bitterness, and unhappiness, and I was going to make sure that everyone around me felt my wrath.

You cannot be angry and happy at the same time. It's okay to be angry but it's not okay to sin and if you don't channel that emotion to your benefit it will be to your detriment. So many people allow envy which is fear based to paralyze them as I was. It was ruining my dream of owning a house on the hill and my white picket fence.

Habakkuk 2:2-4; Then the LORD answered me and said: "Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end IT WILL SPEAK, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, WAIT FOR IT; BECAUSE IT WILL SURELY COME, it will not tarry. "Behold the proud, his soul is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith".

Habakkuk had this same problem. You have to read chapters one and two to get the big picture of why God told him to write the vision down. It's quite powerful. Basically, Habakkuk was complaining to God about the violence that was taking place against His people. As if God didn't know what was going on. But Habakkuk was voicing his cry as many of us do, as I was doing, pleading for God to do something about the injustice in the world and why was he tolerating their wrong doings. In that time there was constant strife, violence, conflicts were escalating, much oppression and no one was abiding by the law. Justice seemed like it would never emerge, and the wicked people were dominating the righteous which caused the justice system to be perverted. Sound kind of like what's going on today! God replies confirming all that Habakkuk was saying was true and how they are absolutely guilty for what they are doing. Then Habakkuk questions God by saying, "Are you not from eternity, Yahweh, my God?" He's going back and forth in a

conversation with God about how treacherous these people were, and he questioned God's leadership by asking why was he silent?

Woah, Habakkuk was bold, but I can understand his frustration. I was feeling this way for years. It wasn't that I wanted to be a superstar although I wouldn't mind that, but I was tired of seeing Gods people suffer, myself included. We, Christians have become the laughing stock of the world. We have all kinds of labels, then we have weird people who, possessed by demons, claiming they are killing in the name of God. Um, God is NOT a murderer. So, stop the nonsense!

After a while, Habakkuk stopped complaining and said he would wait for God to answer his questioning. What he meant by waiting was to stay in a position of prayer. He wasn't dropping all his grievances on God and not looking for a response. And God did reply. He told Habakkuk to write down what he was about to say and make it clear so that there is no mistake about it. Everything God said, Habakkuk wrote. He was told that the vision would not tarry, that it is for an appointed time and it is the truth. Even though it seems delayed, wait for it because it will be right on time.

Mari Benning

Take a moment to share what you are thankful

for...
