



[2 Corinthians 11:2](#)

(2) For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

King James Version

Being the one who wrote about the [fruit of the Spirit](#) and the works of the flesh, Paul understood the difference between carnal and godly jealousy.

What was Paul's motive for teaching and guiding the church? What was the object of his jealousy? Was he hoarding this little group for himself or keeping enough people in his group to support his lifestyle and agenda? The various definitions of the Greek word *zeloo* (often translated as "affect," "covet," "desire," "envy," "jealous," or "zealous") provided by *Vine's Dictionary of New Testament Words* give us some insights: "to seek or desire eagerly," "to desire to have," "to take a warm interest in," "to seek zealously." From this perspective, we see that Paul's motives were virtuous. He was eagerly desirous to do everything in his God-given power to present the church to Christ as a chaste virgin! He was closely watching over these people with godly jealousy.

Notice, Paul was not jealous *of* these people but *for* them, and maybe that is part of our misunderstanding of godly jealousy. [God](#) has no reason to be jealous of us or anything else, but He certainly has a burning desire **for** us!

Has something ever caught our interest so much and fired a yearning for it that we could not rest until that desire was satisfied? These two ideas, jealousy and consuming fire, have something in common, as [Deuteronomy 4:24](#) suggests: Our jealous God is a consuming fire!

This is one of God's attributes of which we might at first be afraid, as the author of Hebrews points out ([Hebrews 12:29](#)). When we think of fire, chances are we first think of being burned or consumed. Yet, fire can also be used as a purifier, and it can sure feel good on a cold winter morning. Many people can sit and watch a fire in the hearth for

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hours, listening to the soothing crackle and pop of the wood and enjoying its warmth.

A fire is a beautiful sight. It contains many different shades of red, orange, and yellow flowing together, and if it gets hot enough, one can see deep shades of blue in it as well. The coals or the burning embers seem as if they are pulsating with heat and energy all the while they are slowly being consumed and their energy dissipating.

Yet, recall the burning bush where God commissioned [Moses](#) to lead His people out of slavery ([Exodus 3:2](#)). It was totally enveloped in fire, yet it was not destroyed. As long as God was in it, the energy never diminished! The sight was so brilliant in depicting God's glory that Moses dropped to his knees and bowed to the ground. This event demonstrates that godly jealousy comes first, and it issues in fire!

What, then, is the motive and object of God's jealousy? In seeking to reproduce Himself, God is preparing a bride for His Son. The practice of parents' choosing their children's spouses is not common in our Western world, but many of us wish our children were so likeminded with us that they would totally trust us with their happiness for the rest of their lives.

[Jesus](#) trusts His Father because He knows that He is a jealous God, and His jealousy is directed toward Him and the perfecting of His bride, the church. The Father desires that we be given a spirit body and be filled with His mind and power. He is eager to give us His only companion in wedlock, bestowing on us His Family name and making us heirs of His mighty Kingdom!

On the other hand, [Satan](#) begins very early in our lives to plant seeds of carnal jealousy, never missing a chance to tempt us to react according to his evil spirit. The [sin](#) of jealousy begins in our minds, and if it is not eliminated, it will inhibit [God's Spirit](#) from dominating our thinking. The two cannot dwell together.

— Ronny H. Graham

To learn more, see:
[The Jealousy of God](#)

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