Enemies of the Heart

Let's go straight to the bottom line: Every leader needs to read this book. Author and pastor Andy Stanley in his must-read-right-away book *Enemies of the Heart: Breaking Free From The Four Emotions That Control You* nails down the absolute centrality of the heart in life and relationships. He reaches out and grabs you from the start with these words of warning: *The unresolved issues stirring around undetected in your heart will eventually work their way to the surface…If your heart continues to go unmonitored, whatever "thing" is growing in there will worsen to the point that you're no longer able to contain it with carefully managed words and behaviors*. From there he offers helpful (and convicting) diagnostics, along with hope-filled steps of restoration and transformation.

Read it for yourself. But most of all, read it for those who live and work within your circle of influence. Check out these Book Notes to get a fly-over of the heart-renewal that awaits.

Take a look at these Book Notes to get a taste of the highly practical insights that Webb provides.

Title: ***Enemies of the Heart: Breaking Free from the Four Emotions That Control You***

Author: **Andy Stanley**

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Book Description:

Break free from the destructive power of guilt, anger, greed, and jealousy.

Divorce. Job loss. Estrangement from family members. Broken friendships.

The difficult circumstances you are dealing with today are likely being fed by one of four emotional forces that compels you to act in undesirable ways, sometimes even against your will.

Andy Stanley explores each of these destructive forces—guilt, anger, greed, and jealousy—and how they infiltrate your life and damage your relationships. He says that, left unchallenged they have the power to destroy your home, your career, and your friendships.

In Enemies of the Heart, Andy offers practical, biblical direction to help you fight back, to take charge of those feelings that mysteriously control you, and to restore your broken relationships.

Book Quotes:

Life can be hard on the heart. The world is full of outside influences that have the power to disrupt the rhythm of your heart. Most are subtle. Some may even appear to be necessary as protection from further disruptions. Over time you develop habits that slowly erode your heart's sensitivity. The inevitable pain and disappointment of life have caused you to set up walls around your heart. LOCATION: 99

The unresolved issues stirring around undetected in your heart will eventually work their way to the surface.

LOCATION: 130

If your heart continues to go unmonitored, whatever “thing” is growing in there will worsen to the point that you’re no longer able to contain it with carefully managed words and behaviors.
LOCATION: 131

Likewise, we’re tempted to treat the ancillary, symptomatic challenges that stem from an unhealthy heart while ignoring the deeper issues. But as is the case with the physical heart, eventually the root problem will become a real problem. And just as a heart attack has the potential to destroy your body, so spiritual heart disease has the potential to destroy you and squeeze the life out of your most valuable relationships. LOCATION: 157

What we need is a heart that can keep pace with our outward obedience. LOCATION: 175

What’s up is this: What God begins at the moment of our salvation is not completed in that same moment. I bet you already knew that about yourself, didn’t you? LOCATION: 181

At the risk of oversimplifying, let me put it this way: Jesus may have moved into your heart, but he may not have been given full access. That’s why as happy as you are about being forgiven, you’re not always willing to extend forgiveness to others. That’s a heart thing. As excited as you are about the success you’re experiencing, you aren’t always excited about the success someone else is enjoying. That’s a heart thing too. Both are evidence that God has not completed in you what he has begun. You’re still a work in progress. There’s still some heart work to be done. LOCATION: 183

You think that outburst was an exception. And in one way it was. It was an exception to your general rule of not allowing what’s in your heart to be exposed to the rest of the world. But as we’ll discover in the next chapter, that embarrassing outburst wasn’t an exception to what’s in your heart. Indeed, it was a reflection of what’s really swirling around down there. LOCATION: 262

Nobody wants to admit to having heart problems. It sounds so serious. I know I feel better if I think my occasional slip-ups are purely behavioral. After all, nobody’s perfect. But if you tell me my heart is faulty or in need of repair … well, that hurts. Now I feel like a bad person, like I’m a candidate for some sort of rehabilitation program. LOCATION: 284

Here’s something the people around you know that you may not have clued into yet: The people closest to you routinely catch the flak thrown off by the explosive stuff you normally work so hard to keep hidden. LOCATION: 295

What’s in your heart comes out at home, where you’ve turned off the “safety” and let down your defenses. That’s when the heart exposes itself in the most negative ways to the people you love the most. LOCATION: 297

We hurt most who we love the most. Bad grammar, painful truth. LOCATION: 299

The heart is such a mystery. In fact, one prophet asked of the heart, “Who can understand it?” (Jeremiah 17:9). Good question. The implication is, nobody. With which I readily concur. And even if we do begin to understand it, we certainly can’t control it—which is all the more reason we need to learn to monitor it. Like the seismic activity of a dormant volcano, what you don’t know can hurt you. LOCATION: 389

Everything we experience is processed through our hearts, the good and the bad. Life comes at us from all directions, but it all gets channeled through our hearts. Unfortunately, our negative experiences have a tendency to get stuck there. Eventually they make their way out through our words and deeds; but because of

the delay between entry and exit, we often have a difficult time making the connection. LOCATION: 415

Our very lives emanate from the heart. We live, parent, lead, relate, romance, confront, react, respond, instruct, manage, problem solve, and love from the heart. LOCATION: 425

For example, secrets can damage the heart. I've counseled dozens of people who had hidden habits or were harboring secrets from their past. These secrets had caused them to build walls in their relationships. In many cases, their personal secrets caused them to become unjustifiably suspicious of those closest to them. That's because we usually suspect in others what we're guilty of ourselves. LOCATION: 467

My point is that none of us reach adulthood without a few dings to the heart. Our response to those dings determines the condition of our hearts. We cannot control how people treat us. We cannot stop their hurtful words. But we can monitor their effects on our hearts. And perhaps, as we'll see, we can reverse the damage and keep our hearts free from further destructive debris. LOCATION: 474

Because heart issues always take their toll on relationships. Specifically, heart issues impact an individual's ability to initiate and maintain intimate relationships. LOCATION: 483

The old adage is true: Hurt people hurt people. And we could add who hurt other people, who hurt still other people.… On and on it goes. LOCATION: 491

They're the four primary enemies of the heart—four life-blocking agents that become lodged in the heart, poisoning our relationships, our faith, and our character. These corrosive forces gain strength from the darkness. Secrecy is their greatest ally. Left to their own, they grow in power and influence, like a lab experiment gone terribly wrong. LOCATION: 551

But as we'll discover, these forces lose their power when exposed to light. Like roaches that scatter at the flick of a switch, so these four enemies of the heart dissipate when exposed to the light of truth. Here they are: • Guilt • Anger • Greed • Jealousy. LOCATION: 553

Each of the four foes on this list is fueled by a single dynamic, and it's this dynamic that makes each so problematic. Understanding this dynamic is the first step to rendering each of these monsters powerless in your life….Guilt, anger, greed, jealousy—each results in a debt-to-debtor dynamic that always causes an imbalance in any relationship. If you owe someone money, or vice versa, you know this to be the case. No matter what else is going on at the moment, the debt is always in the room with you. LOCATION: 563

Unbalanced power in a dysfunctional relationship is a recipe for disaster. LOCATION: 574

There are only two ways to resolve this kind of tension: Either somebody has to pay up, or somebody has to cancel the debt. As long as the debt is unpaid or unforgiven, the debt governs the relationship. It becomes a filter for everything. LOCATION: 582

Guilt says, "I owe you." Guilt is the result of having done something we perceived as wrong. Every wrong we do can be restated as an act of theft, as we'll see in a moment. If I steal from you, I owe you. So the message from a heart laden with guilt is, "I owe!" LOCATION: 592

We've even adopted specific terminology for resolving our guilt. We say, "I owe her an apology." Why do we "owe" people an apology? Because our hearts tell us we took something, that we're now debtors in some fashion. Consequently, the only way to make things right is to pay up. Even if our only available currency is words—"I'm sorry"—still we feel obligated to pay something. LOCATION: 600

Guilt says, "I owe you." Anger, on the other hand, says, "You owe me." LOCATION: 631

We get angry when we don't get what we want. That's a pretty important idea, and one you may not agree with right off the bat, so I'll say it again: Anger is the result of not getting something we want. LOCATION: 632

Think about a time when you were really angry. Isn't it true that the entire situation could have been reduced to this simple idea: You wanted something and you didn't get it. In other words, you didn't get what you were convinced you deserved. LOCATION: 649

Show me an angry person and I'll show you a hurt person. And I guarantee you that person is hurt because something has been taken. Somebody owes them something. (If nothing else, an apology.) LOCATION: 658

Again, here's the point: The root of anger is the perception that something has been taken. Something is owed you. And now a debt-to-debtor relationship has been established. LOCATION: 662

If anger is lodged in my heart, then before long, I'll come to believe that everybody owes me.
LOCATION: 672

But then, anger is a heart disease. People with anger lodged in their hearts are sick, and sick people act sick.
LOCATION: 680

It is when our hearts are stirred that we become most aware of what they contain. LOCATION: 688

Like all four of the internal enemies we'll be looking at in this book, anger gains its strength from secrecy. Exposing it is painful and powerful at the same time. LOCATION: 695

I would like to offer an insight into your hesitancy to tell your story. It goes back to something I said in an earlier chapter: These enemies of the heart cannot withstand the light of exposure. For you to tell your story would be to drag it out into the light. You know intuitively that bringing it out into the open would cause it to lose its potency, which means you would lose an excuse to stay angry. Besides, the whole ordeal would be so uncomfortable that it's easier just to keep it to yourself…If this is your situation, do you realize you may be one story away from a healthy heart? Can you see that by forcing yourself to bring your story to light you may deal your anger a fatal blow? LOCATION: 707

Here's a question every angry man and woman needs to consider: How long are you going to allow people you don't even like—people who are no longer in your life, maybe even people who aren't even alive anymore—to control your life? How long? LOCATION: 729

What's ridiculous is to continue to allow the people who have hurt you the most to influence your current and future relationships. That's not just silly. That's … sick. LOCATION: 732

While it's true that you can't undo what's been done, it's equally true that you don't have to let the past control your future. LOCATION: 755

Remember, your story explains your behavior; it doesn't excuse it. Until you're willing to embrace this simple but annoying truth, you'll never flush the anger from its hidden lair in your heart. Besides, justifying your behavior by reciting your story gives ongoing power to the people who hurt you. Why continue giving them that kind of leverage in your life? LOCATION: 759

Like guilt, anger alienates us from other people. More times than we care to admit, the shrapnel of our anger pierces those closest to us, loved ones who are innocent and clueless as to what caused us to detonate in their presence. A heart filled with anger is a heart looking to be paid back. Unfortunately, in most cases, it's our unsuspecting friends and family who are made to pay. LOCATION: 775

Quick review. Guilt says, “I owe you.” Anger says, “You owe me.” The third treacherous enemy on our list is greed. Greed says, “I owe me.” LOCATION: 779

Bottom line, the greedy people believe they deserve every good thing that comes their way. Not only that, but they believe they deserve every good thing that could possibly come their way. LOCATION: 781

The truth is, we’ve made it almost impossible to identify greed in our own lives. Unlike anger or guilt, greed hides behind several virtues. Greedy people are savers, and saving is a good thing. Greedy people are often planners, and planning is a good thing. Greedy people want to make sure their financial future is secure, and that’s a good thing as well. LOCATION: 793

Greed knows no socioeconomic boundaries. I’ve met greedy poor people and greedy rich people. Greed isn’t a financial issue; it’s a heart issue. Financial gain doesn’t make greedy people less greedy. Financial gain or loss doesn’t change anything, because greed emanates from the heart. LOCATION: 803

Greed is supported by an endless cast of what ifs. What if it gets scratched? What if it gets lost? What if there’s not enough? What if I don’t get my fair share? What if she has more? What if the economy collapses? LOCATION: 842

As we’ve seen, each of the enemies of the heart we’re discussing is energized by the idea that somebody owes something. Guilt says, “I owe you.” Anger is fueled by the notion that you owe me. Greed is kept alive by the assumption that I owe me. This fourth heart issue is no different. Jealousy. Jealousy says, “God owes me.” LOCATION: 855

There’ll always be someone who’s richer, skinnier, more talented, better connected, or just plain luckier than you. And until you find a way to deal with your jealous heart, you’ll be unable to follow the most basic of all Christian tenets—love one another. LOCATION: 902

Well, there they are: guilt, anger, greed, and jealousy. Did you recognize any symptoms? Hopefully not, but I’m guessing you saw some of yourself somewhere in there. LOCATION: 910

The most powerful agent of growth and transformation is something much more basic than any technique: a change of heart. –John Welwood LOCATION: 918

A changed heart is the result of forming some new habits—some exercises for the heart. For that reason most of us would rather sing about it than do the hard work. LOCATION: 954

But old habits die hard. Guilt, anger, greed, jealousy—all are habit-forming. And like any habit that goes unchecked, over time they come to define us. These disorders become such a part of us that we no longer view them as issues to be resolved. Instead, we dismiss these destructive habits as characteristics hardwired into our personality. LOCATION: 960

In the chapters that follow we’re going to look at four specific spiritual exercises that, if you’ll make them a habit, will effectively neutralize the enemies of your heart…Ask around and you’ll discover that the happiest people you know are people who have mastered these four habits. Whereas these are learned behaviors, happy people seem to do them instinctively. LOCATION: 989

In fact, as we’ll discover, wealth actually works against happiness. Typically, the more a person has, the less generous he is. The more a person has, the more anxiety she carries. The more a person has, the more aware he is of what he doesn’t have. I’ve found that it’s actually harder to be happy and rich than happy and not so rich. But don’t despair—even the wealthy can master these heart habits. Happiness is no respecter of people.

But it is the overflow of a healthy heart. LOCATION: 996

Secrets lose their power when exposed to light. LOCATION: 1003

The light that exposes our secrets and frees the heart from the oppressive power of guilt is confession. LOCATION: 1003

The English definition of confession is to admit to or acknowledge something. But in the Scriptures, confession is associated with change. Confession is just one step in a sequence of steps that lead the guilty out of the darkness and into the light; it's simply the beginning of a process that ultimately leads to a change in lifestyle or behavior. LOCATION: 1051

But Jesus comes along in his characteristic fashion and reverses everything. In effect he says our relationship with God hinges on our relationship with other people—the two are inseparable. He seems to imply that our ability to worship God sincerely and fellowship with him unashamedly is contingent upon the status of our relationships with others, including those we've offended. LOCATION: 1104

The truth is, you cannot resolve your differences with God if you're unwilling to resolve your differences with the people around you. You cannot be in fellowship with the Father and out of fellowship with others over something you've done. The two go hand in hand. Confessing secretly to God or to a priest is no substitute for confessing openly to someone you've wronged. God values relationships and considers restoration a priority. Often, that requires confession—not just to God, but also to the offended party. LOCATION: 1107

Guilty people are usually repeat offenders. And as long as you're carrying a secret, as long as you're trying to ease your conscience by telling God how sorry you are, you're setting yourself up to repeat the past. However, confession—the way God designed confession to be applied—breaks the cycle of sin and guilt. But that's just the beginning. LOCATION: 1124

Public confession has the power to purge our hearts of the guilt that keeps us from living out in the open; secret confession does not. LOCATION: 1129

Forgiveness doesn't erase our need to take responsibility for what we've done. LOCATION: 1179

God's forgiveness doesn't exempt you from the responsibility for confession and restitution. On the contrary, his forgiveness is the very reason to confess. God paid a high price to reconcile you back to him, and now he's calling on you to pay the price to reconcile yourself to others. LOCATION: 1210

At some point in your journey, God is going to call on you to turn and take responsibility for your past. It never fails. Unresolved relationships, debts that have been neglected, apologies never made—these are things God will eventually lead us to own and resolve. How does he do this? Through that nagging, undeniable, irritating sense of guilt that follows you around like a bad cold. You won't be able to confess it away or pray it away. LOCATION: 1213

Guilt chips away at my self-respect. Confession has the potential to undermine my public respect, but self-respect is far more important. Besides, I can't control what others think of me. I either lose the respect of others or lose respect for myself. Why pollute my heart with guilt in an effort to protect a reputation I may not have anyway? LOCATION: 1227

I've never heard of a man or woman breaking a debilitating habit without public confession. Ask the folks at Alcoholics Anonymous. They'll tell you that going public with a habit is the first and possibly the most important step in recovery. Confession breaks the death grip of guilt and sets us free to embrace the future

God has for us without dragging around the dead bones of the past. LOCATION: 1232

Of the four enemies vying for control of our hearts, this one's the most obvious and perhaps the most dangerous. Anger. When unleashed with unbridled intensity, anger leaves a trail of destruction in its wake. But behind all the huffing and puffing, ranting and raving, brewing and stewing is the most basic of human experiences: We just aren't getting our way. LOCATION: 1241

Hurt, rejection, criticism, stuff just not going our way—all of these things leave us feeling like victims. No wonder we lash out. No wonder we have such short fuses. Who can blame us? Victims are powerless. Victims have no control over their lives. Victims are at the mercy of others. Victims can only react. Victims are held prisoner by circumstances beyond their control…It's these feelings of victimization that fuel our justifications and excuses. A victim will always have an excuse. In fact, a victim can write off just about any kind of behavior. After all, look at the way he's been treated. Look at what she's had to endure. LOCATION: 1292

In contrast to bitterness and brawling, Paul suggests that we extend kindness and compassion to those who have wronged us. LOCATION: 1307

And Jesus' words couldn't be any clearer. Cancel their debt. Forgive them—or else. What a terrible thing to tell someone who has been taken advantage of! Maybe you're thinking, Wait a minute! I've already been hurt once. I'm the victim. And now you're telling me that if I don't grant this person forgiveness—which he doesn't deserve—then God's coming after me too? What's up with that? LOCATION: 1385

Allow me to summarize: If we hold out waiting to be paid back for the wrongs done to us, we will be the ones who pay. If, on the other hand, we cancel the debts owed to us, we will be set free. LOCATION: 1392

Your pain isn't a trophy to show off. It's not a story to tell. It's potentially poison to your soul. To refuse to forgive is to choose to self-destruct. LOCATION: 1400

God's decision to forgive Peter required the death of his Son; Peter's decision to forgive those who had offended him would cost him little more than his pride. LOCATION: 1405

In the shadow of my hurt, forgiveness feels like a decision to reward my enemy. But in the shadow of the cross, forgiveness is merely a gift from one undeserving soul to another. LOCATION: 1407

Whenever I talk to someone who's hesitant to forgive, invariably it's because this person is evaluating his decision in light of what was done to him rather than what was done for him. There's a big difference. Perspective is everything. As a believer, I'm called and liberated to view forgiveness from the perspective of the cross. Like the servant in Jesus' parable, I've been forgiven of a debt I could never repay—the least I can do is to cancel the debts owed to us by others. That's what it means to forgive "just as" God forgave me. LOCATION: 1415

If you're a Christian, you aren't expected to treat others the way you've been treated by others; you've been called to treat people the way you've been treated by your Father in heaven. You don't forgive because the other person deserves it; you forgive because you've been forgiven.
LOCATION: 1419

Forgiveness runs so contrary to our sense of justice and fairness that it's unlikely we'll ever feel like forgiving. But in the Scriptures forgiveness is never presented as a feeling; it's always described as a decision. Forgiveness is a gift we decide to give in spite of how we feel. LOCATION: 1429

Four phases must take place to complete the cycle of forgiveness. I hesitate to call them "steps." They're more

like processes.

1. Identify who you're angry with.
2. Determine what they owe you.
   You cannot cancel a debt that you haven't clearly identified.
3. Cancel the debt.
   After identifying exactly what was taken, you must cancel the debt. That means deciding that the offending party doesn't owe you anything anymore. Just as Christ canceled your sin debt at Calvary, so you and I must cancel the debts that others have incurred against us.
   Heavenly Father, _____ has taken _____ from me. I have held on to this debt long enough. I choose to cancel this debt. _____ doesn't owe me anymore. Just as you forgave me, I forgive _____.
4. Dismiss the case.
   The final process centers on a daily decision not to reopen your case. What makes this so difficult is that our feelings don't automatically follow our decision to forgive. Besides, forgiving someone doesn't erase our memories. LOCATION: 1432-1471

Your memories are not your enemies. Memories are simply memories. What you do with them will determine their impact. Truly forgiving doesn't always entail truly forgetting. LOCATION: 1481

The truth is, nothing can make up for the past. There's an emotional element involved in hurt that cannot be compensated for through apologies, promises, or financial restitution. An apology doesn't erase an experience. To some degree, there will always be an outstanding debt. To pursue or wait for "payback" is futile. It won't happen. It can't happen. To insist on it is to set ourselves up for unnecessary heartbreak. To cling to our hurt while waiting to be repaid is to allow the seeds of bitterness to take root and grow. When that happens, we allow the person who hurt us once to hurt us over and over and over again. LOCATION: 1499

Of the four monstrous forces we'll discuss, I believe this one—unresolved anger from intentional and unintentional hurt—is the most devastating. Yet in some ways it's the easiest to overcome. You simply make up your mind to cancel the debt. You decide and declare, "You don't owe me, you don't owe me, you don't owe me anymore. From one forgiven soul to another: You don't owe me." LOCATION: 1510

The person whose heart is coated with greed believes he has earned the good things that have come his way and, therefore, is determined to control his possessions and wealth the way he sees fit. Greedy people have a supersized sense of ownership. LOCATION: 1515

Greed can take up residence in the heart and live there for years, undetected. The unguarded heart is highly susceptible to this debilitating disease. It's difficult to diagnose—especially to self-diagnose. LOCATION: 1529

This is Jesus' definition of a greedy person: A person who stores up things for himself but isn't rich toward God. Being "rich toward God" is Jesus-talk for being generous toward those in need. A greedy person is the man or woman who saves carefully but gives sparingly.
LOCATION: 1586

Here's a question we all need to ask ourselves from time to time: Why do I have so much? Now, I realize you don't have as much as you want. Few of us do. Again, the desire for stuff is like the rest of our appetites—it can never be fully or finally satisfied. But just for a moment, shift your focus away from your potential

possessions and income and consider your actual P&I. Think of all you have. Chances are, it's more than your parents had at your age. Perhaps it's considerably more than most people in the world can lay claim to. So why you? Why do you have so much? LOCATION: 1606

Guilt is conquered with confession. Anger is conquered with forgiveness. Greed is conquered with generosity. LOCATION: 1674

You've got to give to the point that it forces you to adjust your lifestyle. If you're not willing to give to the point that it impacts your lifestyle, then according to Jesus you're greedy. LOCATION: 1677

Generous feelings and good intentions don't compensate for a greedy heart; in fact, good intentions and greed can cohabit in your heart indefinitely. LOCATION: 1685

Don't wait until God changes your heart to begin giving. Giving is the way God chooses to change our hearts. As your heart changes, your attitude and feelings will follow suit. God loves a cheerful giver, but he'll put your money to good use whether you're cheerful or not. My advice: Give until you get cheerful. LOCATION: 1689

These two habits, percentage giving and spontaneous giving, will protect you from Bigger Barn Syndrome. The day will come when you receive an unexpected windfall and your first thought will be, Who can I help? What kingdom endeavor can I fund? In that moment you'll know that through the habit of generous giving, you've broken the power of greed in your life.
LOCATION: 1702

Every one of the four invaders of the heart is fueled by the notion that somebody owes somebody something. And it's this debt dynamic that gives each of these monsters its power. Regardless of who owes what to whom, as long as someone's holding on to a debt, there'll be tension in a relationship. LOCATION: 1733

Jealousy says, "God owes me." LOCATION: 1737

Your real problem isn't with the people whose stuff you envy; it's with your Creator. God owes you, and you're holding a grudge against him. LOCATION: 1744

Because the driving force behind jealousy is really the driving force behind every single relational struggle you'll encounter in your life. Every one of them. LOCATION: 1748

James seemed to think that our external conflicts are the direct result of an internal conflict that has worked its way to the surface. The word "desires" here means pleasures. In fact, this same Greek word is translated "pleasure" later in this passage. James believed that if you and I find ourselves in an argument, it will be because a battle within me has spilled out onto you, and vice versa. According to James, there are conflicting desires churning around inside me, and if you bump me too hard, what's on the inside is going to spill out all over you. LOCATION: 1763

So what is it that's causing this internal struggle that threatens the peace of every home and office and menaces our every relationship? James comes right out and states it plainly: You want something but don't get it. LOCATION: 1772

The desires James is referring to in this passage represent unquenchable thirsts—our thirst for stuff, money, recognition, success, progress, intimacy, sex, fun, relationship, partnership. We never get enough of any of these things to fully and finally satisfy our desires. In fact, as C. S. Lewis points out in Mere Christianity, the more you feed an appetite, the more it escalates in intensity: "Appetites grow through indulgence—not neglect. Gluttons think just as much about food as starving people." LOCATION: 1792

The issue in every quarrel is that we each want to get our way. Owning that makes a huge difference. When everybody involved owns it, the problem usually evaporates. LOCATION: 1806

Until I can own my share of the problem, I'll always have a tendency to blame the other person. And blaming never resolved anything. I've never talked to a husband or wife who credited incessant blaming as the source of their marital bliss. Blaming just feeds the problem, but until I can stop and own the fact that my real problem is that I'm not getting what I want, I have no recourse but to blame. LOCATION: 1807

What do you do with desires and appetites that can never be fully and finally satisfied? James says you take them to the one who created them in the first place….James is instructing us to bring our deepest desires and unmet needs to the Father. He's giving us permission to pour out our hearts in an unfiltered conversation with our Creator. LOCATION: 1829

Once you've confessed to him that your root problem is that you're not getting your way, and once you've thoroughly and completely dumped your desires and anxiety on him, you'll find it much easier to deal with the people in your life. Regardless of whether they ever give you the recognition, love, or credit you deserve, you'll find peace—because you're no longer looking to these people to meet a need that only God can meet. LOCATION: 1840

Jealousy is dangerous. It's dangerous because it shapes our attitudes toward other people. It's hard to actively love someone you're jealous of. It's hard to serve (or submit to) someone who's a constant reminder of what you're not. LOCATION: 1878

Now, if you find it a bit daunting to look God in the eye and accuse him of owing you something, you're on the verge of a breakthrough. If you really do think he has mistreated you and, in fact, owes you something, then my suggestion is that you reread the New Testament. Jesus, along with a host of others, makes it pretty clear that we were goners, hopelessly separated from God. But God had mercy and gave us exactly what we did not deserve: forgiveness. The price? His Son. The truth is, we owed God a debt we couldn't pay—so he paid it, thereby erasing forever the possibility of his owing us anything, ever LOCATION: 1907

The habit that will enable you to strengthen your heart against jealousy is celebration. LOCATION: 1931

To guard your heart against jealousy, you've got to celebrate the success, size, and stuff of those you've tended to envy. You need to go out of your way to verbally express your congratulations over their accomplishments. This must become a habit. Celebrating the success of those you envy will allow you to conquer those emotions that have the potential to drive a wedge in the relationship. LOCATION: 1932

Expressing the truth helps to free you from the emotional bondage that's such an integral part of jealousy. When you walk up to the guy who got your promotion and say, "Congratulations," you're refusing to allow dangerous emotions to control your behavior. You're protecting your heart. You're saying no to jealousy. LOCATION: 1987

The questions you ask your children communicate to them what's important to you. The questions you repeatedly ask communicate what's most important to you in life. LOCATION: 2080

I'm convinced that one of the best ways to train our children to guard their hearts is through asking questions. Our questions have the power to do two things. First, they can communicate the value we place on the condition of their hearts. But more importantly, our questions can actually help our children know what they should be watching for. In time, our questions will become the gauge by which our children measure their hearts. LOCATION: 2092

The other thing that's different about lust is that it's an appetite—it's not going away, no matter how spiritual or committed you are. Lust isn't a problem you solve; it's an appetite you manage. Thus the need for self-control. Lust can be focused but not eliminated. You can deal with your anger and guilt once and for all. But not lust. It's here for the duration. Well, it's here for a long time anyway. LOCATION: 2168

Based on my conversations with hundreds of individuals whose misplaced lust has gotten them into trouble, I've drawn the following conclusion: Lust is rarely ever the root problem. When lust becomes problematic, it's almost always a manifestation of one or more of the heart problems we've already discussed. Clean out the anger, guilt, greed, and jealousy, and lust will become much more manageable. Deal with the big four, and your ability to exercise self-control in the arena of your sexuality will increase dramatically. LOCATION: 2172

Simply put, guilt, anger, greed, and jealousy weaken our resolve against sexual temptation.
LOCATION: 2182

Confess, forgive, give, celebrate. These are the habits that will change everything. Once these four routines define the rhythm of your heart, life will be noticeably different. Why? Because these habits empower you to settle your outstanding debts with others, God, and even yourself. Removing the debt-to-debtor dynamic from a relationship paves the way to better communication, understanding, and openness. LOCATION: 2208

In case you haven't figured it out already, these four habits set us free to love as God intends for us to love. Anger, greed, guilt, and jealousy are the antithesis of love. As long as these four monsters grow unchecked in your heart, your efforts to love will be short-lived, thwarted. LOCATION: 2214