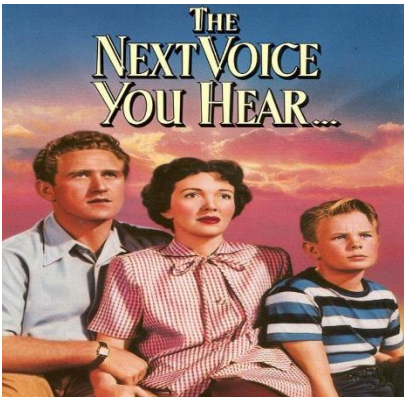


EMOTIONAL BOUNDARIES: HATE-ANGER TEMPLATE

by David Lee Burris

Brief Synopsis “Movie Parable” “The Next Voice You Hear”



(1950) “Joe and Mary Smith and their young son Johnny live in a modest home in a suburban Los Angeles neighborhood. The Smiths lead simple lives defined by mostly their daily routines: Joe works hard at his steady job at the Ajax Aircraft Plant and Johnny attends school and delivers newspapers, while Mary, who is nine months pregnant, is a homemaker. One evening, while Mary is helping Johnny with his homework, Joe turns on the radio in the living room, expecting to hear his favorite program. However, instead of the usual programming, Joe hears a voice that identifies itself as the voice of God. Though perplexed by the voice and initially believing it to be a hoax, Joe later tells Mary that he heard the voice tell him that God will be broadcasting on the radio for the next few days. The following morning, Joe reads in the newspaper that three thousand people reported hearing a strange voice on the radio the previous night, and that they all heard the same thing he heard. Later that evening, when Joe returns home from his bowling game, Mary tells him that she heard the voice of God on the radio and that it said that God was planning to perform miracles. As the government begins an investigation into the mysterious radio voice, which is now being heard all over the world, the talk of the town is the voice of God. The next time that God addresses the world, a fiery thunderstorm suddenly advances upon the city, sending Mary and Johnny into Joe's arms for comfort. Joe tries to calm them by insisting that the storm was a coincidence, but Mary is not convinced. As all scientific attempts to explain the voice fail, people all over the world begin to conclude that the voice really is God. Joe eventually decides that the voice is real, too, and that he has been given a sign from God to respect his boss, Fred Brannan, and to be kinder to Mary's sister, Ethel. On the fourth consecutive day of God's radio broadcasts, **the world is instructed to perform miracles of kindness and peace...**

The following day, while drinking in a bar with his friend Mitch, an intoxicated Joe has a epiphany and realizes that the time he spends with Mitch in bars is wrong. Before staggering out of the bar, Joe tells Mitch that he is the 'voice of evil.' When Joe returns home, Johnny sees his father drunk for the first time and is ashamed. Joe quickly reforms his ways and, the following day, apologizes to Ethel for his past behavior. Johnny, however, becomes disillusioned and runs away from home. Joe finds his son at Fred's house, and their frank discussion leads to a reconciliation. The next day, the Smiths attends a special church service to hear the voice of God speak on the radio, but on that day, the 7th day, no voice is heard. Their minister concludes that God must be resting, and with that pronouncement, Mary goes into labor. Hours later, Mary gives birth to a baby girl, and Joe and Johnny are overjoyed." – TURNER MOVIE CLASSICS

GOD HAS NOT BEEN SILENT AS TO OUR INNER LIVES: HATE

From Mike Willis of Guardian of Truth Magazine:

There are some things which are said to be “abominable” to the Lord (cf. Prov. 6:16-19). The word “abominable” refers to something which is extremely abhorred. Hence, there are some things which Jehovah abhors extremely.

The concept that Jehovah would hate anything is foreign to some’s concept of the Lord. However, divine revelation testifies that some things are extremely abhorred by Him. We want to consider some of the things which the book of Proverbs lists as being abominable to the Lord.

Seven Are An Abomination Unto Him (Prov. 6:16-19)

These **six things doth the Lord hate:** yea, seven are an abomination unto him: a proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

1. **A Proud Look** (Prov. 6.17). Elsewhere the wise man wrote, “Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord . . .” (Prov. 16:5). Pride stems from an attitude of the heart – an attitude of arrogance, superiority, boastfulness. The reference to the “proud look” refers to that arrogance which looks down its nose at those who are judged to be inferior. A feeling of superiority might come from one’s station in life: the wealthy might feel superior to the poor; the educated might feel superior to the uneducated; the ones in position of authority and dominion might feel superior to those under them. A feeling of superiority might come from one’s concept of his own righteousness; the Pharisee displayed an attitude of arrogant superiority toward the publican (Lk. 18:9-14). This attitude is still present when one displays a “holier-than-thou” disposition.

A Christian must display humility. He needs to imitate the humility of Jesus (cf. Phil. 2:2-3). Rather than feeling superior to others, the Christian recognizes that he is a sinner in need of the salvation which Christ brings, he is a man just like all other men – facing the same certain death and judgment to come.

2. **A Lying Tongue** (Prov. 6.17). “Lying lips are abomination to the Lord . . .” (Prov. 12:22). A lying tongue stems from a dishonest heart. People lie for different reasons. Some lie to take advantage of another person (for example in misrepresenting a product or warranty); some lie to cover their own sins (cf. Cain’s lie in Gen. 4:9); some lie to protect themselves from another’s anger (for example, a child might lie about his action rather than face the anger of his parent); some lie to keep from hurting someone’s feelings (for example, telling a terminally ill patient that there is nothing seriously wrong with him). Each of us has faced the temptation to lie and many of us commit the sin. The honesty and integrity of Nathanael’s character, whom Jesus described as “an Israelite . . . in whom is no guile” (Jn. 1:47), commends itself to us.

3. Hands That Shed Innocent Blood. “Shedding innocent blood” is a reference to I ‘murder.” God hates the murderer. We witness “shedding innocent blood” in our society frequently. Someone mugs an elderly lady in order to steal ,her purse and she dies; a family quarrel gets out of hand and someone shoots his own relative; a guard is killed during a robbery; a police officer is shot while on duty. These are stories likely to be on any news cast. Jezebel and Ahab were guilty of this sin when they slaughtered innocent Naboth in order to make his family inheritance, his vineyard, their own (cf. 1Kgs. 21).

Another form of “shedding innocent blood” has recently become commonplace. A physician – one trained to save life – uses his medical instruments to kill unborn babies (abortion). Those hands which should be healing and ministering to the sick are being used to slaughter the innocent!

Euthanasia is another form of shedding innocent blood. Doctors and family members reach the conclusion that the “quality” of human life is inadequate and then proceed to kill innocent blood. The aged, crippled, and retarded are either actively put to death or allowed to starve to death.

The feelings which God has toward this sin is seen in His divinely revealed punishment for it – “by man shall his blood be shed” (Gen. 9:6) and in the fact that God said this was an abomination to Him.

4. A Heart That Devises Wickedness (Prov. 6.18). “The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord” (Prov. 15:26). Before wickedness is committed, it is planned and plotted. One example is given in Proverbs 1: “My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause: let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit: we shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil (1:11-13).”

These wicked men devised wicked plans. Whenever a robbery is committed, someone devised wicked plans. Some make their living by devising wickedness. Every pornographic magazine is demonstration that someone spent his time devising wickedness; its cartoonists, editors, writers, etc. spent their time devising wickedness. God abhors this kind of heart.

5. Feet That Are Swift In Running To Mischief (Prov. 6.18). This condemns those who hastily follow through in committing the wicked devising of their hearts. Indeed, the Lord said, “The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord” (Prov. 15:9). Those who have hardened their hearts toward the Lord’s will and scornfully rejected His word in order to brazenly commit wickedness are abominable to the Lord (Prov. 3:32; 11:20; 15:8-9).

Some feet are swift in running to these forms of mischief: fornication, drunkenness, drugs, foul language, shoplifting, mixed swimming, dancing, gossip, backbiting, etc.

6. A False Witness (Prov. 6.19). A false witness is a special kind of liar. His lying assists in perverting justice. It is singled out for condemnation by the Lord. A man does not go to the civil courts to settle a matter until he has exhausted all other ways to obtain justice. He goes there hoping to receive justice and equity. The false witness distorts the truth and causes injustice to be perpetrated. The victim leaves the court without further recourse available to him.

In capital offences, the false witness could bring the death of the innocent. In the record of Jezebel plotting the death of Naboth in order to obtain his vineyard, lying witnesses testified that Naboth had cursed God and the king, resulting in his being executed (1 Kgs. 21). These false witnesses murdered Naboth just as certainly as did Jezebel. God hates the false witness.

7. He That Sows Discord (Prov. 6:19). The psalmist described the unity of God's people as something both good and pleasant (Psa. 133:1). Those who disrupt the unity of God's people are objects of Jehovah's wrath.

The unity of God's people is destroyed by gossips and talebearers. "Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth. As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife" (Prov. 26:20,21). "... a whisperer separateth chief friends" (Prov. 16:28; 17:9). Sometimes the unity of God's people is destroyed by self-willed men who are bent on having their own way. Sometimes the unity of the church is destroyed by men who introduce things into its work and worship which are unauthorized. Men who disrupt the unity of God's people are abhorred by the Lord.

Other Things Which Jehovah Abhors

1. **Divers Weights** (Prov. 11:1; 20:10,23). Each of these proverbs condemns dishonesty in business. Before modern scales were invented, weights were used in order to have fairness in business transactions. Sometimes a person would devise a means of stealing from others by using different weights. He might use a 10 pound weight when buying your grain but an 8 pound weight when selling it to others; in this way, he sold 8 pounds of grain at the price one would expect to pay for 10 pounds. Such dishonesty in business God abhors. Fair marketing laws are not an invention of modern man; God had them years ago.

2. **Those Who Blur Moral Distinctions.** "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord" (Prov. 17:15). The wicked seek to sanctify their immorality until it becomes socially acceptable. This has been done successfully in our society with reference to fornication, adultery (divorce and remarriage

for reasons other than fornication), gambling, drinking, dancing, mixed swimming, and many other sins. Efforts are underway to make homosexuality, abortion, and euthanasia acceptable.

In the meantime, the wicked try to make righteous behavior look wrong. Those who oppose pornography are condemned as being guilty of “censorship.” Those who oppose abortion are criticized as trying to deny one’s freedom of choice. Those who preach one church are condemned as “narrow-minded bigots.” God abhors those who distort biblical moral standards.

3. The Worship of the Wicked. The Scriptures reveal that God abhors the worship of the wicked.

The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness (Proverbs 15:8); The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination: how much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind? (Proverbs 21:27); He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination (Proverbs 28:9).

The wicked under consideration in these verses, whose worship is abhorred, are those wicked who refuse to repent of their sins. The wicked who repent of their sins and seek God’s forgiveness are acceptable to God. However, the disposition of mind which imagines that one is acceptable to God just because he offers a prayer or contributes money to the church, even though he persists in sin, is an abomination to the Lord.

Conclusion. Yes, there are some things which Jehovah hates. If God hates these things, we should hate them as well and diligently avoid committing them. Are these things abominable to you?

– Mike Willis

Does God Hate Sinners?

by [Kyle Butt, M.Div.](#)

Most religious people agree that God hates sin. Over and over, the Bible stresses the fact that God despises iniquity. God told the prophet Jeremiah to speak to the Israelites about their sin, saying: "Oh, do not do this abominable thing that I hate!" (44:4). The Proverbs writer listed seven sins the Lord hates (6:16-19). The prophet Zechariah declared that God hates a false oath and evil done to one's neighbor (8:17). Jesus Himself said that He hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans (Revelation 2:6). The Bible emphasizes that the Lord hates sin.

Some have suggested that God takes His hatred one step further. They believe that God hates **the sinner** as well as the sin he or she commits. It has been suggested that God loves those who obey Him, and hates all who disobey. Those who teach this idea use various Bible verses to "prove" their case. For instance, Psalm 5:5 says that God hates "all workers of iniquity." Proverbs 6:18-19 says that God hates "a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren." Is it true that God hates sinners and their sin?

Any person who has read the Bible understands that one of its greatest themes is love. The Bible says that God is love (1 John 4:8). It also explains that God showed His love to us **while we were still sinners**:

For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:6-8).

An interesting aspect of this passage is that it stresses that lost sinners were not "righteous" or "good" when Christ demonstrated His love for them.

In the narrative of the rich young ruler, Jesus explained that the young man lacked something necessary to be pleasing to God. Yet even though the young man was lacking and lost, the Bible says that Jesus "loved him" (Mark 10:21). When Jesus mourned over lost Jerusalem, He cried:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! (Matthew 23:37).

Jesus said His affection for the lost inhabitants of Jerusalem was like a mother hen's affection for her chicks. Such a statement obviously denotes love for the sinners in Jerusalem.

In one of the most well-known "love" verses in the Bible, Jesus said: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). God's love for the lost world was shown **before** the lost believed in Jesus. John further explained this when he wrote: "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10). From these verses it is clear that God loves lost sinners, and proved that love by sending Jesus.

How, then, can one reconcile the verses that seem to suggest that God hates sinners, but loves them at the same time? One of the most plausible solutions is that the Bible writers are using a figure of speech called metonymy when they write that God hates sinners. Metonymy is defined as: “A figure by which one name or noun is used instead of another, to which it stands in a certain relation” (Bullinger, 1898, p. 538). Bullinger further explains that metonymy can be “of cause,” when the person acting can be put in place of the thing that is done (p. 539). For instance, in Luke 16:29, the text says: “They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them.” In reality, they did not have “Moses” or the “prophets,” but they did have their writings. The name Moses is a metonymy that stood for his writings, since he was the cause of the writings. In modern times, that would be like saying, “I hate Shakespeare.” Would the person who said that mean that he hated Shakespeare’s personality? No. We understand he would be saying he does not like the **writings** of Shakespeare, with no comment on the playwright’s personality.

If we apply that same figure of speech to the passages about God “hating sinners,” we can see that the sinner is put in place of the sin. Thus, when God says He hates “a false witness who speaks lies” (Proverbs 6:19), if metonymy is being used, then God hates the lies, and the one who is doing the lying (the cause) is put in place of the lies (the effect). It is interesting to see how clear this feature can be in other contexts. For instance, Proverbs 6:17 says that God hates “a lying tongue.” Does that mean that God hates a physical tongue, made of muscle and body tissue? No. It means God hates the sin that a tongue can perform. In the same context, we learn that God hates “feet that are swift in running to evil” (6:18). Again, does that mean that God hates physical feet? No. It simply means that God hates the sin that those feet can perform. It is interesting that while few, if any, would suggest that God hates physical tongues or actual feet, they would insist that God hates actual sinners and not the sin done by them.

When studying the Bible, it is very important to keep in mind that the Bible writers often used figures of speech. When we look at the idea that God hates sin, but loves sinners, the figure of speech known as metonymy clears up the confusion. Just as God does not hate physical feet or tongues, He does not hate sinners. These nouns are put in the place of the things they cause—sin.

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Does the Bible Encourage Hatred?

By **Wayne Jackson**

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I am confused about the Bible's teaching on hate. Sometimes hate is condemned, at other times it seems to be encouraged. Can you comment on this?"

There are two basic biblical words that represent the concept of hating. In the Old Testament, **sane** (used about 145 times) means to "to hate, to set against."

In the New Testament, the word is **miseo** and is found some forty times. It is used with the meaning of "to hate, despise, or to disregard," depending upon the context.

The easiest way to approach this theme is to note that these terms are employed by sacred writers in either **absolute** or **relative** senses. This distinction is very important.

Hatred in the Absolute Sense

There is nothing evil in hating something *per se*. This should be evident from the fact that even God is represented as hating in a certain way.

We must note in passing, however, that the attribution of strong feelings to Jehovah frequently reflects a biblical **figure of speech**

known as **anthropopathism**. The term literally refers to human passion. This figure of speech is used to attribute volatile human emotions to non-human objects or even to Deity for the sake of emphasis.

In discussing God's hate, one scholar has noted that this is not "emotional hate but a disowning of evil and those who commit it" (Bromiley 1985, p. 598).

And so, there is a fashion in which the Lord hates.

Similarly, there is also an appropriate expression of hate for the faithful servant of God.

We could develop a list of character flaws hated by the Lord because of his innately holy nature (cf Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8). Solomon identified haughty eyes, the lying tongue, the shedding of innocent blood, and those who perpetrate family discord (Prov. 6:16ff) as detestable attributes.

The prophet Amos, speaking on behalf of Jehovah, delivers a stinging rebuke to the citizens of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Their worship exercises were mere formality rituals. Even though the people dutifully offered animal sacrifices, unrighteousness saturated their daily lives. Thus, God despised their worship facades (Am. 5:21ff; cf. Isa. 1:11ff).

A beautiful passage in the book of Hebrews represents God, the Father, as speaking to his Son, and saying,

"You have loved righteousness, and hated iniquity. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows" (Heb. 1:9).

A psalmist admonishes, "O you who love Jehovah, hate evil!" (Psa. 97:10). This text illustrates that there is a sense of appropriate hate entertained by godly people.

Another passage exclaims: “Through your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every evil way” (Psa. 119:104).

The reverse implication is this. If we refuse to hate that which is corrupting and bad, we are void of an understanding of Heaven’s law.

When Christ sent a letter to the church at Ephesus, though he censured them in several particulars, nonetheless he had this word of commendation for those saints:

“But this you have, you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate” (Rev. 2:6).

It is believed that this ancient sect advocated compromise with idolatrous cultism and sanctioned sexual immorality.

Paul used the term hate in a context wherein he expressed his deep remorse relative to occasional lapses in his own spirituality. If I may take the liberty of paraphrasing the apostle, with great anguish he confesses:

“Sometimes I do not understand why I yield to the things I do. There are things I know I should be doing, yet I am not. And I find myself doing things that I actually hate ... wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death” (Rom. 7:15, 24).

We should entertain a certain level of self-esteem because we are creatures in God’s image (Gen. 1:26). We should glory in the fact that we have been bought with the Lamb’s blood (1 Cor. 6:19). Nevertheless, we ought to genuinely hate the sins that we fall into through weakness.

Hatred in the Relative Sense

In the ancient world, the term hate did not necessarily carry the overwhelmingly negative tone that it does in modern society.

The Middle East vocabulary was characterized by a greater degree of excitability. So what we might describe as lesser love or possibly a disregard, the Eastern mind would call hate — though such should not be understood in the sense we normally would refer to hate (see Thayer 1956, p. 415).

Several examples will suffice to illustrate the point.

Recall that Jacob longed to marry his beloved Rachel. But at the time of the marriage, feast her sister Leah was “palmed off” upon the unsuspecting groom by the girls’ father, Laban. Likely Leah’s identity was concealed by the use of the oriental veil (Gen. 29:22-25; see Walton 2000, p. 62).

Subsequently, however, Jacob did marry Rachel, who was loved more than her sister (Gen. 29:30). The lesser love for Leah, though, is depicted as hate in that antique style of phraseology (Gen. 29:31).

There is a similar example in the Gospel records. Christ taught that one cannot become his disciple unless he hates his fleshly family (Lk. 14:26). In a parallel passage, however, it becomes clear that hate is the equivalent of to love less (Mt. 10:37).

The point is this. Love for the Son of God must be unrivaled by mere familial love. Jesus Christ will not take second place! Only deity has the right to make such a demand—and he does.

This **idiomatic use of hate** is seen again in Christ’s challenge regarding the kind of quality service that is essential in serving God. The Lord stated that the person who exalts his own life to the status of the supreme will actually lose that life.

By way of contrast, the one who hates his life (i.e., he is willing to subordinate it to the higher interests of God’s kingdom), is the one who, in fact, saves his life (Jn. 12:25).

A curious passage in the book of Romans that is grounded in the Old Testament (cf. Mal. 1:2ff) can be understood only in the light of the exaggerated use of hate. Paul says, regarding the two sons of Isaac, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated” (Rom. 9:13).

Some, especially Calvinists, contend that this text proves God elects some to be saved and others to be lost. They allege this is strictly on the basis of God’s sovereignty and irrespective of one’s response or rejection of his will.

Douglas Moo has written regarding Romans 9:13:

“I have argued that this passage gives strong exegetical support to a traditional Calvinistic interpretation of God’s election: God chooses those who will be saved on the basis of his own will and not on the basis of anything — works or faith, whether foreseen or not — in those human beings so chosen” (Moo 1996, p. 587).

Professor Moo’s mistake lies in his assumption that **individual salvation** is under consideration in this context. That is not the case. Rather, as Jack Cottrell has argued convincingly, “the subject here is not individual salvation but election to service” (Cottrell 1998, p. 83).

And so, as M. T. Braunch has observed:

“The strong expression ‘Esau I hated’ must be seen as a typical example of Eastern hyperbole, which express thing in terms of extremes ... Neither in Malachi nor in Paul’s use of [hate] is there then any warrant for the idea that God has determined in advance the eternal destinies of either the people of Israel or the people of Edom. The historical situations of the two, their ‘election’ or ‘rejection,’ are but temporary evidences of God’s sovereign freedom with which he moves history toward his redemptive purposes” (Kaiser 1996, pp. 560-561).

Conclusion

On the basis of the available data, it is quite clear that the term hate must be examined in the light of the immediate contexts in which the term is found and out of the cultural background from which the word arises.

When these considerations are factored in, there is no difficulty in viewing the term in different senses without any conflict being attributed to the sacred Scriptures.

Hatred: A Spiritual Malignancy

By Weldon E. Warnock

"There is no faculty of the human soul so persistent and universal as that of hatred. There are hatreds of race; hatreds of sect; social and personal hatreds. If thoughts of hatred were thunder and lightning, there would be a storm over the whole earth all the year round" (Beecher).

Hatred means an "intense aversion or active hostility that is expressed in settled opposition to a person or thing" (Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia). A kindred word is "bitterness." A good description of this word is given by Eadie as "that fretted and irritable state of mind that keeps a man in perpetual animosity -- that inclines him to harsh and uncharitable opinions of men and things -- that makes him sour, crabbed, and repulsive in his general demeanor -- that brings a scowl over this face, and infuses venom into the words of his tongue" (Word Meanings in the New Testament, Ralph Earle).

People hate because they do not love. A loving heart has no place for hate, bitterness and malice. William Barclay stated it well when he said that love "is that attitude of mind which will never allow itself to be bitter to any man, and which will never seek anything but the highest good of others, no matter what the attitude of others be to it" (Flesh and Spirit).

The Effects of Hatred

Hatred is a deadly poison that exudes from the depths of hell, destroying every soul that breathes in its toxic fumes. Its carcinogenic chemical has many side effects:

1. **Hatred stirs up trouble.** Listen to Solomon: "Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins" (Prov. 10:12). The friction between Joseph and his brethren was induced by hate (cf. Gen. 37:4,5,8). Congregations are torn asunder because brethren despise and detest, reject and repel one another.

2. **Hatred leads to murder.** Because the brethren of Joseph hated him, they said, "Let us slay him" (Gen. 37:20). Because of perpetual hatred, the Edomites (Mt. Seir) shed the blood of the children of Israel (Ezek. 35:5). The Jews crucified Jesus because of their animosity and hostility toward him (Jn. 15:18-25). The apostle John succinctly states, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (1 Jn. 3:15).

Brother Guy N. Woods, commenting on 1 John 3:15, wrote, "What is meant is, he has exhibited the disposition and spirit of a murderer; he has allowed passions to arise in his heart which, when carried to their ultimate ends, result in murder . . . Murder is simply hate expressed in an overt act" (A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles).

3. **Hatred provokes sins of the tongue.** David was the target of the biting barbs from the mouth of his enemies. He says, "They compassed me about also with words of hatred, and fought against me without a cause" (Psa. 109:3). The vitriolic opposition to David was nothing but a fabrication, but hatred needed no justification. Solomon said, "A lying tongue hates those it hurts" (Prov. 26:28, NIV).

Abrasive, rude, cutting and harsh language generates from those whose hearts are filled with hate. This is also true of gossip, slander, faultfinding and false witnessing. Jesus said, "That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matt. 12:36). The way we use our tongue is a most serious and grave matter.

4. **Hatred fosters resentment and retaliation.** The Bible is replete with passages forbidding revenge (Prov. 19:11; 24:27,29; Matt. 5:38-48; Lk. 6:27-36; 1 Cor. 4:12; 1 Pet. 3:9). When Jesus was "reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not" (1 Pet. 2:23). Someone said that to render evil for evil is devilish; to render good for good is human, but to render good for evil is God-like.

5. Hatred begets envy and envy begets hate. We see this vicious cycle in the life of Joseph and his brethren. They hated Joseph (Gen. 37:4,5,8) and, subsequently, "his brethren envied him" (Gen. 37:11). The Jews hated Jesus and they delivered him to be crucified because of envy (Matt. 27:18; Mk. 15:10). Envy is "rotteness of the bones" (Prov. 14:30).

Those who harbor hate, malice and envy are miserable wretches, and unless they excise this virulent cancer from their hearts, they will slowly destroy themselves as a malignancy emaciates the body.

The Character of Hate

Hate is an odious, malevolent malady. Gothold said, "Malevolence is, in point of fact, a real colocynth juice; for, if once it infects the heart, nothing in a neighbor any longer pleases. If he walk, his gait is proud and haughty; if he laugh, he is derisive; if he weep, he is hypocritical; if he look grave, he is insolent. Every fault swells into magnitude, and every virtue shrinks into littleness." Let us focus upon the following features of hate:

1. Hate is a characteristic of the world. Paul wrote of those in the unregenerated state, "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another" (Tit. 3:3). Those in the kingdom of Satan, hate. But the children of God must put off such works of darkness.
2. Hate is a work of the flesh. It is cataloged with fornication, idolatry, witchcraft, murder and drunkenness (Gal. 5:19-21). They who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Hatred will keep us out of heaven.
3. Hate is harbored only by fools. Solomon said, "He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool" (Prov. 10:18). Analyzing this verse, David Thomas astutely said, "Wickedness hides hatred by lies, and slays reputation by slanders. It is often honey on the lips and venom in the heart. It is always associated more or less with a villany that hides itself under flattering words, and works out its ends by treachery and lies" (Book of Proverbs).
4. Hate is cruel and mean. The enemies of David were many and they hated him "with cruel hatred" (Psa. 25:19). We see this kind of ill treatment vented upon Abel by Cain, upon Joseph by his jealous brothers and upon Jesus by the rebellious Jews.

Today, several members of the church, including elders and preachers, are the targets of this venomous gall that is spued out by those whose hearts are full of hate and bitterness. Let us guard against this root of bitterness that defiles us (Heb. 12:15).

The Cure for Hate

There is only one remedy for hate and that is love, a love that is patient, kind, does not envy, does not boast, is not proud, not rude, not self-seeking, not easily angered, keeps no record of wrongs, etc. (1 Cor. 13:4-7, NIV). If we love as we ought, we will love our brethren:

1. As the Lord loves us. "A new commandment I give unto you, That you love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (Jn. 13:34; cf. 15:12).

2. With unfeigned love. Love is to be genuine and unhypocritical. Peter said, "Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren" (1 Pet. 1:22). This kind of love is not in word only, but also in deed and in truth (1 Jn. 3:18).

3. With a pure heart (1 Pet. 1:22). To love with a pure heart is to be free of malice, guile, hypocrisies, envies and evil speakings (1 Pet. 2:1). Peter says we are to lay aside these evil things as a result of being born again. These are layed aside (put off) as one would discard filthy and dirty clothing.

4. With fervency (1 Pet. 1:22). This shows the intensity of love. It describes an emotion that is forceful, vivid and earnest. We are not to love loosely, indifferently or casually, but vigorously and energetically.

"Let brotherly love continue" (Heb. 13:1). In the words of Solomon, "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith" (Prov. 15:17).

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GOD HAS NOT BEEN SILENT AS TO OUR INNER LIVES: **ANGER**

*** HATING WHAT GOD HATES & BEING ANGRY LIKE JESUS ***

In the “Image and Likeness of God” by Eric Lyons

To sin against man either by murder or by slander is reprobable on the ground of the divine image being resident in man. A definite sacredness appertains to human life. Man must respect his fellow man, not on the ground of kinship, but on the ground of the exalted truth that human life belongs to God. To injure man is to injure one who bears the image of God (1943, 100:489-490).

Anderson and Reichenbach added: “To kill a human is to forfeit one’s own life, for the denial of another’s image is a denial of one’s own. This value emphasis is reiterated in James 3:9, where to curse persons is to fail to properly recognize the image of God in them” (1990, 33:198).

James wrote: “But the tongue can no man tame; it is a restless evil, it is full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we the Lord and Father; and therewith curse we men, **who are made after the likeness of God**” (3:8-9, emp. added). The English verb “are made” (ASV) derives from the Greek *gegonotas*, which is the perfect participle of the verb *ginomai*. The perfect tense in Greek is used to describe an action brought to completion in the past, but whose effects are felt in the present (Mounce, 1993, p. 219). For example, when the Bible says “it is written,” this usually is stated in the perfect tense. That is to say, scripture was written in the past, but is applicable in the present. The thrust of the Greek expression, *kath’ homoisosin theou gegonotas* (“who are made after the likeness of God”), is that humans in the past have been made according to the likeness of God and **they still are bearers of that likeness**. For this reason, as Hoekema noted, “It is inconsistent to praise God and curse men with the same tongue, since the human creatures whom we curse [whether Christians or non-Christians—EL/BT] still bear the likeness of God” (p. 20).

According to biblical instruction, sin did not **destroy** the divine image stamped upon man by Jehovah. While it is true that after the Flood, God referred to the imagination of man’s heart as being evil “from his youth” (Genesis 8:21), it also is true that just a few lines later, Moses recorded God as telling Noah that murder is wrong **because man is a divine image bearer** (9:6). Thus, Hoekema properly remarked:

We may indeed think of the image of God as having been tarnished through man’s fall into sin, but to affirm that man had by this time completely lost the image of God is to affirm something that the sacred text does not say (p. 15).

If, then, it is the case that the image of God does not refer to “spiritual perfection,” how does one correlate the image that Christ Himself possessed, and “the renewed image” that Christians possess, with such passages as Genesis 1:26-27, Genesis 9:6, and James 3:9—each of which teaches that man innately bears God’s image? The answer, of course, lies in the fact that the “image of God” applied to Jesus in the New Testament is a much “fuller” term than is intended in the usage found in Genesis 1:26-27. That is to say, the image Jesus possessed (2 Corinthians 4:3-4; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3) is one that included spiritual flawlessness and the glory that emanated from the Lord’s divine nature (two traits, incidentally, that humans do not, and cannot, possess). It is obvious that Jesus represented the “image of God” in an extremely unique sense. As Robert Morey has suggested:

This is why the Apostle Paul could refer to Jesus as the messianic image-bearer of God (Col. 1:15). As the second Adam, Christ was the full and complete image-bearer. This is why Christ could say that to see Him was to see the Father (John 14:9). Christ reflected on a finite level as the second Adam what the Father was like on an infinite level (1984, p. 37).

While it is true—as both Old and New Testament testimony makes clear—that God created man in His image, the Bible similarly teaches that Christ bore the image of God. He was the **perfect** image—an unsurpassed example of what God wants each of us to be like. When Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 about how “the god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel of the glory of **Christ, who is the image of God**, should not dawn upon them,” he used the word *eikon* for “image”—the Greek equivalent of *tselem*. Verse 6 of that same chapter elaborates on what, exactly, he meant by his use of that term: “Seeing it is God that said, ‘Light shall shine out of darkness,’ who shined in our hearts, **to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.**” Paul reiterated this same fact when he wrote in Colossians 1:15 of Jesus, “who is the **image of the invisible God.**” This is precisely the point Christ Himself was making when He said to Philip: “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (John 14:9). Boiled down to their essence, the two passages amount to this: If you look carefully at Christ, you will see God, since Jesus is His **perfect image**. There is a remarkable corollary in Hebrews 1:1-4:

God...has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who **being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person**, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they (NKJV, emp. added).

When we reflect on the fact that Christ is the perfect image of God and is one with Him, it helps us understand just how much we are able to view God through Christ. Because Christ was without sin (Hebrews 4:15), we can witness the image of God in all of its perfection. Christ bore the image of God in a way that man cannot.

Using the same type of logic, it also is reasonable to conclude that the image of God possessed by Christians (Colossians 3:10; Ephesians 4:22-24) simply is one that is more “refined” than what non-Christians possess. In commenting on Colossians 3:10, Camp wrote:

Paul here implies that sin makes man less like God than he **should** be, but I believe he is using “image of his Creator” in a fuller sense than intended in Gen. 1:26-27. Man is like God in some aspects of his nature and therefore has the **potential** (and duty) of being like God in action. The sinner is less like God in action, even if the divine aspects of his nature are unchanged, and therefore can be said to be less like his Creator (1999, p. 47, emp. added, parenthetical item in orig.).

Realistically then, “the things that make mankind in the image of God are still present in the worst sinner as well as in the best saint” (Brown, 1993, 138[8]:50). All kings and peasants, all sinners and saints, possess God’s image; **it is the use of this image that makes the difference in mankind’s relationship with God.**

Therefore, God has “spoken” (Hebrews 1:1), and in so doing He has made known to man His laws and precepts through the revelation He has provided in a written form within the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 2:11ff.; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21). Thus, mankind is expected to act in a morally responsible manner (Matthew 19:9; Acts 14:15-16; 17:30; Hebrews 10:28ff.) in accordance with biblical laws and precepts. Surely, then, this is a part of our having been fashioned “in the image of God.”

Even Jesus Had A Temper

by [Kyle Butt, M.Div.](#)

In most circumstances, Jesus chose to use gentle words and peaceful measures to take care of the Father's business. But on at least one occasion, aggressive action ruled the day.

From the time of Moses, whenever Jewish men presented themselves to the Lord at the Temple, they were instructed to offer a half-shekel of silver. Exodus 30:13 records: "This is what everyone among those who are numbered shall give: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary." When Moses issued this decree, the Israelites were a single, cohesive unit that traded with the same form of money. However, that changed as the years passed and the Jews found themselves dispersed into other countries (such as Babylon, Assyria, and Phrygia). Naturally, those Jews who lived in foreign nations began to use as legal tender the money of the country in which they dwelt.

This posed a problem for them when they wanted to present themselves to the Lord at the Temple, because the Law said that they were to present a half-shekel of silver. The priest of the Temple would accept no foreign currency into the sacred treasury. Therefore, greedy moneychangers posted themselves in the court of the temple in order to offer their services. They would exchange foreign currency for a Jewish half-shekel, but in doing so they routinely exacted an exorbitant "commission" on the deal. What was a foreign Jew to do? Where else could he obtain a Jewish half-shekel except in Jerusalem? The moneychangers had a virtual monopoly. Basically, nobody could come to God unless he first went through the moneychangers.

As if that were not bad enough, the moneychangers and Temple brokers also had a monopoly on the sale of livestock suitable for offering to the Lord. Since many of the worshipers who visited the Temple lived so far away, they would purchase livestock at or near the Temple, rather than trying to bring animals on the trip with them. When they arrived in Jerusalem, they were in for a rude awakening because the acceptable livestock was priced outrageously high. They had no choice but to pay the prices, however, since returning home without sacrificing to God was not an option. Once again, the moneychangers and traders came between God and His worshipers.

Upon this scene of fraud and abuse, the Lion of Judah came roaring. In John 2:14-17, the story is told of Jesus experiencing righteous indignation. He formed a whip of cords and reeked havoc on the moneychangers, overturning their tables, pouring out their money, and driving them and their livestock out of the Temple.

Anger and wrath enter the lives of every one of us. But let us learn from Jesus to be "swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath" (James 1:19). Let us also learn that there is a time for righteous indignation. When there are those who stand between God and the true worship that is due Him—whether it be through false doctrine, hypocrisy, or any other vice—let us remember the example of the Lord and "be angry, yet sin not" (Ephesians 4:26).

What Caused Jesus to Be Angry? By Sarah Sumner

It isn't said too often, but Jesus did a lot of rebuking. He had a well developed, robust rebuking ministry. To rebuke (*epitimesan*) literally means to "beat back." It's a strong word that connotes the idea of anger. My observation is that Jesus very deliberately reserved his holy rebukes for the sinister and the privileged. He did *not* rebuke social outcasts such who knew themselves already to be sinners. Curiously, Jesus instead rebuked demons, religious leaders, and his own disciples.

Story 2: Jesus Rebuked a Demon in the Synagogue

Demons hate redemption. They don't cheer when a wayward life miraculously turns around. Demons like destruction, not restoration. Their incapacity for goodness makes them too empty to applaud a positive change. That's why Jesus rebuked them. He beat them back. Never did he merely reprove them. To reprove them does no good. To reprove means "to expose." Demons are, by nature, irremediable.

The Gospel of Luke includes a story about a man in the synagogue who was possessed by the spirit of an unclean demon. This man cried out with a loud voice, "Ha! What do we have to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!" (Luke 4:34, NASB). Luke says Jesus then "rebuked" the demon. Jesus ordered the demon out. He said, "Be quiet, and come out of him" (4:35, NASB). Notice, Jesus said nothing more. He did not take time to teach or explain anything at all to the demon. In other words, *Jesus did not get hooked into an unfruitful conversation with this demon.*

The response from other onlookers was pure astonishment. They discussed with one another, "What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out" (4:36, NASB). Strikingly, they said nothing about Jesus' anger. The reason for this, in my view, is that his anger was a different kind of anger. *His anger was so moral that it looked like moral authority.*

Stories 3 and 4: Jesus Rebuked a Fever and Rebuked Demons

As soon as Jesus arose and left the synagogue where he exorcised the demon from the man, he went straightaway to Peter's house, where Peter's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever. Jesus rebuked that fever (Luke 4:39). As a result, the fever left her. That very day, while the sun was setting, Jesus healed many others as well. As Luke describes it, the demons were coming out and crying out to Jesus, "You are the Son of God!" (Luke 4:41). Jesus then rebuked them, silencing them, because they knew him to be the Christ.

That's three rebukes in a row: He rebuked the demon in the man in the synagogue, the fever in Peter's mother-in-law, and the demons who were rebelling by prematurely revealing who he was. Three rounds of rebuking anger, all of which resulted in correction. The demon-possessed man was delivered from the demon; the mother-in-law with the fever was made well; and the demons who were broadcasting Jesus' unique identity were not allowed to speak anymore.

It's simply not enough to know that Jesus is the Christ. To know he is the Messiah, even to know that he is God, is not the same as being submitted to him in a loving relationship. The demons know that Jesus is God's beloved. They believe that, and they shudder (James 2:19).

Story 5: Jesus Rebuked the Storm

Sometime later, Jesus got into a boat along with his disciples. According to both Mark and Luke, “a fierce gale of wind” arose such that waves of heaving water were breaking over the boat and engulfing them and threatening to drown them (Mark 4:37; Luke 8:23, NASB). Everyone aboard panicked, except Jesus. He was in the stern, asleep on a cushion, until his disciples interrupted to awaken him. They said, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” (Mark 4:38).

Aroused then from his sleep, he rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Hush! Be still” (Mark 4:39). And the wind died down, and the sea became peaceful and calm. At the sound of Jesus’ rebuke, there came another positive change. Yet Jesus didn’t leave it at that. The more pressing issue, I believe, was not so much the weather as it was the disciples’ doubt. So, Jesus magnified their doubt in order to help them see the needlessness of their faithlessness. Dulled by unbelief, the disciples responded with more fear. In Mark’s words, “They became very much afraid” (4:41).

Thus, they distanced themselves from him because he had a power that they didn’t understand or have themselves. “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?” (Mark 4:41) they wondered, thinking about power more than truth. When people focus on power rather than truth, inevitably they feel intimidated. Perhaps that explains why Jesus never said, “I am the Power.” **He said, “I am the truth” (John 14:6, NASB). Truth sets people free.** Truth puts everything into right perspective. Power does not require people to think. Whereas truth is unintelligible unless people think, power makes its point without stimulating even a single thought.

Let’s think this through together. Anger is a source of power. Psalm 62:11 (NASB) says, “Power belongs to God.” No doubt, power is ultimately of God because God is omnipotent. Yet God’s power is intertwined with God’s truthfulness. God’s power is legitimate because it overlaps entirely with truth. Truth is what legitimizes power. Power untied to truth is rogue. Thus, when anger is oriented around power, not truth, anger itself is rogue.

Think about it. The anger of wounded pride is basically the reaction of a bruised ego. Having wounded pride is not a legitimate reason to be angry. Human pride lies. It deceives itself into thinking that I am greater than I am. Pride lies to others as well. So, God is opposed to the proud (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5). Pride is the root of all sin.

We can see in Jesus that righteous anger is proactive, not reactive. It is purposeful and God-ward. It is stabilized by its commitment to the truth. It reposes in the truth of God’s unchanging character and acts in the fear of the Lord. That’s why godly anger is so powerful.

Story 6: Jesus Rebuked James and John

According to Luke’s chronology, after Jesus rebuked the storm, there came a day when he resolved to go to Jerusalem: And He sent messengers on ahead of Him. And they went and entered a village of the Samaritans to make arrangements for Him. And they did not receive Him because He was journeying with His face toward Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” But He turned and rebuked them and said, “You do not know what kind of spirit you are of; *for the Son of Man did not come to destroy people’s lives, but to save them.*” And they went on to another village. (Luke 9:52-56, NASB)

What stands out most to me in this narrative is the very striking difference between Jesus and his disciples, James and John. Whereas Jesus made no hint of feeling any type of misgivings toward the people who refused to receive him, James and John felt so insulted that they plotted to annihilate a whole village. James and John had wounded pride. In their pride, their hearts caught flame with sinful anger.

Godly anger lobbies for God's agenda. Sinful anger, by contrast, vies for human agendas that may seem justified but are not. That's the operative nature of sinful anger. Cruelly, it dehumanizes people—not only the victims, but the perpetrators. Ironically, in their anger, James and John dehumanized themselves. That's why Jesus rebuked them—to save them from themselves. In one fell swoop, he saved the Samaritans and also two disciples.

Herein lies the genius of Jesus' godly anger: it corrected sinful anger. These two disciples were harboring murderous anger; they were murdering Samaritans in their hearts. They had the vilifying anger that Jesus warned against in Matthew 5:22 in his Sermon on the Mount. Vilifying anger seeks vengeance. God says, "Vengeance is Mine" (Romans 12:19, NASB).

Story 7: Jesus Zealously Cleansed the Temple

This narrative is recorded in all four Gospels, yet none of the gospel writers mention the word *anger* in it. Scholars therefore debate whether Jesus was angry or not. I, for one, believe that he certainly was. According to the wording in Scripture, when Jesus cleared the temple, he was "consumed with zeal" for his Father's house (John 2:17, NASB). From the apostle John's description, it appears that Jesus' zeal was demonstrably demanding—unyielding and resolute.

The temple was a sacred space for prayer. But the buyers, sellers, and moneychangers converted God's house of prayer into a house of merchandise that operated for the sake of ill-gotten gain. Jesus wasn't merely half-attentive to the irreverence he discovered in God's house. Jesus was "consumed" with zeal. His jealousy for God—that is, his zealousness for God—moved him to take action against all the religious imposters in the room.

According to the Gospel of John, Jesus "made a scourge of cords and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the coins of the moneychangers and overturned their tables" (John 2:15, NASB). Jesus drove them out all by himself.

I wonder if there were bouncers in the temple. I would think, with all that money right there in the room, that someone would be stationed to guard the place. Yet no one tackled Jesus or ganged up on him to kick him off the property. Instead, Jesus ousted them. Jesus boldly dumped their coins onto the floor and then sent the sellers out without their money. On account of Jesus' anger, the merchandisers fled. Almost instantly, it seems, Jesus got the wrong people out of the temple and the right people in. As unrepentant sinners were spilling out of the room, the blind and lame poured in. Children poured in, too. What a marvel! Hardened hearts were repelled, and soft hearts were attracted—all in the same scenario. Matthew puts it this way:

And Jesus entered the temple and cast out all those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those who were selling the doves. And He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer'; but you are making it a robbers' den." And the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that He had done, and the children who were crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they became indignant. (Matthew 21:12-15, NASB)

By clearing out the buyers and sellers and moneychangers, Jesus made it clear that serving mammon is unacceptable, especially in God's house. No church, no Christian ministry, no religious organization should ever prioritize money above God. That kind of prioritization is idolatrous, even apostate. It therefore kindles Jesus' anger and jealous love.

Story 8: Jesus Became Indignant at His Disciples

It is safe to say that all of Jesus' disciples were tacitly taking anger lessons specially from him. After all, nothing that made them angry angered Jesus. Whereas the disciples saw themselves doing a favor for Jesus, for instance, when they shielded him from swarms of babies and children, Jesus took offense at their intervention. Mark's Gospel offers this concise report:

And they were bringing children to Him so that He might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw this, He was indignant and said to them, "Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it at all." And He took them in His arms and began blessing them, laying His hands on them. (Mark 10:13-16, NASB)

Jesus was delighted to be bombarded by little kids. Jesus was beside himself, so thrilled by the children's willingness to believe. Faith comes easily to children. They're open to the realm of the supernatural. In fact, it's sensible to them to think a supernatural God would do supernatural things. What else would a real God do? *Kids aren't loaded down with all the weighty rationalizations that are used by boastful people to discredit and explain away God.* It's no problem to little kids for God to be invisible. To them, the idea of God makes perfect sense. Jesus understood that. He celebrated that. He recognized that preschoolers don't make good atheists. They're just too honest.

Perhaps emboldened by their adult sense of importance, being that they had disciple status, the disciples muscled up and rebuked the imposing parents, policing them to move back and get their kids out of the way. But surprise! Jesus didn't like that idea. He became indignant with them.

The Greek word for "indignant" is *aganaktasen* (from the root *aganakteo*), which literally means "to have much grief." Here's the breakdown of the syllables: *agan* (meaning "much") and *achthos* (meaning "grief"). I believe Jesus felt grieved by his disciples' disregard for little ones.

Angry Jesus, though, did not gripe at his disciples. Rather, he mentored his disciples. He corrected them, even in the presence of the babes, kids, and parents. He explained to them that children are actually good exemplars for adults. That is one of the ironies of God's kingdom and of this story. The very children whom the disciples had intended to dismiss were the people whom Jesus pointed to as role models.

Story 9: Jesus Rebuked Peter

When Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day, Peter fell into a trap. Without realizing he was sinning, Peter "took him aside and began to rebuke him" (Matthew 16:22, NASB). With the same good intentions that pave the road to hell, Peter said to Jesus, "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You!" In other words, Peter's pride made him presumptuous and caused him to react to the sovereign plan of God by beating back Jesus' willingness to fulfill it.

In response to him, Jesus physically turned around. Matthew says he “turned” (16:23). Jesus turned his body directly toward Peter’s. Imagine the contrast. Whereas Peter took Jesus aside and presumably stood next to him shoulder to shoulder, Jesus positioned himself toward Peter face-to-face. Then Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s” (Mark 8:33, NASB).

I get a pit in my stomach thinking about this scene. When Peter rebuked Jesus, Jesus rebuked him back. How silencing was *that*? If you think about it, saying “no” and “Lord” to Jesus, all in one breath, does not make logical sense. Yet I empathize with Peter, even though I realize Peter was sinning. How gut-wrenching would it be to watch Jesus, of all people, be mistreated?

That’s what sinful anger does to people. As the Stoic philosopher Seneca said, it seizes them with “temporary madness.” Sinful anger is senseless. It makes us stubbornly say no to things we should say yes to. It says “No!” to submitting to God. It says “No!” to sovereign things that stab our egos. It says “No!” before it even knows what it rejects. Sinful anger simply doesn’t listen. It’s presumptuous. Filled with hubris. Willfully deaf.

Godly anger, by contrast, has good hearing. It is teachable. It is open to hearing more truth. *Unlike sinful anger, which acts arbitrarily, godly anger operates with purpose.* It is mindful. It’s productive. It bears fruit. **Godly anger stages interventions.** Godly anger, regardless, isn’t sidetracked. It overlooks ingratitude and sets its face like flint toward restoration.

When Jesus rebuked Peter, he didn’t rebuke him in private. He staged an on-site public intervention. Instead of saving Peter’s face, Jesus rebuked him face-to-face. I believe Jesus did this because that is what it means to stage an intervention—to intervene “onstage” so that Peter and everyone else there could learn in that same moment what Jesus was about to teach Peter. After saying to him, “Get behind Me, Satan!,” Jesus said, “You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s” (Matthew 16:23, NASB).

Peter’s problem is emblematic of our problem. We all have trouble listening well to Jesus. We all have selective hearing. We all tend to jump to premature conclusions, especially when we feel threatened personally. Peter wasn’t listening fully to Jesus. Once he heard the words “suffer” and “be killed,” he kicked into high-gear revolt. Peter didn’t have the patience to hang with Jesus long enough to listen to the rest of what he said: “And after three days, rise again” (Mark 8:31, NASB).

Peter missed the high point. He missed what put the rest into perspective. How many times have you and I missed the high point? How often have we reacted before hearing someone out and checking to make sure we really heard them? How often have we replaced the truth of actual facts with the distortions of our own personal insecurities?

Peter’s heart was wrong. His heart was almost right, but it was wrong. The torturous thought of Jesus being killed by bullying bureaucrats sent Peter through the roof. He couldn’t stand it. Because his heart was set on himself, on his own agenda for Jesus, Peter recklessly rebuked the Lord of Lords. In his emotional impetuosity, Peter failed to listen because he failed to be respectful enough to listen. That’s the nature of sinful anger—it’s disrespectful.

Peter’s rebuke of Jesus amounted to a selfish reaction. By contrast, Jesus’ rebuke of Peter amounted to a protective proclamation.¹

¹ Sumner, S. (2015). [*Angry like Jesus: using his example to spark your moral courage*](#). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

Killing and Anger

By Keith Sharp

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, 'Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, 'That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, 'Thou-fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thy adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, 'Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing'' (Mat. 5:21-26).

One cannot expect pure water from a polluted fountain (cf. Ja. 3:11). Nor can one expect to serve God acceptably with a heart full of evil. The law of Moses primarily dealt with the outward actions of men. The law of Christ is superior in that it primarily deals with the heart, the source of all conduct, whether good or evil (cf. Matt. 12:33-35). The Master's teaching concerning killing and anger well illustrates this difference between the covenants. What is the meaning of Jesus' lesson about killing and anger?

To understand the law of the Lord on this matter, we must be familiar with the Old Covenant regulations Christ replaced. What killing did the law of Moses prohibit? Accidentally taking the life of another person was not the killing forbidden by Moses (Num. 35:22-25). Nor did the law

against killing include the administration of the death penalty in a legal case for just cause, since the Old Testament demanded the death penalty for at least eleven crimes (murder-Ex. 21:12-14; patricide or matricide-Ex. 21:15; kidnaping-Ex. 21:16; cursing parents-Ex. 21:17; manslaughter of pregnant woman or her unborn child-Ex. 21:22-23; malicious carelessness-Ex. 21:28-29; witchcraft-Ex. 22:18; bestiality-Ex. 22:19; idolatry-Ex. 22:20; rape-Deut. 22:25-27; and blasphemy-Lev. 24:15-16). Nor did the command, “Thou shalt not kill,” include taking the life of another in legitimate warfare, since the Lord of hosts led his people, Israel, into battle (e.g., Num. 31:1-5; I Sam. 15:1-3). Rather, the law against killing prohibited murder, i.e., taking the life of another human unlawfully (whether human or divine law) and with malice and / or forethought (cf. Num. 35:16-21).

Under Moses’ law, the one guilty of murder was “in danger of the judgment”. In other words, according to this correct comment of the rabbis, which they had added to the law, the murderer was to be brought before the town court. Jehovah specified the punishment for murder-death. But he left it to the people to organize courts to judge the cases (cf. Deut. 16:18). Each city or town of the Jews had a court of elders, usually composed of seven men, which was the lowest court in their judicial system. Cases could go from these to the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem.

How did Christ Jesus change this law? He did not change the definition of killing. So far as the outward act is concerned, the Lord accepted the definition of murder given by the law of Moses. Therefore, as accidental killing of another human, the lawful and just execution of capital punishment and just warfare were not murder under the Old Testament, neither are they under the New Testament. As unlawfully taking the life of another human with malice and/or forethought was prohibited by Moses, so it is by Christ. But the difference between the covenants is that Jesus does not merely condemn the overt act of murder itself. He goes to the very root and source of sin and prohibits the attitude of heart and the words which lead to the outward crime.

In announcing His law, the Lord Jesus deals with the progressive nature of sin. He speaks of three degrees of sin, each a step closer to the outward act of murder. “Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.” What does Jesus here condemn?

Not all anger is wrong. “God was angry” (Ps. 7:11). Jesus was angry (Mk. 3:5). Christians can be angry without sinning (Eph. 4:26). There are different kinds of anger. One Greek word described anger which quickly and perhaps violently rose and just as quickly subsided. Another term (the one used here) denoted “long-lived anger; . . . the anger of the man who nurses his wrath to keep it warm; . . . the anger over which a person broods, and which he will not allow to die” (William, Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible*, Vol I, *The Gospel of Matthew Chapters 1 to 10*, (Philadelphia, 1958), p. 135.) The anger that will not be satisfied, that will not “forgive and forget,” that continues to fester like a sore, is a deadly sin. The qualifying phrase “without a cause” is absent in the American Standard Version, making all such smouldering grudges, whether with or without cause, sinful. Paul admonishes, “let not the sun go down upon your wrath” (Eph. 4:26).

Also sinful is the anger that vents itself in spiteful words. “And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.” “Raca” was an arrogant term whereby the Jews expressed contempt for one they considered to be “senseless” or “empty-headed” (J.H. Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* Chicago, 1889), p. 561). It scorned a man’s intelligence. The word “fool” did not just impugn a man’s intellect; it was an attack on his character. It was the term describing one who was “morally worthless” (W.E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Old Tappan N.J., 1940), II, 114).

As the Lord expresses a progression of sin, he also expresses a progression of punishment. He figuratively uses Jewish forms of judicial punishment to teach divine judgment. The one who holds a grudge is in danger of “the judgment,” i.e., judgment by the local court. The one who calls his brother, “Raca,” is in “danger of the council,” i.e., the Jewish Sanhedrin, the Supreme Court of the seventy revered elders in Jerusalem. He who hurls the epithet, “fool,” toward his brother is “in danger of hell fire”.

Even the term “hell fire” is derived from a Jewish background. The terrible Valley of Hinnom outside Jerusalem, where babes had been burned in worship of the idol god Moloch (cf. 2 Kings 16:3), was the receptacle for the cities refuse, and the constantly burning fires accentuated the repulsiveness of this pit of filth. The term is fittingly used in the New Testament to describe hell, the place of eternal punishment of sinners (cf. Mt. 10:28).

The Lord Jesus does not teach that these sins literally lead to Jewish processes of law. Rather, he uses these processes figuratively to teach the divine judgment upon smouldering anger and angry words. Thus, the Master recognizes in his doctrine the progressiveness of sin: smouldering anger, contemptuous speech, malicious speech against one’s character, murder. He goes to the tap root of the weed and decrees that even those who practice the first three steps shall come under the punishment of God.

The Master has well taught the importance of removing all malice from our hearts toward others. But what if someone is angry with me, whether justly or unjustly? Should I simply have the attitude that, since I have no ill will toward him, then I have no obligation? To the contrary, it is so vital that I seek to be reconciled to one who holds malice toward me that it takes precedence over public worship.

Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift (Mat. 5:23-24).

Again the Lord employs Jewish practices to teach a lesson to His own disciples. The “gift” was the sacrifice; the “altar” was the altar of burnt-offerings in the court of the Temple in Jerusalem. One might have stood in line for hours awaiting his turn to give the priest the sacrificial victim. But if he remembered that one had “aught” (anything at all) against him, he should first seek to win back his friendship, then worship the Lord. One cannot be right with God while wrong with his fellow man, (cf. 1 Jn. 4:20). There is a real danger in thinking we can cover up our injustices to others by worship toward the Father. This was a common attitude of the Jews (cf. Matt. 15:1-9). But God will not accept our veneration if we are guilty of wrong toward other people (cf. Isa. 1:15). A person who reverences God while his brother has something against him, unless he has made a sincere effort to be reconciled to that brother, is a hypocrite, and his worship is vain. The proper relationship to our fellows must precede even veneration of God (cf. Matt. 9:13).

Notice, the Master does not teach that we should only seek to be reconciled to the one who, has a just grievance against us. If he has anything at all that causes him to reject us, even an imagined wrong, we should go to him and seek to be reconciled.

The Master then stated a short parable to illustrate the urgency of being reconciled to an angry brother.

Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison, Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the

uttermost farthing (Mat. 5:25-26). The illustration is of a lawsuit. One's "adversary" would be his opponent at law. He, the creditor, seeks satisfaction in court against you, the debtor. Under Roman law, the adversary and the defendant would come to court together. At any time before formal proceedings had begun, the defendant could make a settlement with his adversary for whatever he would accept. But once the court proceedings were under way, the matter had to be settled by law. The "officer" would be the court official parallel to a sheriff, who had the power to put one unto jail. The reference is to debtor's prison, which was common until modern times. A creditor could have a debtor thrown into prison until the debt was paid in full. Of course, this often meant permanent imprisonment. The "farthing" was the Roman "quadrans, "the smallest Roman coin. It represented the smallest portion of debt. Once the judicial process had begun, the entire debt would have to be paid, down to the tiniest sum. Jesus wisely warns the defendant to settle the matter "quickly", before he is taken to court. He should seek to win over his adversary by demonstrating good will and the willingness to fairly settle the debt. He should not be stubborn and intractable.

This is a great lesson, even in the civil realm (cf. Prov. 6:1-5; Rom. 12:18; 1 Cor. 6:1-8). I have known brethren who seem to love to settle their differences in court and who are constantly embroiled in legal proceedings. They should take notice.

But the real lesson is in what the parable illustrates. If you have wronged another, or if another even imagines you have, the time for reconciliation is now. Seek his friendship quickly. Delay can only make the matter worse, perhaps causing you to lose a friend or brother, or even worse, causing the Judge of the universe to cast you into hell.

A basic principle of the law of Christ is that all sin is rooted in an improper attitude of the heart. Thus, Christ will not be satisfied if only the outward acts are correct. He demands obedience "from the heart" (Rom. 6:17). We must carefully cleanse our hearts of smouldering anger,

grudges, and cleanse our tongues of angry words. We must diligently teach our children not to hold grudges against their playmates and not to call them by reproachful names.

Does a friend or brother have something against you, whether a just or imagined grievance? Do not wait for him to come to you. Go to him. Do not delay. Go now. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Rom. 12:18).

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Practical Christianity (X): Be Ye Angry and Sin Not

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Anger, like other emotions, is God given. Anger is not sinful or damaging. It is a motivating emotion that God has given us for good. God is angry continually with the wicked (Psa. 7:11; 79:5). God is recorded to have been angry with Moses (Deut. 1:37, 4:21), Aaron (9:20), Solomon (1 Kings 11:19), and Israel (1 Kings 17:18). Jesus was angry - hotly angry - in fact his anger "ate him up" (Jn. 2:17) yet without sin. Jesus was once recorded as instantly angry, as when he turned on the hardhearted priests in anger at their malice and unbelief (Mk. 3:5).

But Jesus and the Father kept their anger within controlled bounds and directed it at the problem that elicited the anger. Anger, like all other emotions, uncontrolled is sinful. "Uncontrolled" does not just mean the unsubdued explosions of wrath we commonly associate with anger, but includes any undisciplined and unbiblical use of anger (i. e. boredom, resentment, bitterness, or chronic sarcasm). Anger can become sinful. Desire can become lust. Concern can become anxiety. Happiness can become hysteria. Sorrow can become despair. God has given us our emotions to be used within the framework of his revelation to our good.

When Is Anger Evil?

Anger is caused by something. People bring out anger, but usually it is what people do, rather than the people themselves (or what they do not do). Jesus' anger was brought forth by the hard hearted unbelief of the Jews (Jno. 2:17; Mk. 3:5). God's anger is provoked by those who presume on his mercy and longsuffering. Jesus directed his anger at the Jews, not in an emotional outburst, but in correcting the problem: He drove the moneychangers out of the temple with the teaching "You shall not make my father's house a den of thieves." He healed the cripple in the presence of the disapproving Jews with the words, "Is it right to do good or evil on the Sabbath?" His anger was directed in overcoming the problem-unbelief.

God's anger was demonstrated in his delivering the Jews into calamity after repeated warnings-to discipline them and teach them. He did not utterly destroy them, but preserved a remnant that they might find repentance.

Neither the Father nor the Son "blew up" in their anger (if they had, I could not have written this article, and you would never have read it for God was angry with Adam and Eve in the garden). They did not withdraw in sullen silence, harboring bitter anger deep in their heart. On the contrary, they directed their hot anger, concentrating their passions upon the problem that a solution might be found.

Consider a practical example for illustration: Your tire blows out on the freeway. As you flop over to the shoulder, you are seething in anger at the expense, delay, and inconvenience. Slamming the door, kicking the tire, shaking your fist at the car or at the sky accomplishes nothing. Sitting in your car gripping the wheel till your knuckles turn white, biting your lip till it bleeds, or pounding the dashboard does not attack the problem-it only hurts yourself, and makes a biblical fool out of you (Prov. 12:16; 14:17; Eccl. 7:9). But, jacking up the car, and changing the tire does deal with the problem. (Inanimate things often are used as a brunt of anger when one is accustomed to concealing anger. Swearing at stop lights, kicking things that get in the way, slamming doors, etc. Why? Things cannot respond. Demonstrating that suppressed anger at people would be wrong. What makes demonstrated anger wrong and suppressed anger "right"? "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.")

More appropriately, consider an example of a newly converted family falling away from the truth. The bad example of the brethren has discouraged them. The preacher has lost their confidence and esteem because of malicious and hurtful speaking on the part of the brethren. They announce that they are not returning to services. The message is borne by the very ones who discouraged them to start with. Their tone of voice and sarcastic comments demonstrate that they hold you responsible. Anger is a natural, God-given response to this problem. But, how will that anger be directed? Do you react by blowing up? Do you dress down those who have come to you, venting your rage upon them? Or, do you say sullenly, through clenched teeth, "Thank you for the information" then go home seething in anger, silently hating them, the church, your work, and the unfaithful under your breath? Anger is not controlled either way, and is not directed at the problem. The bad

example of the one responsible for discouragement of the weak must be pointed out, rebuked, and changed. The hateful talk must be confronted and dealt with as sin, and either repented of, or brought to the attention of the church. The weak must be visited as soon as humanly possible, preferably the same day, that their lack of faith might be rebuked, and the righteous way shown to them. Anger was felt and demonstrated to them, but was biblically directed at the problem and its solution.

Sinful Anger

Today, there is a great deal of encouragement for people to freely express themselves and their emotions. It is called ventilation, or concious raising. Group therapy, sensitivity training, and encounter groups encourage free expression of all emotions. People supposedly will relieve their anxieties by openly expressing their hatred and anger, resentments, and grudges.

But God says that uncontrolled anger is sin. "He that hath no rule over his spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls" (Prov. 25:28).

"He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly" (14:17a).

"The prudence of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression" (19:11).

"Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God" (Jas. 1:19, 20).

Anger can become sinful in a variety of ways. One way is to bottle up anger within. "Internalizing" anger is self destructive and leads to greater sin. Paul told us that the way to be angry and sin not was not to permit the sun to go down upon our wrath. This simple command from God would solve most of the problems facing brethren today.

Example: A notable brother is rebuked publically in a gospel paper. Instead of seeking righteousness and reconciliation, he strikes back at a totally unrelated (for his sin) problem, the "attitude" and motives of those who rebuked him. He then silently withdraws in silent anger and contempt. He cuts off all contact with those who have rebuked his behavior, cancels his subscription to any paper that rebukes him, and withdraws in hurt. His anger spurts now and then like steam from a

pressure cooker in hatefully worded articles or "private" diatribes against those who "persecute" him.

Example: A brother feels he is wronged by another. Instead of seeking reconciliation, he withdraws completely, assuring all "I bear no ill-feeling or grudge" all the time while burning with repressed anger and resentment at his mistreatment. He continues to show his anger by his severed relationships, and his continual attacks on other's motives and character.

Example: A brother is angry with another's behavior. "He is too uppity" or "Who does he think he is, rebuking me?" While "all smiles" in the other's presence, in other relationships, he never loses an opportunity to downgrade him in every way. If asked to recommend the other for a meeting, he will pull a wry face and say reluctantly "Well-1-1-1 . . ." leaving the impression that the other is unworthy or unable.

There are many examples that could be used; but they all demonstrate the same thing. Suppressed anger and resentment, and an unwillingness to submit to God's method of repentance and reconciliation.

"Few things are sapping the strength of the church of Christ more than the unreconciled state of so many Christians. So many believers have matters deeply imbedded in their relationship like iron wedges forced between themselves and other Christians. They can't walk together because they do not agree. When they should be marching side by side taking men captive for Jesus Christ, instead they are acting like an army that has been routed and scattered and whose troops in their confusion have begun fighting among themselves. Nothing drains the church more of her strength as these unresolved problems, those loose ends among brethren that have never been tied up. There is no excuse for this sad condition, for the Bible does not allow for loose ends. God wants no loose ends" (Adams, Christian Counselors Manual, p. 363).

There is no place in the church for a Christian sitting in silent hurt, or self-righteous resentment waiting for the other to come to him to talk. Matt. 5:23, 24 talks to the one who has wronged someone else. 'Reconciliation with the one he has wronged must take precedence over any other religious service unto God. All service dedicated to God is vain till an attempt is made to reconcile with the one wronged. Matt. 18: 15-17 on the other hand, is addressed to the one who has been sinned

against. He must seek out his brother and convince him of his error and seek reconciliation ("Thou hast gained thy brother . . ."). Therefore it is always the responsibility of the child of God to go and seek reconciliation and righteous relationships. You can note whether you are the mature Christian by whether you go or someone had to come to you. True followers of God meet on the way to see each other. There is no place in the Kingdom of God for one who refuses reconciliation with a brother for whom Christ died. God demands that reconciliation must be sought before the sun goes down on the matter.

Evil Speaking

Anger can become sinful when it is allowed to be expressed other than to resolve a problem-when it is directed at a person or the situation. Paul said, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Eph. 4:29). Paul is talking about more than just "foul language" though that is certainly included. More accurately Paul is contrasting speech which "builds up" with speech that "corrupts" or rots, tears down.

Many believe "evil speaking" to be speaking lies or slander against another (Eph. 4:31; 1 Pet. 2:1; Tit. 3:2). But this is not all there is. Evil speaking is hurtful speaking. Speaking that tears down, destroys, hurts, or damages. Literally it means "to speak against" and is often translated "blasphemed." Evil is that which is "injurious, destructive, baneful, pernicious" (Vine, p. 50). The young call it "cutting up" and the adults call it "putting down" or "one-upmanship." Often brethren cut up, slice, cube, and dice their brethren with no mercy under the guise of humor (cf. Eph. 5:4; Jas. 3:5-10; Gal. 5:15). Indeed, the scriptures refer to it in the same way: "There is that speaking which is like the piercings of a sword . . . the words of a talebearer are as wounds which go down to the innermost parts of the belly" (Prov. 12:18; 18:8).

It is not socially acceptable to "blow up" in public. So uncontrolled anger is often demonstrated under the guise of wit or sarcasm.

Example: Observe the couple who continually cut one another in public and private. Nothing can be said that is not met with a sarcastic riposte. Surly, belligerent words meet any effort to talk to them.

Example: Consider the brother who is constantly making such righteousness as preaching, marriage, child raising, sobriety, temperance, or benevolence the brunt of hurtful jokes and cutting comments. All sober godly effort is met with flippant and inappropriate jesting. Often he takes one person in gathering and singles him out to be made the brunt of sarcasm and scorn (Eph. 5:4; Prov. 26:18).

It is a common thing to demonstrate suppressed anger by saying and doing hateful cutting things, and when hurt is registered to reply, "I wasn't serious! I meant no harm! Surely you did not take me seriously?!" God's reply is "Yes." God takes every word we say seriously, for it is out of the mouth that the abundance of the heart springeth. We will be judged by our every idle word. "As a madman who casteth coals, arrows, and death, so is the man that deceiveth his neighbor and with, Am I not in sport" (Prov. 26:18, 19)?

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THE SIN OF ANGERLESSNESS

The Destructiveness of Inirascibility

Inirascibility is more destructive than it might seem. Let's look at King Saul as described in 1 Samuel 15. Instead of joining in God's anger against the Amalekites, Saul befriended the Amalekite king. Despite the fact that God explicitly told Saul to destroy every tiny trace of the Amalekites' property and assets, and to utterly do away with the Amalekite people, including their king, Agag, King Saul decided instead to house King Agag and warehouse all the Amalekites' riches, including their livestock.

You see, Saul wanted glory from King Agag. I believe King Saul felt exalted by having a king subservient to him. It didn't bother Saul that King Agag and the Amalekites had disregarded God in flagrant disobedience. Saul himself, in fact, was being flagrantly disobedient to God.

King Saul was angerless, and that's what did him in. I believe his angerlessness was tied to his emptiness that made him want to fill himself with praise. King Saul thirsted to be praised. That's why he didn't care if God was praised or not. Saul's inirascibility was so offensive to God that when King Saul abused his power, God ripped Saul's kingdom away and transferred it to David instead.

Now consider King David. According to 2 Samuel 13–15, he, too, was inirascible, and his angerlessness also turned out to be disastrous. David blew it royally as a father. He was not a good family man. When David's son, Amnon, violated David's daughter, David didn't even bother to take a stand for her. David's daughter, Tamar, was raped. David made no overtures to discipline Amnon or offer any nurturing to Tamar. On the contrary, David exasperated his other son, Absalom. In defense of Tamar, Absalom was outraged about what had happened to his sister. Absalom was so furious that he sabotaged his dad by leading an open rebellion, a conspiracy, a coup. So disappointed was Absalom that he literally set fire to David's fields and waged a civil war against his father. Mutiny resulted from David's sinful angerlessness. Mutiny also led to heartbreak because Absalom wound up dead.

The subtle temptation of inirascibility originated long ago. It all began in paradise, in the Garden of Eden, as described in the book of Genesis: Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, lest you die.' " And the serpent said to the woman, 'You shall not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' " (Genesis 3:1-5, NASB)

It is no exaggeration to say "the fall" of humankind traces back to selfish angerlessness. Consider what happened. Eve was inirascible. Adam was inirascible. Neither one riled up when the serpent lied to Eve and made it sound as if God had lied to Adam. Deceitfully, the serpent framed God. That is, the serpent *misframed* God. The serpent misframed God on purpose. Yet neither Adam nor Eve was offended.

Now imagine what would have happened had Eve rebuked the serpent. What if she had said, “No way, you wily snake! Stop lying!”? That’s what should have happened. Do you remember what God told Adam and Eve? He told them to “rule” (Genesis 1:28, NASB). Explicitly they were told to rule over every living thing—including the crafty serpent—that moves upon the earth.

The Complicity of Inirascibility

Inirascibility is passivity. It’s complicity. It turns people into bystanders who silently stand by when there’s a bully. Sin is a bully. I believe complicity is one of the very biggest sins in Christianity. So many [so-called] Christians relate to each other politically rather than spiritually - Tacitly agree not to hold each other accountable in the name of “not being judgmental” and “being safe.”

If sinning flippantly is unacceptable in the eyes of a committed Christian, that committed Christian is instantly labeled “unsafe.” It used to be that safe Christians were those to whom you confess with assurance that they would guard you as they helped you to repent. But today “safe” means complicit.

Many nice Christians are also inirascible in the name of “neutrality.” In the sense I’m using the word, neutrality refers to avoidance rather than to the wisdom of wise boundaries. Neutrality, as I mean it, starts out as an eyewitness but then deliberately looks down for the purpose of looking away. It looks down because it knows what it already saw while looking up. To put it in biblical terms, neutrality steers clear of “the good fight of faith” (1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 4:7, NASB). It passively stands by in complicity while claiming to be ignorant of what it knows. A neutral Christian is quick to say, “I don’t know anything,” right after he or she learns something concrete and disenchanting that obligates that Christian to pitch in somehow and help restore just order.

Jesus was not neutral. Neutrality is not the thing that offended the angry mob who chanted, “Crucify him!” Nowhere in the Bible is the concept of neutrality extolled. Yet it is common for professing Christians to exalt neutrality as if it were more important than loving God—or as if it were the same as loving God. *Neutrality is a form of faithlessness.*

Inirascibility and Rebellion

Every little trace of rebellion against God is fueled by underlying sinful anger. We all have this anger, but inirascible Christians are unwilling to admit that they have it. It’s too humbling (thus feels too painful) to come to terms with. Regardless, unwanted anger is still there. Wishing it away doesn’t make it disappear. It’s not moisture. It does not evaporate. On the contrary, it builds up like creosote in a fireplace. If creosote in a chimney isn’t regularly cleaned out, it eventually explodes. Inirascible Christians are set up to explode, not with spewing volcanic anger, but with subterranean anger expressed in disordered behaviors.

It’s not as though angerless Christians can’t see sin. Inirascibility isn’t blindness. It is willfulness. It happens when Christians willfully decide to “play it safe.” Jesus’ anger stimulates Christians to love and do good deeds. The Greek word for “stimulate” is *paroxusmon*, which means to “stir up, irritate, provoke.” God wants us to goad each other, bug each other, irritate each other into true repentance. God wants us to love and do good deeds (Hebrews 10:24). We can’t salt the earth by being neutral.²

² Sumner, S. (2015). [*Angry like Jesus: using his example to spark your moral courage*](#). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

SUBJECT OVERVIEW IN PRESENTATION OUTLINE

Title: “Is It Right For You To Be Angry?” By Allen Dvorak

Introduction:

- A. In the story of Jonah, Jonah became angry because the Lord decided to spare the city of Nineveh (3:10-4:1).
 - 1. The Lord asked Jonah if it was right for him to be angry (4:4).
 - 2. The Lord prepared a plant to provide shade for Jonah, but then struck the plant so that it died (4:5-7).
 - 3. Jonah became angry at the death of the plant and God asked him again about the appropriateness of his anger (4:8-9).
- B. Unrestrained anger is a common problem.
 - 1. In the beginning, Cain was angry with his brother Abel and killed him.
 - 2. The devil is motivated by his wrath in his desire to destroy men (Revelation 12:12, 17).
 - 3. From road rage to terrorists, from abusive parents to students on the rampage, we are constantly bombarded by the evidence of uncontrolled, sinful anger.
- C. Purpose:
 - 1. Note the importance of the motivation for anger.
 - 2. Observe the danger inherent in anger.
 - 3. Encourage us to be careful about the way(s) that we express our anger.

Body:

I. Anger – Basic Information

- A. A Pauline Paradox
 - 1. Note these two verses:
 - a. **Ephesians 4:26** "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath,
 - b. **Ephesians 4:31** Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.
 - 2. What are we to do? Put away anger...or be angry??
- B. The resolution of this paradox is seen in some basic information about anger.
 - 1. Anger is a natural, God-given emotion.
 - a. Defined: *"A strong passion or emotion of displeasure, and usually antagonism, excited by a sense of injury or insult; as, to foam with anger."* Webster
 - b. Defined: *"the emotion of self-preservation of [one's] worth, needs, and convictions"* (Carter & Minirth, The Anger Workbook, p. 19)
 - 2. Anger is not always sinful.
 - a. The Lord was often angry with Israel

- (1) At Mount Sinai (Exodus 32:9-10, 11-12; Moses also - vs. 19).
 - (2) At Korah's rebellion (Numbers 16:15, 20-22; contrast Moses' anger with that of the Lord!).
 - b. While in the flesh, the Son of God became angry and yet is described as being without sin (Mark 3:5; Hebrews 4:15).
- 3. If anger is sometimes not sinful, what makes it sinful in other instances?
 - a. Look at Jonah's anger in the light of Webster's definition of anger:
 - (1) "A strong passion or emotion of displeasure, and usually antagonism, excited by a sense of injury or insult"
 - (2) Jonah was displeased...because the Lord decided not to destroy the people of Nineveh (Jonah 3:10-4:1).
 - b. The reason for Jonah's displeasure was the physical salvation of the Assyrians – a selfish motive.
 - (1) Jonah understood the danger that Assyria posed for the northern kingdom of Israel.
 - (2) Jonah's anger was aroused by the salvation of the Assyrians and the death of the plant; in other words, he was motivated by self-interest.
 - (3) Through the illustration of the plant, the Lord revealed to Jonah the appropriateness of His concern for the Assyrians (4:10-11).
 - c. The answer to selfishness, of course, is to crucify self (Colossians 3:5-8).

II. The Fruit of Anger

- A. Our study thus far indicates that we must distinguish between anger and its manifestation. While anger is not always sinful, we must also be concerned about the way that we express this strong emotion.
 - 1. Remember Paul's admonition: "Be angry, and do not sin" (Ephesians 4:26; see also Romans 12:19 – "give place to wrath" – vengeance implies injustice).
 - 2. Even legitimate anger can result in sinful behavior!
 - a. Moses was clearly angry with the people of Israel in Numbers 20 when they complained about a lack of water (vs. 1-11).
 - b. Although Moses' anger was legitimate (caused by Israel's sinful complaining), he spoke rashly (Psalm 106:32-33) and struck the rock contrary to divine instructions.
 - 3. The rest of Paul's comment to the Ephesians is designed to help us avoid the error into which Moses fell ("do not let the sun go down on your wrath").
- B. Anger presents several grave dangers:
 - 1. Hot wrath usually clouds our thinking, causing us to make irrational decisions.
 - 2. Anger makes it hard for us to listen to others or understand their point of view.
 - 3. Anger, if uncontrolled or harbored, can lead to bitterness, hatred and/or even violence (Proverbs 29:22 - *"An angry man stirs up strife, and a furious man abounds in transgression"*).
- C. While we are born with the capacity to become angry, we choose when we become angry and how we express that anger.

1. “I can’t help it – he makes me so angry!” The truth is that our behavior is not determined by the actions of others. Jesus commanded love for one’s enemies (Matthew 5:44).
2. The way in which we express anger is influenced by several factors, including:
 - a. Our innate temperament
 - b. The examples of others, especially those close to us (friends, parents, etc.)
3. Note the principle of Proverbs 22:24
 - a. *“Make no friendship with an angry man, And with a furious man do not go,”²⁵ Lest you learn his ways And set a snare for your soul.”*
 - b. The way that we express our anger is a learned behavior. Often we are greatly influenced by our parents or other adult role models.
4. Parents must be very careful about the way that they express their anger. If the parents manifest uncontrolled anger, it is likely that the children will learn to behave in the same way.
5. Be slow to anger
 - a. **Proverbs 16:32 (ESV)** ³² **Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.**
 - b. **Proverbs 19:11 (ESV)** ¹¹ **Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense.**
 - c. **Ecclesiastes 7:9 (ESV)** ⁹ **Be not quick in your spirit to become angry, for anger lodges in the heart of fools.**
 - d. **James 1:19–20 (ESV)** ¹⁹ **Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰ for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.**
6. Think Before Acting

Psalms 4:4 (ESV) ⁴ **Be angry, and do not sin; ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. *Selah***

Conclusion:

- A. The question that the Lord asked Jonah is a really good question for us to ask ourselves about our anger.
- B. Our study has reminded us that we must be careful about the motivation for our anger, lest our anger be sinful in itself, and how we express our anger.

Angry Words

by AP Staff

Talking about people behind their backs is not a kind thing to do (read 2 Corinthians 12:20). Nothing good comes from it. Another sinful thing to avoid is to say mean and hateful things to a person's face. You should never make fun of someone. When you make fun of somebody, you need to realize that you are making fun of one of God's creations.

Jesus told us never to say mean things to our fellow Christians, or be angry with them for no reason. During his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said: "I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment" (Matthew 5:22). David was a man of kind words. He said: "Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; do not fret—it only causes harm" (Psalm 37:8). When we speak mean words out of anger, nothing good comes from it. Also, you cannot teach people about Christ if you are angry all the time, because Jesus taught kindness and love.

The Bible teaches that you can be angry without sinning. Ephesians 4:26 reads: "Be angry and do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your wrath." Jesus, you may recall, got angry when the people were mocking God by defiling His temple. Jesus was angry, but He did not sin. If you have a problem with somebody, then you need to go to that person, and work things out. When you are angry with someone, calm yourself down and speak peacefully in an attempt to resolve your problems.

If someone is being mean to you or saying bad things about you, do not try to "get even." Just being angry does not solve anything. You can't "out-hate" hate. Hate can be overcome only with love. As Paul told the Romans: "Do not be overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21). At times, people will ask you mean questions, trying to get you to argue with them. Don't argue with people who ask such questions. Arguing would be a waste of your time, and it would be displeasing to God. Instead of arguing, answer kindly. Solomon said: "A soft answer turns away wrath. But a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly" (Proverbs 15:1-2).

Talk kindly to those who are your friends, and even those who aren't your friends. You may not enjoy being around everybody, but you can treat everybody you meet with kindness.

Angry Words! O Let Them Never

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D. K. P.

H. R. Palmer

1. An - gry words! O let them nev - er From the tongue un-bri-dled slip;
 2. Love is much too pure and ho - ly, Friendship is too sa - cred far,
 3. An - gry words are light-ly spo - ken, Bitt' rest tho' ts are rash-ly stirred,

May the heart's best impulse ev - er Check them ere they soil the lip.
 For a moment's reckless fol - ly Thus to des - o - late and mar.
 Brightest links of life are bro - ken By a sin - gle an - gry word.

CHORUS.

"Love one an - oth - er" thus saith the Sav - iour; Children, o -
 "Love each oth - er, love each oth - er,"

bey the Fa - ther's blest command. "Love one an - oth - er,"
 'tis the Fa - ther's blest com - mand. "Love each oth - er,"

thus saith the Sav - iour; Children, o - bey His blest com - mand.
 er, love each oth - er," 'Tis His blest com - mand.

