

- **\*Read Ezekiel 36:24-27/Prayer\*** Even though Israel is currently kicked out of the promised land because of their unfaithfulness to God, His plan was always to bring them back as His people and give them His land. But in order for them to be brought back, God demanded something. What was it that God demanded? He demanded that they be a changed people. How were they to be a changed people? They were to be changed in their hearts. Their very character was to be different. How was it that they could be made different? God, through Ezekiel, said that they would be made different through the power of His Spirit. Now, does this kind of language remind you of any other portion of Scripture? It reminds me of what Paul writes to the Christians in Galatia in **Galatians 5:16-26**. Here, Paul demands that disciples put off the sins of the flesh. They were to put these things away from so that they would be able to be led by the Spirit of God. They could be what God desired for them to be, if they were willing to be led in the right way.
- This quarter is going to be dedicated to a focus of those things that the Spirit will not lead us in. It will focus on those things that will fall into the sins of the flesh category. There is balance that needs to be had in our teaching, and that means that sometimes instead of focusing on what we ought to be, we need to take some time to figure out what we ought not to be. We need to take some time to do three things:
  - Know What To Avoid
  - Know Why We Need To Avoid It
  - Know How We Can Avoid It
- In knowing what is bad and what ought not have a place in our hearts, we are then able to move forward and come to put those things in our hearts that ought to be there. In doing so, we will be able to possess clean hearts that continually pour forth godliness and are shown to be led by the Spirit instead of taken over by the flesh. This is the goal of our class this quarter. We want to allow God's Spirit to guide us, and He does through the Inspired Word that shows us what to avoid and how we ought to walk. So let's begin these series of studies by looking at Sinful Anger and why it shouldn't have place in the Christian's heart.

### **I. Anger is part of the human experience**

- A. Anger is something that we all experience. Really it is just a fact of life because even the calmest and most even keeled of individuals will get angry at some point and time. I think this is the reason why the Bible never universally condemns anger. God understands that we get angry. "Be angry, and yet do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity." (**Eph. 4:26,27**)
- B. I'm confident that God created us with the ability and expectation that we would get angry. In fact, we know that God Himself can and does become angry. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness." (**Rom. 1:18**)
- C. We know that God gets angry and shows His anger, and even Jesus in the flesh showed great anger (**Mark 3:5** "After looking around at them (Pharisees) with anger..."; **Matt. 21:12** "Jesus...overturned the tables") So what is the defining factor that made Their anger acceptable, we might say righteous? It's got to be the fact that Their anger was a result of evil doing. They were only made angry because others were practicing evil and going against divine decrees. Their character can't stand such things.

### **II. Anger originates in our hearts.**

- A. This and all of the issues we examine this quarter will find their origins in the heart. The heart is the essence of who we are as people. Notice the Texts that are given to us in our lesson books. "Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life." (**Prov. 4:23**) "But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders." (**Matt. 15:18,19**)
- B. Go back to what was said in Ezekiel, what was it that God said He would give the people? Did He say He would simply give them the right actions? No, it goes farther than that. It isn't that God just wants us to do what is right, but He wants us to be changed first in our hearts. "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind." (**Rom. 12:2**)
- C. If we want to start doing the right things in a way that truly pleases God then we need to start by making our hearts what they ought to be. We need to have hearts that know what is right and what is wrong. If we possess such things then we will then naturally become angry and upset when we see evil and injustice present in our world.

### **III. Our goal is to be made angry by the right things and handle it the right way.**

- A. What types of evil and injustice can rightly anger us? Oppression of the helpless, killing of the unborn, disrespect of God, harm against our loved ones, etc. These things ought to anger us, and that is perfectly acceptable, and in fact, it is good that they do because it shows that we have hearts trained to love what is good and reject that which is wicked.

- B. However, does this mean that we can react just any way we want when we become angry? I think we would all agree that the second half of "Be angry, and yet do not sin." pretty much shows us that we are charged with keeping our anger in check and reacting to things that make us angry the correct way.
- C. When we become angry, how would God have us to react? He would have us under control. **(Prov.29:11)** He would have us continue to act loving. He would have us do everything we can to show the evil doer, the one in the wrong that what they are doing is wrong and they need to repent and change.
- D. Knowing and practicing these things helps us to be angry and yet not sinful, but again, we also need to know what sinful anger looks like so let's use the rest of our time considering how and when anger becomes sinful.

#### IV. Sinful Anger:

- A. Product of Resentment
  - 1) Who can we look to in Scripture who was guilty of sinful anger that was a result of resentment? Cain resented Abel because of his better sacrifice. He didn't control his anger and killed his brother. **(Gen. 3)**
  - 2) What can we do in order to curb resentment of others? Figure out why we are resentful, take responsibility, etc.
- B. Is Unjustified
  - 1) Who can we look to in Scripture who was guilty of sinful anger that was unjustified? Naaman became "furious" when he was told to go wash in the Jordan to clean his leprosy. His immense anger wasn't warranted. He asked a question and just didn't like the answer. **(II Kings 5:11)**
  - 2) Honestly, each of us can easily be guilty of being made angry over something that just totally doesn't warrant anger. We must truly be sure to be "slow to anger." **(James 1:19)**
- C. Product of Envy
  - 1) Who can we look to in Scripture who was guilty of sinful anger that was a result of envy? The older brother in the story of the prodigal son was said to be "angry and was not willing to go in" **(Luke 15:28)**
  - 2) We can become angry because of the successes of others, but that anger is both born from a bad place and really it can be unjustified.
- D. Racially Motivated
  - 1) Who can we look to in Scripture who was guilty of sinful anger that was a result of racial prejudice? Jonah became "displeased" and "became angry" when the Ninevites actually repented of their evil upon his preaching to them. **(Jonah 4:1)**
  - 2) Jonah was wrong simply because these people were "heathens" in his eyes. When we become angry, we must not allow it to be simply because the others involved are different than us racially. We might look different, but the reality is that we are all equal and valuable before God.
- E. Product of Wounded Pride
  - 1) Who can we look to in Scripture who was guilty of sinful anger that was fueled by wounded pride? Haman "filled with rage" when Mordecai refused to bow before him. His pride took a hit and he reacted by becoming angry. **(Esther 3:5)**
  - 2) Pride can easily become a source of many issues in our lives, and we must be sure to not allow it to push us to become angry when in actuality we might just need some humility.
- F. Wants Revenge
  - 1) Who can we look to in Scripture who was guilty of sinful anger that led to revenge? Herodias was angry with John for his righteous stance on their unlawful marriage between herself and Herod. So to get back at John, she had them killed. **(Matt.14:8)**
  - 2) Again, we must be in control of our anger. We might become angry when we hear something we don't like, but we must take the time to recognize if it is something that is truly worth being angry about. If it's not then we need to relax. However, we don't ever have the right to take revenge. **(Rom. 12:19)**
- G. Leads To More Sin
  - 1) How can anger lead to other sins? What sinful things might anger lead to?
- H. Won't Cease
  - 1) What does sustained anger look like? It looks like someone who allows anger to develop into a grudge that doesn't cease.
  - 2) We need to be a people who learn how to resolve our anger as quickly as possible. Sure someone might do me wrong, but I shouldn't allow that anger to continue to dominate my life. I need to learn how to move on and live without anger.

Let's be honest, there are a lot of things in this world that can rightly make us angry. However, we can and ought to learn how to control that anger and not allow it to be like a fire that gets out of control and leads to things that are sinful. May God help us to avoid sinful anger and keep a clean heart before Him.