***Anger - PH82-01

Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 4:4***

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal, but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer a loss. He himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames."

"So we make it our goal to please Him, whether we are at home in the body, or away from it. For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done in his body, whether good or bad. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong. There is no favoritism."

"Behold, I'm coming soon. My reward is with Me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done."

"Jesus answered, 'It is written. Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

These Scriptures make it very clear to us that the call of the Christian life is a call to service, and the purpose of that service is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. The results of that glorification will be great personal rewards in heaven for all eternity. The name of the game of the Christian life is storing treasures in heaven. The basis of doing that is the intake of the Word of God into the mentality of the soul. That is the purpose for which we have gathered now. Therefore, you have consequences for yourself, now in time, and fabulous consequences for yourself in eternity.

There is among Christian churches a great lack of emphasis upon the fact that it is possible for us to store treasures in heaven, and that it is not only possible, but it is going to determine the quality of our eternity. You are fortunate in being alerted to this. Even Christians who know better will often find, when they get to heaven, that they have very little up there to enjoy for all eternity. Consequently, their eternity will be considerably restricted. For the old sin nature and the old flesh likes to get in there so that we do things on the wrong basis. We do things in the wrong way. What God could have rewarded us for, he must simply overlook.

We are studying the book of Philippians. We are using Philippians as a foundational ground, a base of operation, in terms of an advanced Bible doctrine study course. We have come to the subject of happiness as based on Philippians 4:4. We have already looked at the Greek of this verse, and we have presented the exegesis. What this verse is saying is that we are always to be happy on the basis of a divine command: "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I say rejoice."

We have found that depression is the great destroyer of human happiness. This is often reflected in such expressions as, "I'm so unhappy." Depression, however, always begins in the mind of a person. So happiness, first of all, is a mental attitude. If you're here today, and you realize that you are prone to say on occasion, perhaps many occasions, "I am so unhappy," you should, first of all, realize that what you have is a mental problem. It's a problem of a mental attitude. Everyone has developed a mental attitude. This guides our emotions and our will. Whatever your mental attitude is, that determines how you feel about things, and that determines the choices you make.

This is why we are so adamant that it is right for Christian parents to send their children to a Christian school, because only a Christian school can deal with the important factor of the mind, which determines what a person will do with his body, and what he will do with his soul and with his emotions. You cannot train a person's mind unless you have the spiritual factor that controls the mind trained along with it.

So whatever mental attitude you have, either from the world with its human viewpoint, or from the Word of God with its divine viewpoint, whichever your attitude is, that determines your emotions, and that determines the actions of your will. Everyone has developed a mental attitude, and your mental attitude is the result of what you believe. The idea is that you're receptive to wherever you get those ideas. This is why it's important that you are concerned about the information you take in; what you watch on television; the kind of movies you attend; the kind of entertainment you pursue; the books you read; and, the pictorial things you look at. All of those things have an influence upon your mind.

In the sessions which are coming, we're going to come to a very fascinating part of Philippians. We can drop down (just as a little preview here) to Philippians 4:8-9, where Paul lists a series of things, and he ends verse 8 saying, "Think on these things." And we're going to make an analysis, that I think you're going to find to be very informative and very revealing, concerning the fact that a great deal of what you and I do (if not the major part of what we do) is not determined by what we are aware of – our conscious mind. But it is actually determined by our subconscious mind.

Therefore, it is very important that you know how to program your subconscious, as a Christian, in order to live and to function successfully in your life. The reason that happiness eludes a lot of people is because they do not know how to program the subconscious, and they don't understand their natural temperaments. Everyone has a certain basic natural temperament. This is the raw material that came out of the gene structure of your parents when they conceived you. That temperament is influenced by your subconscious. The results are fantastic.

The apostle Paul in his day is putting his finger upon that very thing. We're going to bring to bear some more 20th century understanding on this thing, which will illuminate this passage tremendously. So there are some very significant areas coming before us, but all of them are getting back to one thing. *You are what you think.* The result of all these inputs of belief into your mind produce a mentality of divine viewpoint or a mentality of human viewpoint. Depression is always the product of human viewpoint thinking. Anytime you are unhappy, it is because human viewpoint is functioning at some point in your life. Very frequently, it is right out from the subconscious that you don't even realize that that's what's guiding your actions; that's what's guiding your feelings; and, that's what is guiding your thinking.

So the real treatment for unhappiness or for depression (the great enemy of happiness) must center on changing your mental attitude. The usual current treatments, we've pointed out, of drugs, electrotherapy, and psychotherapy are mostly limited to short-term results. Permanent victory over depression and the permanent establishing of a happy life requires a spiritual solution.

The biblical solution, we pointed out, first of all, was personal spiritual regeneration to secure a living human spirit in which to store the divine viewpoint principles. What we're talking about there is personal salvation – trusting in Jesus Christ as one's Savior. The result is to receive a living human spirit which acts as a reservoir of these divine viewpoint principles. Then the second step of the biblical solution is to maintain the status of spirituality as a believer. We do that by confessing known sins. The third factor was the daily intake of Bible doctrine into your thinking in order to secure thereby divine viewpoint principles. The fourth step is the development of a strong and stable spiritual maturity structure in the soul. We looked at the various facets of spiritual maturity in the last session, and how each of them affects our happiness.

Finally, the last step was the practice of the technique of prayer in meeting the issues of life. The importance of prayer is that thereby you maintain the personal thankfulness in all things that the Bible says is the will of God; and secondly, that you remember, as a result of prayer, that the battle is the Lord's in all that you face. Anytime a person is unhappy, you can know without any doubt that that person is an ingrate. Anytime a person is unhappy, he is not thankful at some point. Somebody has just come in and dented his brand new car, and he's unhappy about it. Why is he unhappy? Because the Bible says when somebody comes and rams the right front fender of your brand new car, you thank God for it. That's what the Bible says. But you say, "If somebody comes and rams the right front fender of my brand new car, I am unhappy. I just got it yesterday." The reason you're unhappy is because you cannot thank God, as He has told you to do.

Now, you're not going to grit your teeth and thank Him. Somebody is going to pour enough doctrine into your mind that you've gotten yourself straightened out from human viewpoint reactions to divine viewpoint reactions, and you'll be able to thank Him. You will find immediately that a sense of gratitude will produce a sense of happiness as well.

Furthermore, you will remember that the battle is the Lord's. If God permits some situation to arise that rams in the right front fender of your brand new car, you may be sure that it's something of a very wonderful plan that God has for you and your brand new car. So get yourself oriented to God's thinking. That requires the practice of prayer for thankfulness, and for remembering who is sovereign.

I pointed out to you last time that there were two mental attitudes that are the basic source of all depression, and thus of all unhappiness. I can almost guarantee you without the shadow of a doubt, that if you can lick these two factors, you will rarely be a depressed person – probably never. These are the two basic sources of depression, and thus of unhappiness. They are so widely practiced by people that it is really a major problem to correct them. Your initial reaction is, "Oh, tell it to me." Some of you have been bugging me all week: "What is it? What are they?" Why? Because you say, "I'm going to do it. Just tell it to me. I'm going to do it."

I mentioned last time that if I were to ask you to list for me what they are, most of you would miss it. Some of you tried to list them, and you missed them, because these are so common that you're sure that these could not be associated with your unhappiness. As a matter of fact, some of you will resent this. As a matter of fact, some of you will say, "Well, I am unhappy. I can tell you that. But I'm not one of those two things that you're saying. I'm here to tell you that if you are unhappy, you are also one of these two things, and probably both. So I'm preparing you for the resistance that is inherent in this subject beforehand. These are not so simple, so don't dismiss them.

**Anger**

Number one is anger. People who are depressed, and who are unhappy, are inevitably angry people. Studies have revealed very clearly that most unhappy people are also angry people. Now, under the title of anger, we include bitterness, and we include also resentment. When we say anger, we mean that whole general category of rising up in indignation over the fact that you feel somebody has violated your rights. That's why you're angry. The things that you consider your rights have been violated; have been stepped upon; or, have been encroached upon, so you react in anger, or some variant expression of anger – either bitterness or resentment.

There's always a specific reason for depression. Depression is not just spontaneous. You don't just look out and say, "Boy, this was a dark day. I feel depressed." The reason you are depressed is due primarily to one of two specific causes. Anger is the first. When you are depressed, it is for a specific reason. A primary cause is anger. Anger over what? Well, somebody has insulted you. Somebody has disappointed you; somebody has rejected you that you feel should love you; or, somebody has threatened you in some way – threatened your rights. For something of this nature, you've come up against it, and your reaction to it is anger.

Your angry spirit is often revealed, so it's not so easy to deny it. It's revealed by the fact that you desire to irritate the person that you're angry at; you desire to hurt the person that has angered you; or, you want to destroy or reject something.

My number two son and I were visiting one of our local high schools this week that he had attended. As we walked through it, he was looking at certain things. He said, "Well I see they fixed this. I see they've changed that. I see they've done this." He was reiterating to me all of the destruction on school property that takes place. It is just vandalism, and sheer destruction of school property: tearing mirrors off the wall; kicking doors in washrooms; and, one thing and another. I have read statistics recently where American public schools spend as much and more on vandalism as they do on textbooks now.

We got to thinking between us, "Why does anybody do that?" We were trying to put ourselves into their place. What is it that causes some guy to walk into a washroom; tear the mirror off the wall; and, smash it to the floor? What drives him to do that? The reason they do that is because they're angry. They're angry at what? They're angry at the school; they're angry at a teacher; they're angry at a grade; they're angry at a principal; or, they're angry at the system. So they destroy the properties of that system in some respects. Anger is revealed by the desire to seek vengeance. And you do that by irritating; hurting; destroying; or, rejecting someone.

One of the best ways to express your anger is to not talk to someone. You say, "Well, I'm going to be real Christian. Every time I see him, I'm going to turn my face the other way. I'm not going to say anything to him." Sure enough, you're not chewing him out, and you're not saying anything ugly. You're just exercising your anger by silence.

So I'm saying that depression is not triggered by physical factors, but by mental response of bitterness or of resentment. Anger triggers depression. The Bible recognizes that you will have anger. That's why the Bible has this principle: "Let not the sun set upon your anger." The Bible says never allow the anger that will arise in your normal human relationships to go beyond sundown. Now, if you get kicks out of anger, you can look in the paper to see when the official time for sundown is. It's 6:03 today, and maybe 6:10 tomorrow. You can go up to that time and have a real ball. But come 6:10, your anger is over. So the Bible is telling you this because it knows that if you go to bed that night, you'll be in an internal subconscious turmoil all night long because you have not resolved your anger. Anger inevitably leads to depression, and depressed people are usually angry people. That's why they're unhappy. Anger is, perhaps, the most negative and damaging emotion of all that people experience.

So you may nurse a grudge, or you may nurse bitterness, even when you have been genuinely mistreated. You have times when you could say, "I've got cause to be bitter. I've got cause to resent what was done. I've got cause to be angry at what was said." But even then, the results are the same. It doesn't matter that your cause is just. The Bible says that anger will destroy you. Therefore, if you are going to fulfill the command of Philippians 4:4, to be happy at all times, the first thing you must absolutely overcome, without any compromise on your part, is anger. It has to become a thing of the past because it will always lead to depression.

Worse than that, that's an emotional reaction, but the emotional reaction, unfortunately, does not stop there. We have pointed out to you that in your skull is your brain, and right at the front part of your brain is the control center. From that, there radiates, to all parts of your body, nerve outlets that trigger reactions in all parts of your physical body. Whatever affects this nerve center of the mind also affects where those nerve centers lead. So if something affects your mentality in an adverse way (in a bad emotion), it will also affect other parts of your body. You'll feel it in your chest; you'll feel it in your arms; and, you'll feel it in your head. There won't be anything wrong in your chest or your arms or your head, but it will have simply been the reaction of an adverse emotion like anger. Anger places an unbearable strain on the physical body, so the result is illness of various kinds.

That's why people under anger will say, "My stomach is all tied up in knots." Is there something wrong in the stomach? Not directly, but the anger which exists up in the brain has sent the signal down to the stomach, and the result is that the stomach is reacting in an abnormal way, so they have a physical reaction at that point. In other words, anger is the most health-destroying emotion you can engage in. The human body can only take so much strain, and then it breaks down. The brain is the control center, and it's going to affect every organ of the body when anger permeates your thinking. The mental attitude of anger is what we're talking about. If you're going to be happy, we said, you have to straighten out your thinking. Happiness is a matter of the mind. Unhappiness is a matter of the mind. Any tension in the control center of the brain sends these impulses, and it triggers these physical responses. It does this in three ways:

**How the Brain Triggers Physical Responses**

1. **The Blood**

Number one, it changes the amount of blood flowing into an organ. It has an effect on the blood. For example, at a time of embarrassment, that emotion causes the blood vessels of your face and neck to suddenly expand, and your face and neck turn red, and we say, "You're blushing." The whole thing was caused entirely by a feeling. On the other hand, hatred will create a flow of blood into the areas of the skull, but the skull is hard on the inside. You are in truth, hard-headed, and the result is that the blood vessels beyond a certain point can't expand against that hard skull. Yet the blood is pouring in there because of your emotional indignation and your anger. The result is that you have a terrific headache. So changes in the amount of blood flowing to an organ create these effects of physical reactions as the result of these emotional triggers.

1. **The Glands**

Secondly, there is the effect upon the glands of the body. The emotion of anger affects the secretion of certain glands. For example, if you're not used to speaking before an audience, and suddenly you have to get up and make a speech before a group, you have an emotional tension. That emotional tension causes the salivary glands in your mouth to dry up, and suddenly you've got dry mouth, and you can't speak. This is not an uncommon thing for speakers, and that's why you often see a glass of water and a pitcher of water there. That's what that is. That isn't to soup up the speaker, but that's in case he gets a little nervous, and he begins getting dry-mouth, and he can have something to moisten with. That's from this tension.

Or anger will trigger your thyroid gland to secrete excessive thyroxine into the blood. And if you maintain this condition where you are angry all the time, and your thyroid gland is pouring out thyroxine in an excessive way, it's going to begin showing up on you physically. You're going to be very nervous. You're a nervous type of person. You're going to sit there twiddling your thumbs. You're going to rub your fingers all the time. Or your eyes are going to start bulging out. If you see people with their eyes bulging, that's almost a sure sign that there's a person that's got thyroxine pouring into his bloodstream, and the thyroid is being told to work overtime. You can have a rapid pulse, and you can even have the development of heart disease.

Or anger will disturb your adrenal glands. It will pour abnormal amounts of secretion into the blood. That will cause high blood pressure; arthritis; kidney disease; hardening of the arteries; and, various things. It will actually even enlarge the adrenal glands themselves. It's the adrenaline that is poured into your system that prepares you for a crisis. When you're out skindiving out in the ocean, you're swimming around, and all of a sudden a shark comes along. It's the adrenaline that starts pumping in to tell you to get out of there, and to give you the capacity to start paddling your way out in a hurry.

But if you were to check the adrenaline glands of a crocodile, you would find them to be peanut-sized, practically. They are very small. Why? Because the crocodile just sits there. He opens his big mouth periodically and slams it. He rolls his eyes around. He's calm. A lion at the age of 25 is really a decrepit old cat. If you've ever seen a 25-year-old lion in a zoo, he can hardly stand on his legs without wobbling. But a crocodile will live to be several hundred years old because he doesn't excite himself. He's calm. He sheds no crocodile tears over anything, whereas the lion is always crying about something he's excited about.

Now, this is fantastic. You can also find this in human beings. If you could take the adrenal glands out of a human being postmortem, you would discover that there is a great difference in the size of the adrenal glands in different people. That itself will tell you a lot about a person. Some people have huge adrenal glands, and you know that this was the kind of a person who was always angry, bitter, and resentful, and he was always under pressure. So the gland was constantly operating, pumping, and pouring out the secretions. Anger affects the glandular system.

1. **The Muscles**

Third, anger affects us physically by the fact that it affects the muscles of the body. It causes a changing in the tension of the muscles. Anger tightens up the muscles, and that causes pain. Tight muscles cause pain. You can prove that to yourself by just making a fist; clenching it hard; and, holding it for a while. You will discover that the muscles begin to get sore. When the muscles are tense, you have severe tension headaches. You can have pain over your heart. People very often go to a doctor thinking that they're having a heart attack, because they have a constriction (a pain) in the chest, which is due to nothing else except the fact that they are under an emotional strain. And anger is a primary cause of that kind of emotional strain. So there's nothing really wrong in the chest. It's just the reaction of the muscles tensing up, though, indeed, anger itself can also produce a heart attack. The medical world tells us that it produces more strain on the heart than anything else.

It affects the involuntary muscles of the intestines, and causes all kinds of problems: internal pains; diarrhea; or, vomiting. There is nothing wrong with the organ itself. The anger is what triggered it.

So when you decide to be angry, you not only have the emotional reaction of depression to pay, but you also have these things to pay upon the physical body.

**Anger Causes Physical Diseases**

Diseases are actually caused or aggravated by the mental attitude sin of anger. In a book written by Dr. S. I. McMillen called None of These Diseases, he makes a list of the effect of anger upon the body, and the various diseases it causes. He makes a list, actually, of 51 that are simply fantastic. I'm going to read them to you, but some of them are kind of technical. But here, first of all, is a category that he has found, as he has analyzed this, of disorders which anger produces in the digestive system:

"Your anger will produce ulcers in your mouth, your stomach, and your intestines. It will create ulcerative and mucous colitis; loss of appetite; hiccups; constipation; or diarrhea.

"It also produces disorders of the circulatory system. Anger produces high blood pressure; soldier's heart (that is, the strain of fear creating pain in the chest as if there were a heart attack); proximal tachycardia; arteriosclerosis; coronary thrombosis; and, gangrene of the legs."

Have you been angry lately? Check your feet.

"Anger also produces rheumatic fever; cerebral strokes of apoplexy; and, disorders of the genital urinary system. Anger produces painful menstruation; lack of menstruation; premenstrual tension and irritability; frigidity; vaginismus; painful colitis; frequent and painful urination; acute glomerular nephritis (that is, kidney disease); menopausal symptoms; and, impotence.

"Disorders of the nervous system: headaches of several types; alcoholism; epilepsy; psychoneurosis; insanity (such as schizophrenia); and, senile dementia.

"Disorders of the glands of internal secretion: Anger produces hypothyroidism; diabetes; and, obesity.

"Allergic disorders are produced by anger: hives; hay fever; and asthma.

"Muscle joint disorders are produced such as backache; pain and spasm of muscles; rheumatoid arthritis; and, osteoarthritis.

"Infections are produced by anger: infectious mononucleosis; polio; and, many (perhaps all) infections.

"Eye diseases: glaucoma; and, keratitis.

"Skin Diseases: hives; atopic dermatitis; neurodermatitis; Raynaud's disease; scleroderma; lupus erythematosus; and, psoriasis."

You can see that there is a great deal at stake in the physical way that you have to be prepared to pay if you want to be angry.

In Matthew 18:21-22, the Lord Jesus makes a declaration concerning forgiveness. He says that, "We are to forgive people not only seven times, but 70 times seven." When he made that statement, we may be certain that He was not only thinking of our souls, but he was thinking also of our bodies. The angry, unforgiving spirit has a cost upon it both emotionally and physically that is absolutely fantastic.

Now, negative people fan the intensity of their anger by repeatedly reiterating their grievances and grudges to all who will listen. What this does is it intensifies a person's mental stress, and thus the physical disorders. In Dr. McMillen's book, None of These Diseases, he makes a statement on pages 71 and 72. He says, "Running people down does not keep us free from a host of diseases of body and mind. The verbal expression of animosity toward others calls forth certain hormones from the pituitary adrenal thyroid and other glands, an excess of which can cause disease in any part of the body. Many diseases can develop when we fatten our grudges by rehearsing them in the presence of others."

**Do not Respond to Anger**

So when somebody is rehearsing his grievances to you, remember that he is rehearsing his anger, and he is also triggering great, physical, destructive forces in himself. And if you respond to his emotion of anger, you'll trigger it in yourself. You have to turn those people off. You have to listen to their speech, and you have to have no response to it at all.

Now, that is very important in other ways. When we get a little further in Philippians, we're going to show you a girl who has an alcoholic father who has abused the mother and children, and who says, "Whatever I do in life, I promise before God, I'll never marry a man who drinks," and we'll show you why that girl is going to go out and marry a man who is an alcoholic. I'm going to show you why a man who says, "I'll never marry a woman who's been dominant like my mother" is going to go out and marry a dominant woman. You better watch this business of what you think. You better watch the business of other people's thinking, and becoming involved in it. You better learn how to turn off other people's anger. I'm trying to alert you to the fact that when Paul says, "Be happy," God is commanding you to do something you are capable of doing. One of the steps to doing that is to recognize the role of anger in destroying personal happiness and creating depression.

Anger has its emotional effects. It has its physical effects. When you become angry, you become the slave of the object of your anger. Again, reading from Dr. McMillen's book, he puts it in a very excellent way. Now, I want you to listen carefully, and to remember that the next time you're angry at some person or something, that you've just put a ring through your nose and handed him the chain that's hooked to that ring to lead you around:

"The moment I start hating a man, I've become his slave. I can't enjoy my work anymore because he even controls my thoughts. My resentments produce too many stress hormones in my body and I become fatigued after only a few hours of work. The work I formerly enjoyed is now drudgery. Even vacations cease to give me pleasure. It may be a luxurious car that I drive along the lake, fringed with the autumnal beauty of maple oaken birch. As far as my experience of pleasure is concerned, I might as well be driving a wagon in mud and rain. The man I hate hounds me wherever I go. I can't escape his tyrannical grasp on my mind. When the waiter serves me porterhouse steak with French fries; asparagus; crisp salad; and, strawberry shortcake smothered with ice cream, it might as well be stale bread and water. My teeth chew the food and I swallow it, but the man I hate will not permit me to enjoy it.

"King Solomon must have had a similar experience, for he wrote, 'Better a dish of vegetables with love than the best beef served with hatred.' The man I hate may be many miles from my bedroom, but more cruel than any slave driver, he whips my thoughts into such a frenzy that my innerspring mattress becomes a rack of torture. The lowliest of the serfs can sleep, but not I. I must acknowledge the fact that I am a slave to every man on whom I pour the vials of my wrath."

That is very well put, indeed. That's exactly what the Bible is trying to alert us to when it tells us again and again to avoid a permanent condition of anger. Anger will make you fatigued and tired, and remember that emotional tiredness is not restored by sleep. You can work hard for eight hours a day at some manual labor job, and you'll come home and sleep and be refreshed. But it takes almost twice that time when you have emotionally and mentally exhausted yourself. So that's a high price to pay.

Anger will rob you of your sleep. You will take your cerebral tension to bed with you, and you'll indulge it by chewing out your mate, and reiterating all of your grievances. The unhappy person, characteristically, has been striking out against others who deliberately or unintentionally did something he didn't like. That's why the angry person is always a depressed person – because he's always in conflict. We started with Euodia and Syntyche, and we pointed out that they were two unhappy women in the church at Philippi because they were in conflict with each other. They were angry at each other. You can't resist the temptation to set people straight or to get even with him. Satan tempts us to anger even over the failures of Christians who should do better. That's one of his favorite tricks – to get you all up in anger and indignation, because some Christian doesn't do what he should do; he doesn't do his job as well as he should do; or, he doesn't have the attitudes that he should have.

When was the last time you went off into a tirade speech over the shortcomings and the failures of other Christians? Do you realize what you're doing? You're exercising anger, and you've got a right to be angry. Christians ought to do better than other people. But beware that even in there, you do not forget that the battle is the Lord's, and stop trying to straighten out other people. Learn the priesthood of the believer and respect its privacy. After you have done what may be your legitimate thing to do of caution and warning as one Christian to another, you don't become indignant and emotionally involved with a thing.

The divine viewpoint principle for dealing with anger and to preserve your happiness and your health is, first of all, to have a relaxed mental attitude. That's the defense against anger. If you've been here at Berean Memorial Church, you know what that means. You know that that's a mental attitude love, which is free of bitterness. It's not an emotional attitude, but it creates an emotional attitude. It is free of bitterness; free of vengeance-seeking; and, free of resentment. So the Word of God, very carefully, knowing what anger does to us in our emotions and in our minds, constantly reiterates and condemns the practice of anger.

In Ephesians 4:30, the apostle Paul says, "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil-speaking be put away from you with all malice, and be kind one to another; tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you."

In Colossians 3:8, the apostle Paul says again, "But now put off all these: anger; wrath; malice; blasphemy; and, filthy communications out of your mouth." Put away anger.

In the Old Testament, the principle was the same. Psalms 42:5 says, "Why are you cast down, O, my soul? And why are you disquieted in me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance." Why should you be disquieted, meaning why am I angry? Put your trust in God.

So the unhappiness of depression is resolved by rejecting mental attitude anger – not by resolving the point of tension. You can resolve the point of your conflict, and you can still be angry over it. Anger is the thing that God is trying to preserve you from.

So don't compound your depression by making major decisions at a point when you are depressed. The worst time in the world to make decisions is just before you go to bed. The worst time in the world for a woman to start discussing decision-making with her husband is when they are about to fall asleep, because you're not in a condition to be able to respond emotionally and intellectually. But some negative people have really made anger a way of life, and they will not give up this base of their unhappiness.

I know that perhaps some of you have made anger the basis of a way of life. So no matter what you hear, you're not going to stop being angry. As a matter of fact, for some people, this has become such a way of life that it would be a total revolution. It would almost be like retiring from a job and not knowing what to do, because all day long they've operated on anger. They get up in the morning; they get dressed; they get all ready; they get all set for the day; they do their exercises; and, they're great and ready for a big day of anger. Now, suppose you say, "That's it – no more anger." You say, "What am I going to do with myself all day? How am I going to fill my time? It's a mental attitude twist. It distorts all of your thinking.

As a matter of fact, don't forget that anger is the basis of insanity. Spiritual and mental insanity both flow from anger. It's a sin. It takes its toll in unhappiness. So don't go saying, "I'm so unhappy," without adding, "because I'm so mad. I'm so unhappy because I'm so angry." Put the two together, and you'll be on the road to solving that problem.

Now, there is a second factor involved here concerning personal happiness. This one is one that people resist even more. If you've been inclined to drag your feet over the suggestion that you're unhappy because you're angry over something, you are really going to drag your feet over the second one, because this one is not generally recognized as being at the core of personal unhappiness. This one is not generally associated with depression, and thus people are widely guilty of it, completely unbeknownst to themselves. In the next session, we're going to tell you all about that one, because our time has run out, and there is a lot to say on that one, and we can't get into it.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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