***Godly and Ungodly Anger - PH82-02

Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 4:4***

We are in section number five of "Happiness is Your Duty." We have found that the Word of God commands us to be happy. We have learned that the Bible condemns indulging a certain enemy of happiness, which is the quality of anger – a kind of anger, specifically, which expresses hatred, bitterness, and resentment. This is the kind of anger which James tells us does not accomplish the will of God. In James 1:20, James says, "For the wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God." There is a kind of anger which is condemned by God, and which does not accomplish His will. This anger, if prolonged, we have found, causes personal depression, and thus a great loss of personal happiness. This type of anger is also harmful physically to the person who is indulging in it.

The basic defense against this improper kind of anger is the building of a relaxed mental attitude in the soul. This is done through the intake of doctrine, and the positive response to its principles. A relaxed mental attitude is a mind which is free of bitterness; of resentment; and, of hatreds.

Before we go on today, I'd like to look a little further at the nature of anger, because several questions were raised this week on the basis of what was said in our last session, and I think we need a little more clarification. So I want to establish, first of all, that the word "anger" is not a dirty word in the Bible. The word anger does not automatically refer to something that is evil. There is such a thing as godly anger. Anger, in other words, in itself, is not sinful.

If that impression was picked up by you, it's a wrong one. Anger, after all, is a legitimate and a proper and a normal human emotion. All of our emotions were created by God. They are not damaging or destructive to us per se. Emotions, however, must be used in harmony with biblical principles, or they do become destructive.

**God Experiences Anger**

The Bible actually teaches us that God himself experiences anger. We find this, for example, repeatedly taught in Psalms. In Psalm 7:11, we find that God, each day, is angry against evil: "God judges the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day." Here, obviously we could not accuse God of being guilty of sin. Yet, the Bible makes it clear that God is angry on a daily basis. Evidently, there is an anger that is not sinful, and this is what God is exercising.

We have this again in Psalm 79:5-6, where we read, "How long, Lord? Will You be angry forever? Shall your jealousy burn like fire? Pour out your wrath upon the nations that have not known You, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon Your name. For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling place. O, remember not against us former iniquities. Let your tender mercy speedily meet us, for we are brought very low. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Your name, and deliver us, and purge away our sins for Your name's sake." God's anger here continues, the psalm indicates, until the sinner turns from his sin.

Then Psalm 85:1-7 again indicate that God's anger is against sin, but when sin stops, then His anger will cease: "Lord, you have been favorable unto Your land. You have brought back the captivity of Jacob. You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people. You have covered all their sin. You have taken away all Your wrath. You have turned Yourself from the fierceness of Your anger. Restore us, O God of our salvation, and cause your anger taught us to cease. Will You be angry with us forever? Will You draw out Your anger to all generations? Won't you revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You? Show us Your mercy, O Lord, and grant us Your salvation." God's anger is there against sin, but God has taken steps to remove His anger against sin. Here the psalmist is crying out for God, who has removed anger, to put that into operation and to restore peace to this people who deservedly have God's anger upon them because of their practice of sin again.

So the Bible makes it clear that God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – Triune in personalities, but one in essence) has indeed, within that Godhead, the quality of anger – a legitimate type of anger. Furthermore, we find that the Lord Jesus Christ became angry.

By the way, the reason I'm putting a big emphasis on this is that there is a very popular Christian psychologist who has written many books that are very popular (and that probably a lot of you have in your libraries) in which he condemns anger as always being a matter of sin. He has boxed himself, because of his poor theology and his poor knowledge of doctrine, into an impossible situation. There are a lot of Christians cut adrift from reality because they believe that anytime they get angry, they're out of the will of God. That particular Christian psychologist is all wet on that point.

**Jesus Became Angry**

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself became angry. This is the impossible corner that this Christian psychologist has boxed himself into, because he has to then explain away the fact that Jesus was angry. In John 2:17, we have the record of one occasion upon which the Lord Jesus Christ displayed anger when He was driving the moneychangers out of the temple grounds where they were doing business on holy ground in the sacred place: "And His disciples remembered that it is written, 'The zeal of your house has eaten me up.'" This was following the Lord's driving these people out; turning their tables over; and, simply, by His very command presence, sending them scurrying and grabbing their money and picking up their coins, and sending them out of the temple. This expression, "Zeal has eaten me up" connotes a deep emotional response. It, in effect, is an expression of anger on the part of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But, Mark 3:5 puts it specifically in so many words. For, on this occasion, the Lord Jesus Christ is speaking to the Pharisees, and He's teaching them Bible doctrine, and a very natural response of a teacher of the Word rises up within the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ as He looks upon these Pharisees who react with nothing but loathsome negative response to what He is teaching them. And here they have the very God man instructing them. So Mark 3:5 says, concerning Jesus, "And when He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, He said unto the man, 'Stretch forth your hand.' And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored as sound as the other." So the Lord performs a miracle in response to His anger over the fact that the Pharisees would not listen to the instruction in the Word, but were rejecting what He was telling them.

This teaches us something about God. God is always angry at negative response to doctrine. Any time you sit in a church service and some pastor-teacher has instructed you in the truth of the Word, and you don't like it; you don't respond to it; you don't agree with it; and instead, you act with a negative rejection of it, you have sinned at that point, and you have the anger of God against you as a Christian. So this puts a new dimension of seriousness concerning negative resistance to the instruction in the Word of God. Anytime you step into a room where the local church body has assembled for the formal instruction in the Word of God under the authoritative gift which God has placed in that pastor-teacher of that local church, you have stepped into God's territory as you step into it no place else. If you have already gone negative to something you've heard today, whether it's in the preaching; in the singing of the songs; in the prayer; in the announcements; or, anything, you just want to face up to the fact that if you happen to be wrong, and what you have been told is right and is indeed the mind of God, you have invited God's anger upon you, and you're going to have it all week long. And it's going to affect the course of your life.

**Godly Anger**

So God is a God who gets angry. And toward negative volition, as Jesus demonstrated, His anger is intense. The apostle Paul also made it very clear that a Christian can be angry and yet not sin in the process. If you'll turn to Ephesians 4:26, we have that truth taught us. Paul says, "Be angry and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." Anger can be a legitimate emotional upset without it devolving into a sinful kind of anger, which is an anger of resentment; of bitterness; or, of seeking vengeance. Anger against an evil or a wrong is not sinful. It becomes sinful when that anger, perhaps against a legitimate evil, turns to bitterness or resentment or hatred against someone or something. Then it becomes an anger that can be condemned.

So very often a Christian enters an emotion of anger against an evil or against a wrong, and it's a legitimate emotional response. But he lets it degenerate into a bitterness and into a resentment and into a hatred, and then that righteous anger becomes unrighteous anger. It is not unscriptural, for example, for parents to discipline their children while they're angry. Again, even Christian psychiatrists and psychologists, who write many books on this subject, come up with the inane notion that you should never discipline your children when you're angry. Well, if you're not angry, you wouldn't discipline them. It's because they have stepped out of line that causes you to discipline them. You do discipline them because you're angry.

The Bible makes it very clear that discipline is the result of anger. Now, the anger in itself is right. However, you may express that anger toward your children in a way that is hot-tempered or violent in words or in actions, so that that anger now becomes a sinful anger. But always remember that when you discipline your children, it is in anger that you do it. That's right. That's how you should do it. Anger degenerated into bitterness, resentment, or hatred is something else. That is wrong. But the anger part itself is what motivated you to do what is right.

This is what motivates God to punish sin. It is the anger of God against evil that motivates him to punish and to discipline evil. God actually acts righteously out of anger. For example, Isaiah 63:6 points that out to us: "I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the peoples there was none with me. For I will tread them in My anger, and trample them in My fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiments." Here God is speaking about how he will act toward the world in the day of Messiah's vengeance during the tribulation. God says, "I am going to be so angry at the world. I'm going to be so angry at its internationalism. I am going to be so angry at its world religion. I'm going to be so angry at its ecumenicism. I'm going to be so angry at its economic policies. I'm going to be so angry at its political relationships. I'm going to be so angry at its worship of Satan. I'm going to be so angry against its rejection of the Word of God. I'm going to be so angry against the killing of My evangelists and the attempted killing of My 144,000 evangelists."

God says, "I'm going to be so angry that I'm going to be like a man who gets into his vat that he has put his grapes in. They used to squeeze the juice out by getting on the grapes and just stopping them with their feet. They would take their robes, which they wore, and they'd hike them up, and tie them around their waste to get them above their legs. But in the process of stopping on the grapes, it was not possible to keep from splattering the grape juice up on the bottoms of their garments. So when they finished, it looked like their garments were covered with blood on the bottom. This is what the Scripture means. God says, "When I get through, the bottom of my garment is going to look like a man who has just got through pressing juice out of his grapes in his wine vat. My garments will be stained with the blood of My enemies."

Now, man, that is anger. This is anger in the righteous God. Don't forget his essence. He is absolute righteousness. That's the kind of anger that causes God to do what is right. So anger, when it's legitimate anger, and properly control within scriptural, biblical, principle grounds, will be an anger which leads you to do what is right. Anger leads you to do that which pleases God. There is such a thing as a godly anger.

Notice Isaiah 63:5-6: "I looked, and there was none to help, and I wondered that there was none to uphold. Therefore, My own arm brought salvation unto Me. And My fury, it upheld Me, and I will tread down the peoples in My anger, and make them drunk in My fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth." God says that His judgment will be very severe. Because of what? Because of His anger.

So anger in a Christian will motivate that believer to right conduct. It is not wrong, in fact, the Bible says, for a pastor-teacher to become angry. You will notice Titus 1:7, in list of the qualifications for a pastor-teacher (which is here referred to under the title of "bishop"): "For a bishop must be blameless as the steward of God, not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, not violent, not given to filthy lucre," and so on. You notice that one of the things that a pastor-teacher must be is not that he never gets angry; that he is always sweetness and light; or, that he is always mouthing some inane platitude. But it says that he is not to be "soon angry." He is not to be hot-tempered. That's what the Bible condemns in a preacher – when he's hot-tempered. But if you have a preacher who will not get angry, then you are being denied the judgments of God, and the warnings that God has given you. When you understand the judgments of God, then you become angry toward that which is violating the thinking of God. If you do not see that there is indignation toward that which is negative to God's thinking, you'll never even know what God is thinking to begin with.

I want to show you three words that the New Testament uses for this subject of anger. I think it will give you a little more clarification, because I want to get back to that Ephesians Passage for a moment. The first word is the Greek word "thumos." "Thumos" is the Greek word for anger, which is an outburst of boiling up and a sudden explosion. It's an inner indignation. It's like standing at Yellowstone National Park at the Old Faithful area, and watching Old Faithful spew up. You just hear it grumbling; you hear it roaring; you hear the underground noises; pretty soon you see a few spurts of water coming up; and, then the whole thing explodes. Now that is a physical example of exactly what this Greek word is talking about. It's that kind of anger that just boils and stirs, and then all of a sudden it just explodes. This is an inner indignation. But as soon as it has exploded, it just dies right back down again. It also has that quality.

Then there's a second Greek word and that is the word "orge." "Orge" wrath is a settled state of mind, expressing itself outwardly in a controlled vengeance. "Orge" is more settled. It is a state of indignation. It is a wrath against evil. It's just a position you've come to. It's a position that you've taken. And anytime you have confronted this which violates that position that you have taken relative to righteousness, you have an anger in the form of "orge." This has a quality of expressing it outwardly in vengeance. At that point, you may have a problem with it.

The third Greek word is "parorgismos." This is a wrath that is dangerous, because "parorgismos" is a wrath that is accompanied by bitterness, resentment, and hatred. The Bible is very clear about warning us about ever exercising that kind of anger. That's the anger that indeed can be condemned.

Let's go back to our passage in Ephesians 4:26: "Be angry, and do not sin." When it says, "Be angry," it's using the verb form of this noun "orge." So we have the word "orgizo." This is the word for anger from a settled mental attitude against evil. This is not anger exploding in bitterness and hatred, so it is not a wrong anger. So here the Bible is actually telling us to have this kind of anger. What is this anger? This is the kind of anger that is the result of the fact that you've learned doctrine. You've come to an attitude of mind toward what is right and what is wrong according to divine viewpoint. When violations of God's viewpoint comes along, you react against it. You're angry at it. You rebuff it. You reject it.

Now, this is what "orgizo" is telling us to do – to have this subtle attitude of rejection of evil. This word describes positive volition to divine viewpoint, and negative volition to human viewpoint. Now there is the tendency of taking vengeance against evil inherent in this word. That's what we told you about "orge." It's a subtle attitude against evil, but it also has the connotation of taking outward action against that evil, and taking somewhat of a spirit of vengeance, and exercising that against that evil. This is what is in here, and that vengeance is what is to be left with God.

In Romans 12:19, we have this word "orge" used. Paul says: "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourself, but rather give place unto wrath. The word wrath here is this word "orge." Paul says, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves. Don't try to do what your subtle attitude of indignation against evil would incline you to do – to take vengeance against this evil: "Do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath. For it is written, 'Vengeance is mine. I will repay, says the Lord.'" So while you may be indignant and angry at evil, just be sure you don't decide to become the executioner of God's justice. That's what Paul is saying. But leave the execution of justice on the person who is guilty of this evil with God. You simply see to it that your anger does not go beyond the fact that you are taking a stand publicly and privately against that evil, and that you are taking a stand with divine viewpoint in that particular matter.

Therefore (from what we have said concerning God's attitude; the attitude of Jesus Christ; and, the attitude of the apostle Paul in his teaching in the epistles), any Christian who lacks anger against human viewpoint and the evil expressed by human viewpoint is to that degree a spiritually defective Christian. Anybody who can't get angry at evil is spiritually defective.

This particular word, "orgizo," is in the present tense. Therefore, that is telling us that this is to be our constant attitude of indignation toward evil. It is passive in voice, which indicates that it is an automatic response that flows from a divine viewpoint mentality. If our mind is centered upon the things of Christ, this will automatically be our response. But another interesting point here is that it is imperative mood, which means that it is a command. It is a command for you to have righteous indignation against evil.

**Ungodly Anger**

But notice the rest of Ephesians 4:26. While we are commanded to be angry, and to have a subtle attitude of rejection of evil, we also told not to sin: "Be angry, and do not sin. This is the Greek word "hamartano." "Hamartano" is the Greek word for "missing the mark." The mark here is God's absolute righteousness. "Hamartano" means you've shot the arrow, and you've not hit the target on the bull's eye. That is the Greek word for describing sin in terms of missing the target. You have missed God's standard of absolute righteousness. This is active voice. A Christian can control the nature of his anger. You can control your anger so that it does not become evil.

You cannot say, "Well, when I get mad, man, I just go. I'm all over the wall, and I just can't control myself." That is not true. If you splatter all over the wall, it's because you choose to do that. Do you know how I know? Because you may be venting your spleen at the family for something, or you yell at your husband: "You no-good so-and-so. You're leaving your dirty smelly socks all over the house every time. I'm sick of picking them up. I didn't marry you to pick up your socks. When are you going to learn to put your socks where they belong?" Then the phone rings, and you pick it up, and you sweetly say, "Hello. Happy, happy day. This is shining Susie. Oh, yes. Yeah. Wonderful, dear. Bye bye." Then you turn back to your husband and scream, "And what's more, I'm through doing this." You can turn it on, and turn it off, and you can turn the volume up. I've heard you do it. You've heard us all do it. We can turn it up. We can turn it off. So don't tell us, "Oh, when I get angry, I can't control it."

At home, in front of your family, you just chew out your boss to them. You tell them what you think of him, up one way and down the other. But when you get to the office, you're the soul of cordiality to him. Even the unsaved world knows that there are some advantages in how it handles its relationships to people relative to its anger. So it turns it on, and turns it off.

Godly anger is, in other words, a biblically learned behavior pattern. This is what you learn. Godly anger is a learned behavior pattern. Remember that animals have very few learned behavior patterns. They're mostly all instincts. You, in contrast, as a human being, have probably very few instincts, if any, at all. What you have is always almost entirely what you have learned. How you react is a behavior pattern that you have learned. You've been trained and you've been reared in a certain way so that this is how you act, so your behavior is a result of patterns that you have established. So godly anger is a learned behavior pattern. A Christian, because he has the indwelling presence of God the Holy Spirit, is able to bring great controls over anger so that it does not step out of the bounds of godly anger.

This is not only active voice, but it is present tense, and it is imperative. This is a significant point here, because you have, in the Greek language, the present tense and this Greek imperative mood, plus this negative "me" (one of the two negatives in the Greek language). When you have that combination, that is telling us to stop doing something that we are already doing. The present tense, as you know, means constant action. So when that's tied with this negative "me," that's the Greek language way of saying, "You're already doing this, and I'm prohibiting something you're already doing, so stop doing it."

Now there is another way in the Greek language to express something that a person has not started to do. God is saying, "Don't even start this. I warned you not to say this, and don't do this thing." Now, the Greeks were very consistent in this. The "Koine" Greek, and even the classical Greek was consistent in this. So if a Greek, in New Testament Times, wanted to tell his dog, who is barking, to stop barking, he would speak to that dog in the present imperative, and he would use the word "me." He was thereby telling the dog to stop barking. Stop doing what you're already doing. If he wanted to tell the dog that he was going out, and he didn't want him to bark, he would have to tell it to him in a different way entirely. It would be a totally different construction.

So here in Ephesians, what we see is that the Christians in Ephesus were already sinning. They were having an improper kind of anger. So Paul is telling them, when he says, "Be angry, and do not sin," he is telling them, really, "Stop sinning. Stop doing the kind of improper, ungodly anger that you are already involved in, which is a sinful type of anger." The "orge" anger of the Ephesian Christians had degenerated into the "parorgismos" anger. This legitimate anger of "orge" had degenerated into this "parorgismos," bitter, resentment, hatred type of anger. That's the thing he was telling them to stop. This is wrath. This is the kind of anger that Ephesians 6:4 tells parents not to drive their children to. In Ephesians 6:4, it uses this word "parorgismos" when it says, "Parents, do not drive your children to anger." Paul says, "And you fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath." This is the word. It says, "Don't treat your children in such a way that they rise up with a bitterness; with a resentment; and, with a hatred at that kind of anger toward your treatment and your dealing with them.

This is a very dangerous type of anger to indulge in. It has, as we have seen, great spiritual and great physical effects. This kind of "parorgismos" anger is expressed in two ways. First, this type of anger is expressed in the blowing up type. Bitterness, irritation, or hatred explodes against something or against someone without any control. This is the type of anger that doesn't count to ten before it lets loose. This is the fireball type that just explodes. One type of ungodly anger is expressed in simply blowing up.

Now, of course, this is a waste of energy because it is not directed toward the problem. Here is the problem, and this problem perhaps is related to several people or factors around it. The person's explosive anger hits against these things that are surrounding. It never really gets to dealing with the problem. That's why it's a waste of energy. It's a very destructive type of anger. It is not constructive at all.

Now, modern psychiatry actually promotes the unscriptural concept of exploding your anger, and ventilating your sinful anger verbally and physically on substitute objects. This is what has given rise to these counseling sessions, sensitivity training, encounter groups, and these group therapy sessions. What they're designed to do is to give people a chance to verbally abuse one another, and to even have expressions of physical violence in terms of pounding a pillow or beating the arms of a chair or something like that. And again, we have the human viewpoint mentality child-rearing books that tell you to give your child something on which to vent his anger. If he wants to bust his sister in the nose, give him a pillow and say, "You can't hit her, but you can strike this pillow, and you can just go raging to your heart's content at it. And the idea is that then he'll get it all out of his system, and then he won't be hostile toward his sister anymore.

But what you have done, instead, is that you have programmed the subconscious to internal murder. What you have done is programmed the subconscious to the act of hatred toward the sister, and of giving expression to that hatred in some way so that it is now crystallized and program. It's been put into the computer of the subconscious. Then don't be surprised if the time comes when opportunity presents itself, and internalized hatred (which the Bible calls murder) is expressed in externalized murder on that sister. This is always inevitably what happens in externalized murder. It has first been the result of being programmed internally with hatred so that you are now ready to express it outwardly. So when you tell a person, go ahead and get yourself some other object to do your violence on, this is the most dangerous thing in the world. The Bible soundly and roundly condemns this. You don't free a person of his rage. What you do is encourage it, and ensure that it will be seated deep within him, ready to be used on another occasion.

**Proverbs on Anger**

What the Bible tells us to do is to hold your rage back. What the Bible tells us to do is to learn to restrain ourselves. Where, indeed, would we expect to find this more than in Proverbs, this great book of wisdom, that tells us how to conduct human relationships? Notice Proverbs 29:11 says, "A fool utters all his mind, but a wise man keeps it in till afterwards."

Now, if you're the kind of person who says, "I just explode when I get mad, and run off at the mouth," the Bible says you're a fool, and you are not to be commended for it. You are to be condemned for it. So next time, learn to control your tongue.

Notice first Proverbs 29:20: "See a man that is hasty in his words. There is more hope of a fool than of him."

Verse 22: "An angry man stirs up strife, and a furious man abounds in transgression."

Proverbs 25:28: "He that has no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls.

When I was in the Officer Candidates Program of the United States Marine Corps in World War II, we were in a college here in South Texas, going through a few courses, and there was one man in the Marine Corps contingent that was a fellow alumni with me of Baylor University. He was on the football team, and he was a big guy, and we were roommates. Physically, when you think about the nature of combat and the leadership of man, he was everything that you would expect. Actually, he was viewed as probably the most promising officer candidate in the whole platoon. But he had one failing. He could not control his temper. His temper was always violently exploding, always in a violent outburst.

I remember one time I sat down with him, and I said, "Look, I'm going to show you something. You're on a bad course. You can do yourself in if you don't put your temper under control. I read him Proverbs 25:28, "He that has no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down without walls." I said, "You're going to be just as defenseless as a city in ancient times without walls if you don't get that temper under control." He was rather a pitiful character, because we were good friends; he was responsive; and, he would listen, but he never could bring that under control. In time, he was one of the people that was washed out. I remember the captain in charge telling him how much he regretted sending him off to boot camp because he had viewed him as one of the most promising officer candidates that they had. But his temper made him too hazardous to put either in combat or to put in charge of the lives of other men." He was like a city without walls.

The Bible doesn't say, "Go ahead and vent your rage." The Bible says, "Step on it and keep the thing under control." It is possible for you to do so. Proverbs 19:11 says, "The discretion of a man defers his anger, and it is his glory to pass over a transgression." You thought it was your glory to see that you gave tit-for-tat. You thought it was your glory to see that people got what they had coming in. The Word of God says, "You're just a pathetic animal without controls. You're a snarling dog when you do that."

Proverbs 14:17: "He that is soon angry deals foolishly, and a man of wicked devices is hated."

Proverbs 14:29: "He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding, but he that is hasty of spirit exalts folly." Again, control your anger.

Proverbs 15:18: "A wrathful man stirs up strife. But he who is slow to anger appeases strife."

Proverbs 19:19: "A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment, for if you deliver him, you must do it again." This verse tells us that the basic problem has to be solved. You can get a person out of the pickle he is in because of his wrath, but next time he's going to do it again. Until he is brought that under control, he's going to continue to destroy himself and those whose lives he influences.

There is one more, for you women who have not yet married. Proverbs 22:24-25 says, "Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man you shall not go, lest you learn his ways and get a snare to your soul." That's good advice for a woman who's dating a man that is hot-tempered, and who is a ball of anger. She may excuse that, that he just feels so deeply about things, but one of these days she's going to feel the palm of his hand across her face too. That's what a hot-tempered man will get you. The Bible says, "If you're dating somebody that's an angry man – if you get the slightest flicker of that, cut him off." This applies, of course, to everybody. If you associate with angry people, and if you associate with people who cannot control their tempers, you are going to pick up bad habits. You are going to become part of their lifestyle. The Bible says, "Do not associate with them."

So the Bible doctrine principle is to control anger; to restrain it; and, not to indulge it. That's the boiling-up type.

There is a certain type of expression of ungodly anger, and that's the clamming up type. The clamming up type has bitterness, irritation, and hatred all bottled up inside. This is the guy who just bottles it all up, and it just sits there like a little black lump right down inside of him. This, again, is a waste of emotional energy because his anger just floats around inside of him, but it never gets to the problem. It again is dissipated, just as in the other case. So consequently, there is no solution.

This angry type person is externally evident by the fact that he's irritable; he's sullen; he's tense; he's miserable; and, he's usually physically ill. This is the person who goes around with the spirit of having it in for people. He's the grudge-holder. He has it in for people. Consequently, he refuses to speak with those against whom he holds an internal anger. This closes the door, of course, to his being able to resolve his anger. In time, this resentment will let go, and he will strike out at the object of his hostility. Internal hatred then becomes external murder. Clamming up is just as bad as the exploding type.

Anger in a Christian is to become godly, and is to be kept directed toward the problem. You do not vent your feelings with ugly words or with bitterness, nor do you keep it tied up with hateful attitudes. You follow neither the boiling-up type, nor do you follow the clamming up type as a believer. Both of those are self-destructive. If you're going to keep anger godly, then it is always solution-oriented rather than problem-oriented. The problem-oriented Christian is always talking about the problem – incessantly. He feels sorry for himself; he blames others; and, he focuses his energy on who's at fault.

So here you've got some kind of problem. I don't care what relationship of life it is. If you've got a problem-oriented, angry person, he's dealing with an ungodly kind of anger; he is focusing on who's at fault; and, he is strung up in the problem. But when you get a solution-oriented Christian, he talks about the problem in terms of sizing it up. He recognizes responsibilities for shortcomings all around – his own as well as others. He seeks to resolve the tensions with Bible doctrine principles.

Now, if a person refuses to resolve the problems with Bible doctrine principles, then there is no hope. Here's one person, A, and here's another person, B. And A has things against B, and B has things against A. In order to get a line of communication, one of the routine recommendations of counselors is to say to A, "Listen, let's cancel out your discussions as to what's wrong with B. When you talk to B, just talk in terms of what's wrong with yourself." Then, both discussions are going in the same way. B is talking about what's wrong with A, and A is talking about what's wrong with himself. That will open a line of communication.

Now, this is a device, the purpose of which is to try to get A to start talking in terms of the issues to resolve the problem, with the hope that then B will be able to turn around and join with A, indeed, in about talking about the problems and the weaknesses of B. But ungodly anger comes to this impasse inevitably, where you've got a standoff. You've just got a stalemate. It takes a movement of godly anger to try to reverse that, and to get the line of communication going. That's what a solution-oriented Christian will do. The solution oriented Christian will say, "OK, here's what's wrong with me. Here's where I failed. Here's where my weaknesses are." If B is ready to act upon godly principles, B will immediately respond and say, "Well, I recognize I'm out of line too." But if B is not ready to work with godly principles, B will say, "You got that right, boy. And I'll tell you something else that is wrong with you." And what you've done is that you've gotten exactly no place. Ungodly anger slams the door shut, because it's problem-oriented. It's not solution oriented.

So you kind of check your own thinking. If you find that when you are angry at something, it's always in terms of the problem, and putting the fault and laying the blame and pinning this on someone here and someone there, instead of saying, "OK, now let's see, what do we have here? Here's what we got. Here's where we are. Where do we go from here to make it better? We go this way to make it better, and we forget it. Nuts to everything else as to who's at fault and what's what? Let's just get moving in the right direction, and let's make these corrections."

If you are a solution-oriented Christian, this does not mean that you will not rebuke somebody. Your anger will express itself in the rebuking of one who is out of line. It will not keep you from pointing that out, but you'll do it in love. So don't focus on the problem-maker with recriminations. Face up to your own weaknesses and your own failures. Anger remains spiritual when it opens a door to godly living.

Incidentally, to answer one question from the last session, anger against yourself falls under the same principles as these other types of expression of anger. Anger against yourself can be godly or can be ungodly. Anger against yourself can also be problem-oriented, or can be solution-oriented. There is a very basic, simple cause for ungodly anger. Our time is up. We're going to finish this in the next session.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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