

**Ephesians 4:31** Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

Last two weeks we hit the idea of being uplifting by way of following **Philippians 4:8** to focus our minds on what is true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, good repute, excellent, and worthy of praise. We attempted this by looking at two songs, “Mighty to Save” by Hillsong and “I can only Imagine” by Mercy Me.

You may have focused on some of the lyrics such as

- Everyone needs compassion – as Truth
- A love that is never failing - as Honorable
- I give my life to follow – as Right
- What my eye will see when I see your face – as Pure
- When I walk by your side – as good reputation
- Surrounded by your glory, what my heart will feel - as lovely
- Singing Hallelujah – as worthy of praise

Last week I asked you to focus on the six attributes this week and to dwell on them.

I don't know if anyone here has noticed but this passage in Ephesians is really speaking about our relationships in the Body of Believers. I will refer to the Body of Believers as the *BOB Club*. Ephesians really seeks to *pulse* your relational standards doesn't it? I mean, the book of Ephesians is really “Church body” focused in how we are to “Grow Up” in our faith right? It seems like we are looking at the same topics from multiple facets and that is just awesome!

A few weeks ago we looked at Anger and we said:

- **Anger**
  - This is the initial exposure to something that is negative toward you. Your mind begins to race, you shut off the other person and/or you begin to fantasize about what you would like to do to someone.
  - The world teaches us we deserve revenge and you need to get them back. You need to do something about it and “save face” so your reputation is not hurt.
  - The Bible teaches us anger is Godly – but it is what you *do* with your anger that counts. Revenge is not the answer, but confronting the issues for the purpose of reconciliation is.

- We looked at how Jesus was angry, Paul was angry, Moses was angry, David was angry.
- How the anger of God achieves the righteousness of God **James 1:19-20**
- We then looked at **Philippians 4:8** to see what sort of things we should be focusing on.
  - Meaning, we put off anger by engaging and confronting the issues, which puts that sin to death because you are taking up your cross, your responsibility, and work things out for the purpose of restoration.

Today we are going to look at what happens if you do not take care of your responsibility Jesus says that if you think anger against someone, you are committing murder – which is breaking the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment. **[Mathew 5:22 ; Exodus 20:13]**

In addition, James tells us if we do not take responsibility for our anger it will “gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death” **James 1:15**. Therefore, we are going to look at this progression.

**SO, IF WE DO NOT TAKE CARE OF OUR ANGER BY TAKING UP OUR CROSS AND BEING RESPONSIBLE - THEN THE ANGER WILL BEGIN TO WARM UP, SIZZLE AND BEGIN TO BOIL. THAT IS CALLED BITTERNESS.**

- **Bitterness**
  - The idea that something you put in your mouth now leaves a “bitter” bad taste in your; thus, bringing forth the horrible taste and sensation of the tongue.
  - Now, we are not speaking about taste it, but we can personify the taste to become a feeling for another human being.
  - We become bitter when we do not take care of our anger correctly.
  - And when we do not take care of our anger correctly then that is systematic of a dirty heart because we are too blind, too darkened in our understanding, too ignorant, too hard hearted, too calloused to reach into our heart to clean it.
  - And that is why we said our actions, our honesty, our anger are the fruits of our roots
  - What does the world teach us?
    - Trident Commercials – Dirty Mouth – Clean it up with Trident. (External)
    - Talk about it to other people. And what does that do? Infect other people with your bitterness.
  - What does the Bible teach us?
    - First the world’s way doesn’t work

- **Mathew 23:25** "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.
  - So when others use your cup or plate you infect them too.
- What does the middle Ephesians 4:31 of the verse say?
  - To put our bitterness away.
  - What does that mean? How do we do that?
- We said this last week, we need to purify our minds – some people want to tell us to just focus on the good. But that is REALLY hard when all we see is the bad. (INTERNAL)
- The key is to be gracious to them & seek to purify our hearts.
  - **Luke 6:28** bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.
  - **Mathew 5:44** But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,
- Now, some may say – but how? And that is a cop-out question, I refuse to answer.
  - Because I ask you how do you Love your best friends? How are you gracious to your friends?
  - Or better yet, if we define grace as giving something to someone who doesn't deserve it, and you are gracious to your friends but not your enemies are you even being gracious or are you being "gracious" because you like your friends and they deserve it?
  - No, You ENGAGE THEM.
  - Time, calls, cards, presents, you call them out when they need to be called out. That is why Jesus tells the people
    - **Mathew 25:45** "Then He will answer them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.'
- See I am not asking you to be gracious to your friends, but to your enemies. Because after all, your friends expect it – your enemies do not.
- In fact, God was not gracious to His friends but his enemies. You and me were enemies with God before our salvation and He sought us out, He transferred us from darkness into the kingdom of His beloved Son when we did not deserve it.
- We need to purify our hearts and begin to look for opportunities to be gracious to someone when we do not effectually deal with our anger and let it fester in to bitterness. But the more we wait to take up our cross the harder it is to be gracious.
- 2 ways to be gracious and pure
  - Pray for those and love those who anger you by action rather than words.
  - We do this by spending time with them confessing our anger at them, asking for forgiveness. After all that is what restoration is all about – forgiveness.

## BUT WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE DON'T PRAY AND LOVE THOSE WHO WRONG US?

### WE BEGIN TO SLANDER.

- **Slander/Blaspheme**

- This is the idea of “talking bad about someone”. This is also the word of blasphemy.
- So far we see the progression – anger → bitterness → slander.
- Ever get mad at some place and begin to speak bad about it?
  - **[Car Dealership Example]**
- This is a natural sinful progression of someone who does not have a clean heart about the person or place. They love to bring others down rather than build up and love to speak bad about people.
  - We looked at this in our Wednesday Night Bible Study last week – how this is systematic of the root of Pride.
- Now, not only are you bitter but now you are beginning to infect others with your bitterness. This is where most people seem to like to live. In fact, this areas is where the world promotes us to live and focus our lives in. The worlds loves to speak bad and down about people. It is almost a cultural mandate now – that if you do not do this then you are lame.
- But scripture calls to order the mandate & command of Godly friends.
  - **Galatians 6:1** Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; *each one* looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.
    - Here, we who are spiritual must restore those who are sinning.
    - That means first, we don't condone it. We don't listen to it or blow it off as if it is not our problem. We stand up for what is right and seek to restore in gentleness.
      - So when you are with someone who is speaking badly about someone – you need to grow up and tell that person you are not interested in listening to that and you'd rather change the subject. You would rather seek to see restoration and give them suggestions to reconcile the differences rather than listen to them belittle another believer in Christ. Regardless if they deserve it or not.
        - That is Worthy of Praise. Because you are standing up for the gospel, bringing glory to Jesus and saying this “Whole Jesus thing is REAL”. You are strengthening the gospel rather than watering it down.
        - So many people wonder why the gospel is watered down? It is because those who “claim” the gospel aren't willing to “do the gospel”. Thus lowering the

integrity of the Gospel This is exactly what Satan wants and he is trying to dethrone Jesus – and if you are convicted in this part because you realize this is you – then you just realized your silence when someone bad mouths a believer is dethroning Jesus. Congratulations you just “woke up” and now have the obligation to do something about it.

- This is not the most popular thing to do, but if all Christians just stood up for their brother or sister, rather than harp and love to hear the negative thoughts of someone then we wouldn't have to do it as much because those who were speaking bad about another person would either find a new group of friends or receive a changed heart.
- But we are too quick to allow that kind of negativity and “not want to offend” our friends and then people get infected with this sin and don't even realize it. Because they don't want to offend.
- And Galatians tells us that this will allow for us to be caught up in the same sins.
- Guess what Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy. **Proverbs 27:6**
- **Do not be an enemy but have faith in God and stand up for the Body of believers.**

#### IF WE DO NOT STOP OUR SLANDER WE WILL BECOME MALICIOUS.

- **Malice**

- This is the idea of seeking out the opportunity to make someone look bad.
- This is what happens when we fail to act on our anger in a Godly manner, then allow it to fester into bitterness, then we begin to slander someone and now you and those who are listening to your slander begin to seek out the “bad” things in a person.
- Those people are seeking to retaliate against such an individual – trying to irritate them, looking for the opportunity to get revenge and make them feel bad.
- I can sum this is up in two words “vengeful immaturity.” They seek vengeance in their immaturity.
- It takes a strong person to confront an issue – that is why no one likes HR, you have to be strong to look someone in the eye and tell them what they are doing is wrong. I know I am HR. ☺
- That is called being Loving. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy. **Proverbs 27:6**

- Sometimes, as a friend as part of the *BOB Club*, we need engage our friends and let them know we are loving them by confrontation – informing them what they are doing is not about Jesus but rather demonic and evil.
- We effectually change Malice by loving someone. The whole “kill them with kindness” mentality.
- If you are a malicious person, stop, you’d better recognize
- You better seek love rather than evil.
- How you may ask?
  - First, you must STOP and check yourself before you wreck yourself.
  - Second, you need to ask forgiveness from God ask for him to grant you repentance.
  - Third, you need to admit you wrong to those you are wronging. And ask forgiveness from them.
  - Fourth, pray for grace every day to clean your dirty heart.

#### IF WE DO NOT STOP THIS CYCLE WE WILL BEGIN TO BECOME CLAMOUROUS

- **Clamor**
  - This is the idea of crying out
    - *san outcry*; a crying, outcry; - **clamor (1), crying (2), shout (1), uproar (1), voice (1)**
  - I had a hard time of thinking where this fits in but – I would imagine this is the idea of “getting peoples attention” to follow your lead in being a malicious, slanderous, bitter, angry person.
  - I call this rallying the troops for war kind of thing. Making sure you have your set of people who “Have your back” when this hits the fan kind of mentality.
  - My first response to this is – if you are rallying your troops – you already lost. Because you realize your reputation is at stake and you are seeking every possible avenue to save your reputation by gathering people, deceiving people, putting words in people’s mouths to make them bitter, slanderous and malicious.
  - Because the person who is a part of the BOB club will not need to gather their troops because no one would believe they would do such a wrong because of their good reputation. It wouldn’t hold up and you would look like a loser anyhow.

## FINALLY, THIS PROGRESSION ENDS WITH WRATH

- **Wrath**

- This is the full circle. First you are angry – fail to take care of it, so you become bitter, and fail to realize that. So you became malicious, and fail to fix that, then you begin to cry out for “help” and finally you feel you can now take revenge so you become Wrathful. The explosion of your built up anger and therefore brings forth death.

### **James 1:15**

- The ironic this is afterward you realize your anger subsided very quickly and now is festering again, because sin is never fulfilled.
- I personally believe that Wrath is systematic of those faking purity and compassion. Because Purity and Compassion are opposite of Wrath.
  - Purity and Compassion are honorable
  - Wrath and indignation is not honorable
  - One rules by grace and one rules by fear.
- So, when you believe you have your “troops” armed to get your back you lead your attack and POW. You go at it and then it is over and you are left unfulfilled because you know in your heart of hearts you are wrong - because you have no honor in your works.
- How do become honorable to the point putting away wrath
  - First, you need to check yourself before you wreck yourself. Ask yourself, why have you “blown up” like this. Since your heart is “this dirty” you should pray to Jesus asking Him to reveal to you your need for grace. Check your life, how much do you value Jesus and His kingdom – is it just something you say but not your life?
  - Second, you need repent and ask God to grant you forgiveness.
  - Third, you need to go to the person you wronged, and confess completely your sins ask them for forgiveness. **Mathew 5:24** *leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.*

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## CONCLUSION

### What is my point?

1. We must realize that Anger must be taken care of appropriately in a Godly manner as we spoke about a few weeks ago.
2. If we do not take care of our Anger – it will begin a progression into that leads to death. \
3. This will progress into bitterness, then slander, then maliciousness, then clamor and ultimately wrath.
4. Once we understand this progression, we need to realize is the where we stand in this progression; then take the necessary steps to reconcile these issues through restoration and reconciliation.
5. Finally, we need to realize that:
  - a. We must confess and agree with God that what we are doing is wrong and sinful.
  - b. We pray and ask that God would grant us forgiveness and repentance
  - c. We seek out those we wronged to ask forgiveness
  - d. We continually keep ourselves in check by not forsaking the assembling together, **[Hebrews 10:25]**; taking up responsibility for our actions **[Ephesians 4:28; Mathew 5:24]**; and being aware of our need for God's Grace **[Romans 6:14]**