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## **A Key Weapon of Satan's—Our Emotions**

### **Ephesians 4:26-27**

**PowerPoint Presentation: None**

**Keywords: Anger, Forgiveness, Satan, Spiritual Warfare**

**SermonAudio blurb:**

#### **I. Introduction.**

- A. We are considering carefully what it looks like to be daily putting on the appropriate attitudes and actions for those who claim Jesus to be their Lord, their Savior and their God.
- B. The imagery is that of stripping off old clothing and putting on new and it is a good image to use.
  - 1. Too often we speak of things only in what we claim to not do rather than in a positive way—in what we are doing.
  - 2. One can not lie but really not speak truth. One can not steal but not be generous in giving. One can not hate but never really love. One can not disrespect a person but also never show respect.
  - 3. Jesus tells us that we are to let our good works be obvious before this world that they might give glory to our Father.
  - 4. Peter commands us to keep our behavior excellent before non-Christians.
- C. Last week we saw that because we have stripped off believing and speaking the lie of this age, one that rejects the Lordship of Jesus Christ and therefore we are to be a people who speak truth to one another.
  - 1. It is a task that we cannot shirk and not grow weary in.
  - 2. It is a good duty as we help each other continue in the race God has set before us.
  - 3. We saw in Hebrews that each of us must take care to be certain that no unbelieving heart rise up among us. Rather we are to exhort, encourage, correct, and even rebuke when necessary one another to stand firm.
  - 4. Paul says this to the church in Thessalonica, "We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient

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with everyone" (1 Thessalonians 5:14). Wisdom is needed to discern what is needed when.

5. Only as we learn to speak truth into the lives of each other we are not able to help one another stand firm against the constant barrage of lies that this age hurls against us.
- D. Today we learn the idea that we are to be a people who are in control of our emotions. Read vs 25-26.
1. Emotions can be a pain. When we do not know how to keep them in check, when we do not rule over our emotions, we inevitably have regrets.
  2. Notice in our passage that there is no actual putting off of one thing and putting on of another. Rather it is simply two commands, be angry, but do not sin.
  3. I take the term "anger" here in a very broad way. Note in vs 31 that there are several words that carry the sense of anger with different emphases.
    - a. I see this one as a summary term of our emotions that can lead to disunity and hatred and a breakdown of the peace and unity found in through the Holy Spirit.
    - b. I see it this way due to the broader context of the idea that we are to not live like this fallen age lives. We are not to react emotionally as they would react. When we deal with one another it is always toward promoting spiritual growth and spiritual unity.
  4. So whether you want to call it irritation, annoyance, bitterness, wrath, being argumentative, displeasure, outrage, being miffed, peevisness, sore or a tiff—Paul has it in view here.
    - a. I say this because it is easy to say, "I am not angry, I am just annoyed," in an effort to avoid confrontation or self-examination.
    - b. We can be masters at rationalization and we can allow ourselves to be conformed to the spirit of this age very easily through the use of synonyms.
- E. The challenge: to properly grasp what is going on here and understand the two commands Paul gives to us. Simply put he is saying, control your emotions for it is in those emotions that Satan seeks to gain a foothold in the Church of God.

## **II. We are to control our emotions (26-27).**

- A. Key observation—the positive command is to be angry and then it is qualified by the second command which is a negative—do not sin.

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1. How do we approach this, especially since he says in 31 that we are to put away "all" anger?
  2. Some try to make the first command a conditional statement, "if you become angry make sure you don't sin." However, this is primarily a reaction to try to remove perceived contradictions with vs 31.
  3. It is better to let them stand as they are. Be angry but do not sin.
- B. What is meant by the command to be angry?
1. At the most basic level we find that anger in itself is not wrong nor sinful. This passage makes that very clear. One is able to be angry but not sin. The challenge is to figure out how.
  2. In the church world I grew up in anger was almost always wrong. It was often used to shame people who became angry.
    - a. Manipulating people to bring them into submission.
    - b. Using their anger as a means to move them out of positions of authority or influence.
    - c. "Unloving attitude."
    - d. And it was a genuine struggle for me as I kept looking at this passage and tried to reconcile the absolute command with Paul's position.
  3. For those who hold that anger is usually wrong the exception is what is called "righteous indignation."
    - a. The idea is that we can be angry when God is demeaned or mocked.
    - b. The most common example is when Jesus is angry in the Temple and begins to overturn the money-changers' tables and whipping them until they leave the grounds.
    - c. But it is usually a very, very narrow time and is subject to those who observe your anger as to whether they judge it to be proper.
  4. Observations:
    - a. It is a positive command. This indicates to me that we should resist falling into anger.
      - (1) One where we are foolish and are not watching our hearts carefully and end up being provoked and pressed into anger.

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- (2) Here this anger is usually used against you to create bitterness and resentment. It often causes disunity.
- b. But there are times we should be angry and we should not try to pretend otherwise.
  - (1) Part of this passage is a quote out of Psalm 4 (read vss 2-4).
    - (a) David has been falsely accused and as a result has a reproach and shame upon his head. In vs 1 he is calling to the Lord for vindication.
    - (b) In 2a he challenges those who are believing the reproaches against him. They are believing the "lie."
    - (c) Therefore in light of the truth of vs 3 they should be angry but that it should be controlled so that they do not act in a sinful manner on that anger. They should stop, think, meditate and slow down.
    - (d) This is a simple, yet good word of counsel to any who find themselves angry. Slow down, think about what is going on, investigate before committing yourself to an action.
  - (2) So when might we need to be angry? I believe a simple manner to approach this is to consider God. It is an attribute of God—He is love, he is gracious, he is kind and forgiving, he is slow to anger, but he does become angry.
    - (a) "For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; No evil dwells with You. The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes; You hate all who do iniquity. You destroy those who speak falsehood; The LORD abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit" (Psalm 5:6). These are such strong terms that capture aspects of anger.
    - (b) When sin is expressed in a high-handed manner.
      - i) Manasseh was a king of Judah (explain briefly the split). Nothing much can be said good of this man.
      - ii) He built altars to the god of Baal and Asherah. Asherah was the goddess of fertility

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and often the worship involved sexual immorality of every type.

- iii) He erected idols in the Temple of God itself.
  - iv) He shed much innocent blood throughout Judah.
  - v) In 2 Kings 21:9 God says that Manasseh seduced the nation to do more evil than all the nations who were driven out by Israel.
  - vi) Therefore we read in 2 Kings 23:26 that God would not turn away his fierce wrath against the sins of Manasseh.
  - vii) When we see someone openly, willfully sin as a Christian there should be a response. There should be a basic reaction that expresses the reality that this cannot be tolerated.
  - viii) You get the sense of anger from Paul in 1 Corinthians 5.
- (c) Where injustice is obviously seen.
- i) "He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8)
  - ii) Note the reaction Jesus has in Matthew 23:23.
- (d) When exploitation is evident.
- i) Here is just a different slant on the idea of injustice.
  - ii) A brother manipulates his younger sister to take the blame for what he actually did.
  - iii) When you watch those in power use it to abuse those who have no power there should be a reaction for it is unjust.

C. However, this anger is never allowed to slip into sin.

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1. There is a proverb that I think captures how this takes place—Proverbs 25:28.
    - a. A city without walls has no protection.
    - b. So to does the one who cannot control and direct their spirit, which is a reference to their emotions.
    - c. Develop this.
  2. Within the church we will find much sin for we still carry the hangover of being dead in our sin.
    - a. Example of those wanting to work at GCC because it is a godly place.
    - b. Consider all that the New Testament writers warn against and correct. The reason for this is simply that it exists in the church.
    - c. And in those moments where we sin rise up we react in anger. Not because we are offended but because it is not in keeping with who we are in Jesus Christ.
- D. Note that there is a time frame for our anger.
1. If you are going to be angry you need to ask yourself if you can rightly act upon that anger in the proper manner and time frame.
  2. Again this emphasizes the nature of this anger. It is not out of control raging. It is not an anger that stomps off.
  3. It is an anger that then responds to resolve and confront what is bringing it about.
  4. Instead we need to learn to keep short accounts. Basic point I make in every pre-marital counseling I do. Resolve your issues.
  5. Don't try to just shove it down inside where it festers.
  6. But do it in humility since though you may be angry it may not still make your right.
- E. Finally, in vs 27 we see that Satan uses our emotions to bring about disunity within the church.
1. Anger is one of the ways Satan works out his schemes and plottings against the people of God.
  2. Therefore when we either reject anger, or properly use anger we actually are resisting Satan. We are involved in spiritual warfare.

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3. And when we nurse anger and try to pretend it is not present. When we use it to manipulate our brothers and sisters then we are actually walking in accordance to this age and the god of this age.
4. Satan will take our eyes off of the real goal, maintaining the unity of the Spirit and move the goal to proving that we are the one who is right.
  - a. We saunter off with our smug look thinking that we showed that person.
  - b. Or we leave wounded and bitter where Satan brings the injustice to our minds over and over until we take hold of it and begin to let the rot spread.

### **III. Conclusion.**

- A. Again we need to be reminded of our Lord's words to us. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34-35).
- B. Anger is a powerful weapon against Satan, but it is to be used wisely and with great care or he will turn it against you. It is not something to be wielded casually.
- C. We need to not pretend we have emotions. Nor are we to be slaves to our emotions.
- D. We are to bring all our emotions under the lordship of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

**IV. We are to work so that we can give (28).**

**V. We are to speak so as to build up (29-30).**

**VI. We are to express kind-hearted forgiveness (31-32).**

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## **Community Group Questions**

- **What were the challenges for you in this sermon? Why?**
- **Look up each of these passages and make observations in relation to our emotions: Proverbs 14:29; 17:14; 19:11, 19-20; 20:22; 29:20; 18:17; 25:28; 29:11.**