

**“ANGER”**  
**Seven Deadly Sins Series - 6**  
**Colossians 3:8; Ephesians 4:26**  
**Holiday Island Presbyterian Church**  
**April 7, 2019**

**"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry . . .” Ephesians 4:26**

**INTRODUCTION:**

**This morning, our subject is: anger.**

**And the person who personifies anger  
among the castaways on Gilligan’s Island is the Skipper,**

**Hardly an episode went by  
without the Skipper removing his hat  
and smacking Gilligan with it.**

**Sometimes we sympathized with the Skipper,  
often, we identified with his frustration towards Gilligan,  
mostly we chuckled and laughed.**

**But I wonder . . . as we laughed . . .  
. . . did we stop to think of the destructive power of anger?**

**DEFINITION:**

**Anger is an emotion - an emotional *reaction* –  
directed toward someone or something.**

**Mark Twain once described his anger as:**

**"I never killed anyone, but I sometimes read the obituaries with great pleasure."**

**Benjamin Franklin said:**

**"Anger is never without a reason; but seldom with a good one."**

**Anger.**

**We've all experienced it . . .**

**. . . some of us experience it often . . .**

**. . . and some of us seem to be controlled by anger.**

**A "Do-it-yourself" catalog firm received the following letter:**

**"I bought your stupid birdhouse plans!**

**They are stupid, stupid, STUPID!**

**The stupid birdhouse is much too big . . .**

**. . . and the stupid thing**

**keeps blowing out of the stupid tree!"**

**The firm replied with this letter:**

**"We're sorry about the mix-up.**

**It seems we accidentally sent you the plans for a sailboat.**

**We can understand *your* anger."**

**"But, if you think you're unhappy,**

**you should read the letter we got from the guy**

**who came in dead last in the yacht club race!"**

**We can laugh at that example of anger . . .**

**. . . because we are not emotionally attached to the situation -**

**- we aren't affected by the mix-up.**

**It would be a different story**

**if *we* were the principal actors in an event**

that is emotionally charged with anger.

**ANGER IS A FEELING:**

**First of all,**

**anger is a very normal, very human feeling.**

**God created humans with the capacity for anger –**

**- God created the emotion of anger**

**and installed it within us for a particular reason.**

**Anger has the capacity to move us to protect our families -**

**- and those who are unable to protect themselves.**

**Anger can generate enough power to overcome inertia**

**and to spur us to deeds**

**far greater than we think ourselves capable of.**

**Adrenalin is pumped into the bloodstream**

**which sets off a series of physiological responses.**

**Blood pressure increases,**

**the heart begins pumping faster**

**the pupils dilate to give us better peripheral vision.**

**In a matter of seconds,**

**the human body is transformed into a state of readiness;**

**we move from alert to DEFCON 4 -**

**- prepared for action!**

**And it all happens automatically - whether or not we choose it!**

**God does not condemn us for this very natural reaction!**

**However, God does judge how we act upon these emotions!**

**God did not intend for anger to become so destructive!**

**In other words,**

**God is far more interested in what we do  
than in what we feel!**

**That's why the Apostle Paul said this about anger:**

**"In your anger do not sin - Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry." Ephes. 4:26**

**The moment we act upon our feelings of anger  
is the very moment we put ourselves at great risk  
of responding in a sinful way!**

### **HOW TO PROCESS ANGER:**

**Okay, sooner or later we're going to get angry.**

**So, what are we supposed to do when - not if - we get angry?**

**In other words,**

**how does God expect us to respond to the outward stimuli -  
- the frustrations,  
the disappointments,  
the irritations in our lives  
which are - for the most part - learned!**

### **FOCUSED ANGER:**

**Well, for one thing,**

**God expects us to examine the *focus* of our anger -  
- *who* or *what* exactly is the target of our anger?**

**Aristotle once said:**

**Anybody can become angry, that's easy; but to be angry with the  
right person, and to the right degree, and at the right time, and  
for the right purpose, and in the right way . . . that is not easy.**

**God *expects* certain reactions from us -**

**- when we see the weak suffering at the hands of the strong,  
- when the poor suffer at the hands of the rich**

- when we see injustice in *all* its forms

In *those* situations,

we may have to answer for the sin of *not* getting angry.

Without anger the money changers would still be in the temple,  
African-Americans would still be in the back of the bus,  
and women would still be second-class citizens.

Not all anger is sin -

- but some is.

And it takes prayerful discernment to tell the difference.

The filter which we must apply to our anger is:

"In your anger do not sin." Ephesians 4:26

### **SINFUL ANGER:**

Strong feelings – like anger - most often get translated into action -  
- and in most cases, those actions are sinful!

Why are some actions considered sinful?

Because of the destruction they cause!

First of all,

almost every angry person is positive

that his/her anger is *justified* - stemming from a *just* cause.

The *sinful* aspect of anger is not only the outward action -

- it is the mean spirit within,

regardless of who or what caused it.

Unchecked, unexamined,

uncontrolled anger directed at another person

can cause great physical harm.

**Or, we are consumed with our anger  
and we manifest it through the use of hurtful words.**

**There is a common notion that words don't hurt.  
We say, "Sticks and stones may break my bones,  
but words will never hurt me."  
But they do.**

**Especially the hurtful words come  
from the mouths of those we love and/or respect -  
- brothers, sisters, spouses, parents and children.**

**If we speak in anger,  
we will probably make the best speech we will ever *regret*.**

**That's what happens when we *externalize* our anger.  
It out there for the world to see.**

**But there is another destructive form of anger -  
- *internalized* anger.**

**Anger that is allowed to fester within us  
will sooner or later spill over into other areas of our lives.**

**When we harbor anger in our hearts  
we are more prone to gossip about other people -  
- it gives us a perverted sense of satisfaction  
to hear of the failure of others;  
almost a substitution for the harm we cannot do.**

**Sometimes internalized anger surfaces  
as complaining -  
- constantly finding fault in everyone and everything.**

**The pessimist is filled with internalized anger.**

**Sometimes internalized anger**

**propels us to block the progress of another person  
or to intentionally trap him/her  
so that we can quietly enjoy our revenge.**

**And, in my opinion, the worst form of internalized anger  
is found in passive-aggressive actions.**

**Passive-aggressive people will drag their feet over every decision,  
they will question every proposal to death,  
they will require ever “i” to be dotted, every “t” crossed,  
*they will do almost anything to cause problems . . .  
. . . except admit their anger!***

**They are collectors –**

**- they collect grievances, annoyances, irritations  
and deny that it bothers them . . .  
. . . until they explode with a detailed cataloging  
of all past offenses!**

**Paul must have known people like that -**

**- for it is certainly not a modern phenomenon -  
Because he clearly stated in Ephesians 4:26:**

**“Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.”**

**Paul was saying: Don’t harbor your anger - process it!**

**Frederick Beuchner, author and theologian, said**

**“Anger is possibly the most fun of all the deadly sins.**

**To lick your wounds,**

**To smack your lips over grievances long past,**

**To roll over your tongue the prospect**

**of bitter confrontations still to come . . .**

**. . . To savor the last toothsome morsel both the pain you are**

**given**

**And the pain you are giving back . . .  
 . . . in many ways is a feast fit for a king!**

**The chief drawback is that what you are wolfing down is yourself!”**

**Not only is anger fully capable of destroying others . . .  
 . . . it has the potential to destroy us . . .  
 . . . physically, emotionally, and spiritually!**

**PRESCRIPTION:**

**Here are a couple of tips on how to process anger.**

**First of all,**

**Recognize that anger is a normal emotion -  
 - more love and positive thinking will NOT solve the problem -  
 - it usually leads to frustration and more anger.**

**Second, determine the *cause* of the anger -**

**- prayerfully try to examine what is being threatened?  
 For example, if you are a planner and a saver;  
 you will react strongly to spontaneity and extravagance.**

**Third, since our response to anger is a learned response -**

**- learn a *new* way; a *difference* way to respond to anger.**

**Here’s a really good piece of advice:**

**learn to choose your battles -  
 - learn to discern major issues from minor issues**

**For goodness sake - and *your* sake, too -**

**don’t connect repeated events into some sort of conspiracy!**

## **CONCLUSION:**

**Paul said in his letter to the Colossians:**

**But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these:  
anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.  
Colossians 3:8**

**The very first step is to acknowledge your anger to God.**

**C'mon! God already knows you're angry!  
How hard is it to confess you're angry???**

**And don't try to use "Christian" words  
like "irritation" Or "frustration"  
Call it what it is: ANGER!!!**

**Be honest with God . . .**

**. . . pour your heart out to God . . .**

**. . . tell God how angry you are.**

**There's no sin in that!**

**It is exactly what God invites us to do.**

**If you ask God to help you with your anger -  
and if you are sincere about it -**

**God will assign the Holy Spirit to "manage your anger."**

**Here's an invitation you can't refuse!**

**Leave your anger here!**

**And walk in the joy that God intended!**

## **PRAYER:**

**God of all Peace and Love, help us to place all our anger and  
bitterness we have hidden in our hearts at Your feet. We pray to be  
set free from the bitter poison that is lodged within our hearts.**

**We know that unrighteous anger is not Your will for us. Help us to heal and find the peace You offer us.**

**Create in us a forgiving heart towards all those that have hurt us so deeply. Help us to forgive others as our Lord Jesus forgives us.**

**In Jesus' name. AMEN**