

Session 6: Impatience, Irritability & Anger

Impatience and Irritability

What are things that 'set you off?' Push your buttons?

Impatience –in response to unintentional actions of others

Impatience – in response to things that don't go our way

Is impatience a sin?

What does it say about our own character or state of mind when we get impatient?

Impatience seems to reflect back on us.

Some of our annoyance is because people are behaving in a way we don't like.

A lot of our annoyance seems to be because things don't go our way. Don't fit our plan, our agenda. We don't want to wait, for things to go our way.

Eph. 4:1-3 2 words – Patience & Forbearance but always in love

Be patient because:

Christ calls us to live in a way that reflects the holiness of the God who saved us

Christ calls us to live in a way that brings unity and peace

So in our analysis of impatience we need to not only examine our hearts in the fact that we lose our patience with others – that's a character issue.

But it goes deeper than that – ultimately there is a question here of who is in control of our lives. Impatience with others reveals the frustrated desire to be in control. We want to be Lord of our life.

Patience – enduring provocation or annoyance without complaining or loss of temper.

Quiet perseverance, even tempered care.

Mercy is not giving someone, what they deserve. Showing restraint towards someone who has done wrong.

Matthew 18:21-35 forgiveness/patience/mercy/thankfulness

What does this have to do with getting irritated at my little brother?

In our impatience, we pass judgment on others. We determine that their action is somehow worthy of condemnation, all the while forgetting our own sin.

We forget our rank as brothers in sisters in Christ. We are equal none higher, none lower - all sinners who have been forgiven by grace.

Psalm 103:8-14 The Lord is compassionate. . .

Col. 3:12-13

Rehearse the Gospel

Questions:

Where is the line between concern for a brother's sin, and the sin of impatience and an unforgiving spirit?

When should we endure someone else's poor behavior and when should we confront them about a sin problem?

This is a problem for me, how can I get help with impatience and irritability?

Anger

*“We cannot ignore inconsiderate acts in others;
Yet we cannot execute the penalty of law.
We have no right to complete the moral cycle...
Although we sense no spiritual inhibition against crying out against injustice,
The purity of our moral life deteriorates the moment
We attempt to administer justice.”
Edward John Carnell, Christian Commitment*

What is anger?

What is righteous anger?

Righteous Anger—Eph. 25-27;

- Arises from an accurate perception of true evil; namely, a violation of God’s moral law. (mingled with grief over sin)
- Focuses on God and His will; not me and my will.
- Nurtured under self-control.

Sinful Anger—

- Arises from other root sins; namely, selfishness, pride, or other forms of ungodliness.
- Focuses on me and my will;
- Loss of self-control.

Often times, believers justify their anger towards another as righteous anger. Most of the time this is not the case. Just because we might be reacting to another person’s sin does not necessarily make our anger righteous. We might use the fact that another person’s sin is against God’s moral law to justify our own sinful angry response.

“No one causes us to be angry; the cause lies deep within us—usually our pride, selfishness, or desire to control.”—Bridges

Selfishness: “I want it my way...”

Pride: “I don’t deserve this...”; “I am entitled...”; “I’m glad I’m not like this...”

Anger if not dealt with biblically, will lead to unbridled bitterness and give way to other sins. We can choose how we will respond to the sinful actions of others toward us.

1 Pet. 2: 18-20 (be “mindful of God”); Eph. 4:32 (Be kind...forgiving one another)

How do we handle our anger in a God-honoring way?

1. Recognize and Acknowledge our anger and the sinfulness of it (we can’t deal with anger until we acknowledge its presence).
2. Ask ourselves why we became angry. (was it our pride/selfishness?)
3. Repent of the anger and the pride, selfishness, ungodliness (i.e. idolatry)
4. Ask for the Spirit’s help to change our attitude toward the one(s) who have wronged us. (Col. 3:13)

Questions:

1. Give some examples of when you were last angry? Was this righteous anger or sinful angry?
2. How are you going to fight anger in your life?
3. What does righteous anger look like?

Weeds of Anger

Intro: Colossians 3:8-11

Sinful Anger—

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Long Term Results of Anger (Weeds of Anger)

1) Resentment

- a. Anger held on to.
- b. Internalized
- c. It arises in the heart of a person who is ill treated in some way but who does not feel in a position to do anything about it.
- d. Resentment may be more difficult to deal with than outwardly expressed anger because the person often continues to nurse his wounds and dwell on his ill treatment.
- e. Gossip, Proud demeanor, hurtful words feeds resentment.

2) Bitterness

- a. Resentment that has grown into a feeling of ongoing animosity.
- b. Resentment may dissipate over time, bitterness continues to grow and fester, developing an even higher degree of ill will.
- c. Long-term reaction to a real or perceived wrong when the initial anger is not dealt with.
- d. Often it occurs between people that should love each other.
 - i. Church Family
 - ii. Family
- e. This is never a biblical option. It often results in a broken or severed relationship. Most people who harbor bitterness are two-faced in their relationships

3) Enmity and Hostility

- a. Higher level of ill will or animosity than does bitterness.
- b. Bitterness may be marked by some degree of polite behavior; enmity or hostility is usually expressed openly.
 - i. Comes in the form often times of hateful speech toward or about the objects of the animosity
- c. Where bitterness can be harbored in one's heart, enmity or hostility usually spreads its poison outward to involve other people.

4) Grudge (Holding a Grudge)

- a. It is used 5 times in the Bible.
- b. It literally could be translated hate.
- c. The word is associated with taking revenge on the object of the grudge.
 - i. Genesis 27:41- Esau hated Jacob and planned to kill him.
- d. Today we would probably associate holding a grudge with plans to kill someone.
 - i. They usually dare not execute those plans, but they get a perverse enjoyment out of going over them in their minds.
 - ii. Romans 12:19-21

5) Strife

- a. Describes open conflict or turmoil between parties, usually between opposing groups as distinct from individuals.
 - i. Church Fights
 - ii. Family Feuds
- b. It often occurs between self-righteous Christians who never consider the possibility that their own attitudes or heated words contribute to the strife.
 - i. “This is so high school”
- c. In their minds it is always the other party who is the wrong and is causing the strife.

Anger held on to is not only sin, it is spiritually dangerous. If it is not dealt with, it will grow into bitterness, hostility, and revenge-minded grudges.

How do we deal with our anger so that it does not begin to sprout these poisonous weeds?

1) We must look to the sovereignty of God.

- a. God doesn't cause people to sin against us, but He does allow it, and it is always allowed for a purpose—most often our own growth in Christlikeness.
- b. First defense against a temptation is to not allow anger to linger in my mind and emotions.
- c. Genesis 50:20 “As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good.”

2) We should pray that God would enable us to grow in love.

- a. Love enables us to overlook a lot of sinful actions of other people.
 - i. 1 Peter 4:8 “Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.”
 - ii. We are to love one another earnestly; that is, we are to pursue it diligently.
 - iii. Love does not keep a record of wrongs. We must cease to bring them up to ourselves or to another party.
 1. “I can forgive, but I can't forget.”
 - a. It does not mean we erase the hurt from our minds. We can't do that.
 - b. We do not give it a chance to gain a foothold in our conscious thinking.

3) We are to learn to forgive as God has forgiven you.

- a. Matthew 18:21-35 (Parable of the unforgiving servant)
- b. Every sin we commit, regardless of how insignificant it seems to us, is an assault on His infinite glory.

Questions

- 1) Do you tend to file away in your mind wrongs done to you? If so, share what these wrongs are and whom they are with.
- 2) Who do you resent the most in your life and why?
- 3) If you have responded to some one in anger this week, what was the circumstance and what led up to you responding in anger?
- 4) If you have bitterness in your heart towards someone or something, share it with the group.
- 5) Which one of these do you struggle with the most and why?