

I. 40 Days of Love - Part 5: LOVE IS NOT EASILY ANGERED Gee Sprague, Lead Pastor May 9, 2010

II. "Love is not easily angered." 1 Cor. 13:5 (NIV)

- A. Welcome to the fifth weekend in "40 Days of Love!" We're in verse 5 of 1 Corinthians 13 where the Bible says "*Love is not easily angered.*"
- B. Anger is the most misunderstood, and by the way misapplied, emotion of all the emotions that we have as human beings. It is not necessarily a sin.
- C. A lot of people think anger is always a sin. Not necessarily. Sometimes anger is the most appropriate response. Actually anger is a capacity given to you by God. God gets angry. There are some times that you should get angry. Sometimes anger is an evidence of love. If somebody hurt my wife, somebody hurt my kids, I would get angry. In fact if I didn't get angry, it would mean I was just heartless. It would mean I would be apathetic.
- D. The opposite of love is not anger. The opposite of love is apathy. Not caring. If you never get angry it means you're a vegetable, not a human being.
- E. There are some times in life you should get angry. The problem is not anger. The problem is whether it's appropriately or inappropriately expressed. Managed anger is actually a good thing. It produces good marriages. It produces good leadership, good churches, good businesses and many other things. Knowing how to put anger in its proper place.
- F. The problem is, as I said, we don't know how to express it. When you grew up, nobody, nobody taught you how to manage your anger. As a result we live in what many refer to as *The Age of Rage*.
- G. That's really what our society is today. Nobody learned how to manage their anger. You didn't learn it from your parents. You didn't learn it at school. You don't learn it in business and in most churches they don't even teach it – what I'm going to teach you today. But the Bible is very clear about what's appropriate and what's inappropriate.
- H. Typically there are two extremes. Some people clam up when they get angry and other people blow up when they get angry. Some people stuff it all inside and others let it all out. The mute, keep it quiet, and the maniac, let it all out.
- I. People tend to be either a turtle or a skunk. When you get into conflict, if you're a turtle, you pull your neck back in and you hide in your shell. On the other hand if you're a skunk you just stink up the place. You spew all over and you let everybody know it.
- J. The truth is skunks often marry turtles and turtles tend to marry skunks. It's just God's sense of humor that he puts opposites together. He says watch this, we're going to put them together. In your marriage one of you is likely to be the skunk and the other is likely to be the turtle. It always, always happens.
- K. Let me give you little facts about anger that you may not know.
- L. For instance, the average woman loses her temper three times a week while the average man loses his temper about six times a week.
- M. Women get more often angry at people while men more often get angry at things. Machines and stuff like that, that break down.
- N. Single adults express anger twice as often as married adults.
- O. Men are far more physical in their anger than women.
- P. You are more likely to express anger at home than anywhere else. Duh!

III. HOW DO YOU TAME YOUR TEMPER?

IV. **RESOLVE TO MANAGE IT.**

- A. "A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control." Pr. 29:11 (LB)

V. **REMEMBER THE COST**

A. “A hot-tempered man . . . gets into all kinds of trouble.” Pr. 29:22 (LB)

1. When I surrendered my life to Jesus, I thought the things that were displeasing to God were my outward kinds of sin.
2. Smoking, Drinking, etc.
3. Those were simple to deal with.
4. After almost 35 years of following Jesus Christ, anger will still get the best of me from time to time.
5. Can I get a witness.

B. Let’s try true or false on the kind of *TROUBLE* anger gets us into.

C. Pr. 15:18 (GN) “Hot tempers cause arguments.”

1. True or False?

D. Pr. 14:29 (LB) “... anger causes mistakes.”

1. True or False?”

E. Pr. 14:17 (GN) “People with hot tempers do foolish things.”

1. True or False?

F. Has anyone ever regretted not losing your temper?

G. Have you ever said, “Wow I really messed up by not unloading both barrels on that person!”

H. Has anyone ever regretted losing their temper?

I. “The fool who provokes his family to anger and resentment will finally have nothing worthwhile left.” Pr. 11:29 (LB)

J. Write this down: I always lose when I lose my temper!

K. You lose your reputation. You lose the respect of others. You can lose your job. You can lose a sale. You can lose the love of your family. You could lose your health. When I swallow my anger my stomach keeps score. Your body was not designed to handle anger. God didn’t mean for you to carry rage around inside of you. When you carry anger constantly in you, you get sick. There are all kinds of ailments people could get out of the hospital from if they weren’t carrying guilt, resentment, or anger.

L. Let’s say it together: I always lose when I lose my temper!

## VI. REFLECT BEFORE REACTING

A. “A stupid man gives free rein to his anger; a wise man waits and lets it grow cool.” Pr. 29:11 (NEB)

B. “A man’s wisdom gives him patience.” Pr. 19:11 (NIV)

C. Let me ask again, has anyone ever regretted waiting until the boiling point lowers before jumping into a conflict.

D. “Lord, help me control my tongue; help me be careful about what I say.” Psalm 141:3 (NCV)

E. Have you ever noticed that you can’t stick your foot in your mouth if it is closed!!

F. If somebody gets angry at you, your response is to get angry back. We’re not very sympathetic with anger. If somebody gets angry at me my natural reaction is to get defensive. But if somebody comes and says, “What you said hurt me,” hurt is a whole lot easier to deal with than anger. We’re much more sympathetic to hurt. If my wife comes to me and says, “I’m angry at you,” I want to get angry back. If she comes and says, “I was hurt by you,” I want to go, “Oh let me think about that... I’m sorry.” Or if somebody says, “I was frustrated by this,” or “This made me feel insecure.” Guys, if your wife comes to you and says, “The way you look at other women it hurts me, it frustrates me and it makes me feel insecure.” That’s a whole lot better than just having them be angry and you can’t figure out why they’re angry. You need to listen to what’s behind the anger. Does that make sense? And that only happens if you reflect before reacting.

G. You stop and go, I don't want to blow it. I know I can manage my anger. I resolve to manage it. I'm going to remember the cost. I always lose when I lose my temper. So let me reflect before reacting. Why am I angry? What do I really want? How can I get it? Is it frustration? Is it hurt? Is it fear?

## **VII. RELEASE MY ANGER APPROPRIATELY**

A. *"If you become angry, don't let your anger lead you into sin."* Eph. 4:26 (GN)

B. I like the way the Bible addresses anger. It understands the Human Condition.

1. Because of the temptation and fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, humans are going to experience anger.
2. The Bible says, anger is not the sin itself, but what you do with your anger is the sin.
3. At the core of our human existence. God created humanity to be without anger, but unfortunately Free Will allows for anger, or what I describe as our *SIN Condition*,
4. So we have to learn how to deal with our anger so it doesn't cause us to *sin*, small letter.

C. *"A gentle answer quiets anger, but a harsh one stirs it up."* Pr. 15:1 (TEV)

D. I need to tell you three ways that don't work that the world teaches. Then God's way. You don't suppress it, you don't repress it, you don't express it. You confess it.

E. You let it out to God. You admit it first to yourself: I'm angry. And you admit it to God: "God, I'm mad!" You talk to God about it. You confess not just the anger but the cause: "I'm hurt! I'm frustrated! I'm scared! I feel insecure! I feel this is out of control." You admit the cause behind the anger. You confess it. That's how you deal effectively with anger.

## **VIII. RE-PATTERN YOUR MIND**

A. The Bible has a lot to teach about this. You rethink and change the way you think. The way you express your anger, you didn't just get that overnight. Your presumed pattern of behavior is a learned response. Somebody modeled it for you. You didn't just automatically choose it. Somebody modeled it for you. Anger response is a learned response. And you learned some bad things.

B. The good news is you can unlearn it. You don't have to stay that way. You can learn new patterns. You can learn new habits. You don't have to keep perpetuating what your parents and their parents and the parents before did in three or four generations. I've seen this. Every time I get angry in an inappropriate way, I'm modeling it for my kids. I'm teaching them how to do it the wrong way. They're going to teach their kids how to do it the wrong way. Somebody has to stop the insanity. Break the chain. I'm going to re-pattern my mind. The good news is it can be unlearned.

C. *"Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by CHANGING THE WAY YOU THINK."* Romans 12:2a (NLT)

D. The behavior of this world is repress, express, suppress. One of those three.

E. *"Keep away from angry, short-tempered people, or YOU WILL LEARN to be like them ..."* Pr. 22:24 (LB)

## **IX. RELY On God's Help!**

A. *"Patience and encouragement COME FROM GOD. I pray GOD WILL HELP you all agree with each other the way Christ Jesus wants."* Rom. 15:5 (NCV)

B. *"The fruit of the Spirit is... patience."* Gal. 5:22 (NIV)

C. *"Whatever is IN YOUR HEART determines what you say."* Mt. 12:34 (NLT)

D. Your mouth just reveals what's in your heart. If it wasn't in your heart it wouldn't be coming out of your mouth. The problem is not your mouth. The problem is in your heart. If you've got bad water in a well, painting the pump isn't going to do any good. You've still got bad water in the well.

E. My mouth just betrays what's inside me. You find somebody with a harsh tongue, a cutting tongue, it reveals an angry heart. You find somebody with a negative tongue, you know they've got a fearful heart.

You find somebody with a boasting tongue, you know they've got an insecure heart. You find somebody with a judgmental tongue, they're always judging everybody, you know they've got a guilty heart. You find somebody with a critical tongue, they're always nagging and being critical, they've got a bitter heart. You find somebody with a filthy tongue, you know they've got an impure heart.

**F.** On the other hand, if you find somebody who's always encouraging, they're always encouraging, they have a happy heart. You know what's on the inside of them. If they're always speaking in a gentle way you know they've got a loving heart. If they're always being loving and controlled in their words you know they've got a peaceful heart.

**G.** Possible Toothpaste Illustration. What happens when you get squeezed.

**H.** Friends, what you need is a heart transplant. You need a new heart. David says this in *Psalms 51* "Create in me a clean heart, O God." That's what you need to say today: God I need a clean heart. I need a heart transplant.

**I.** "I'll give you a new heart, put a new spirit in you. I'll remove the stone heart from your body and replace it with a heart that's God-willed, not self-willed." Ezekiel 36:26 (Mes)

**X.** Prayer: Father, it's sad but it's true that we often get angry at the people we love the most. The people we're closest to. It's often, Lord, because we forget that you are the source of all we need, not other people. You are the source of all we need. Jesus, help us to remember that when we expect anybody else to meet needs our deepest needs, we're going to be disappointed and we're going to be angry. When we expect other people to be God in our lives and meet all of our needs, help us to realize that we're just setting ourselves up for disappointment and anger. Lord, I'm certain that there are many people here this weekend who are struggling with anger. I ask you to help them Lord, whatever the hurt or the frustration or the insecurity, help them to experience hope and healing today.

**XI.** Now you pray. Say, "Dear Jesus Christ, I admit that I have a problem with my anger and I don't want to stay that way. I need your help. I need you to do a heart transplant in me. I need you to fill my heart with your love. Today with your help I want to start practicing these steps. Today I am resolving to learn how to manage my anger. To learn some of these Bible verses we've looked at today. I'm very aware of how my anger has hurt other people including those that I love and I'm sorry. Please forgive me. Forgive me for the times I've tried to control things and then getting angry when I couldn't. Help me to reflect before reacting. To pause, to put my mind and heart in gear before my mouth. Help me to learn to release my anger appropriately. To not repress it or suppress it or express it in sarcasm or manipulation or weird behavior. But help me to re-pattern my mind. I confess to you that I need your help. So Jesus, today I open up my life, every room of my heart completely to you. Come into my life and save me and change me. Make the changes only you can make."

**XII.** Father, thank you for your word that it's so practical and so relevant and it helps us in every area of life. Lord, we want to be lovers, not haters. We want to be filled with you, and your peace and joy. In your name we pray. Amen