

July 22, 2020

Cease from Anger

This week we come to the sixth and final command that we are going to meditate upon in Psalm 37. Verse 8 begins with three simple words, “Cease from anger.” It sounds simple enough, but the temper and its corresponding emotions can be very difficult to control. Turn in your Bible to **Ephesians 4:22-24**. In his epistle to the church at Ephesus, the Holy Spirit inspires Paul to write about the new life in Christ. The word conversation in verse 22 speaks of our manner of living. It includes but goes far beyond the words we speak. The old life, the life of sin, the life prior to Christ, is totally corrupt, because it is lived according to the lusts of the flesh. These lusts are deceitful as men seek to find joy, happiness, and satisfaction in the things of the world. As believers, verse 23 tells us that we need to think differently. There has to be a change in our mind concerning how we live and what we consider to be important. Whereas the old life is characterized by corruption and deceit, the new life in Christ is characterized by righteousness and true holiness. Righteousness speaks of the outer life, the life that man sees. Holiness speaks of the inner life, the life that God sees.

In this renewal process by which we put off the old man and put on the new man, we come to our topic in **verses 26 and 31**. At first glance, the first three words of verse 26 seem to contradict to our text in Psalm 37:8, but verse 31 clearly states that anger is to be put away from us. Notice, however, the context of verse 26. Paul understands that from time to time we all experience anger. We were created by God with the ability to be angry. Anger is a part of the nature or character of God. There are many references in the Bible to the anger of the Lord or the wrath of God, so the emotion of anger is not sin itself. We sin when we yield to or allow our anger to control us. We sin when we don't deal with our anger, choosing instead to brew over it, allowing it to stew. Not dealing with anger, gives the Devil a foothold in our life. Anger can lead to other sins as it takes control in our life. Anger can lead to bitterness, wrath, and malice. Anger can lead a person to say cruel and mean things.

How then, do we cease from anger? How do we overcome anger? Paul says we are not to let the sun go down upon our wrath, but how is that accomplished? Read **verse 32**. Instead of being angry, we are to practice forgiveness. Forgiving can be hard to do, but forgiveness is not based on the nature of character of the one we are forgiving, but rather on the truth that we have been forgiven by God. We don't deserve God's forgiveness, but He forgives us just the same. Is there someone in your life you need to forgive? Has anger led to a root of bitterness in your life? Do you have trouble controlling your temper? Anger is typical of a hard heart. We need to demonstrate kindness out of a tender heart. Ask God to help you learn to cease from anger.