

## The Seven Deadly Sins – Wrath

Before getting into this week's lesson I want to take a moment to say that my thoughts and prayers are with those who are on the front lines in Haiti. The devastation is almost unimaginable, but I have seen God working in this tragedy. I urge you to pray for those recovering from this tragedy in Haiti and, if possible, find a reputable organization through which you can send aid. Haiti is among the most impoverished nations on earth, and it's the responsibility of the Church to help in times of need.

In the past four lessons I have introduced the sins which are often referred to as the seven deadly sins (lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, wrath, envy, and pride) and discussed the first four. Today I'm going to introduce the fifth, wrath. As I've said before, I believe that all sin is deadly, and these sins are not identified in any list in Scripture as being any different from other sin. All sin is transgression of the law, and the wages of sin is death. I think these are interesting, though, for the simple fact that they cover so many of the things that commonly cause people to stray from righteousness.

Let's begin looking at this sin of wrath, or violent anger, let's look at Proverbs 14:16-17, which says:

(16) A wise *man* feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident.

(17) *He that is* soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated.

In this Scripture the man who is quick to become angry and fly into a rage is called a fool.

The Psalmist David indicates in Psalm 37:8 that anger leads to wrath, and wrath leads a person to do evil. This verse says:

(8) Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.

You see, human wrath seldom accomplishes anything good. To the contrary it most often leads people to do things they would later regret.

But if God reveals his wrath as discussed in the Bible how can wrath be a sin, you might ask. Well, in order to look at this let's look a little further at the nature of God. Indeed we can find many Scriptures which talk about the wrath of God. I can also, though, find many Scriptures which point out that God is slow to anger. God is merciful.

In Proverbs 14:29 we're told that, "He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly." You see, holding our temper is a sign of understanding.

James gives us a warning about wrath in James 1:19-20, which says:

- (19) Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:
- (20) For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

And then in Ephesians 4:17-32 Paul writes:

- (17) This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,
- (18) Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:
- (19) Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.
- (20) But ye have not so learned Christ;
- (21) If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:
- (22) That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;
- (23) And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;
- (24) And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.
- (25) Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.
- (26) Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:
- (27) Neither give place to the devil.
- (28) Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with *his* hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.
- (29) Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.
- (30) And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.
- (31) Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:
- (32) And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

We see then that Paul plainly tells us that wrath is among those things that we should put away. He said in verse 26 that we are to be angry without sinning. Essentially he is saying that there are going to be things in life that make us angry. It is how we respond to anger that leads us either into sin or into godliness. He reiterates this in Colossians 3:1-17, which says:

- (1) If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.
- (2) Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

- (3) For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.
- (4) When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.
- (5) Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:
- (6) For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:
- (7) In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.
- (8) But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.
- (9) Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;
- (10) And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:
- (11) Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free: but Christ *is* all, and in all.
- (12) Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;
- (13) Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also *do* ye.
- (14) And above all these things *put on* charity, which is the bond of perfectness.
- (15) And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.
- (16) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.
- (17) And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

The opposite of wrath here seems to be charity, or love. It is love that overcomes wrath. It is love which marks the believer. Jesus Christ himself even told us in the Sermon on the Mount that we are to love our enemies. In so doing we'll heap coals of fire upon their heads. Then, in 1 Corinthians 13 we were told that love is the greatest gift. This Scripture says:

- (1) Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as* sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.
- (2) And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.
- (3) And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.
- (4) Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

- (5) Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;
- (6) Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;
- (7) Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.
- (8) Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away.
- (9) For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.
- (10) But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.
- (11) When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.
- (12) For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.
- (13) And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these *is* charity.

I know that I've included a lot of Scripture in this lesson, but I feel that it's important that the Word speak. After all, this ministry is devoted to getting Into the Word to find the truth.

Yours in Christ,

Bro. John Rich