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Finally, brethren
WHATEVER THINGS are true
are noble
are just
are pure
are lovely
are of good report
PHILIPPIANS 4:8
IF THERE IS ANY VIRTURE AND IF THERE IS ANYTHING PRAISEWORTHY –
meditate on these things.

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DISCUSSION OF FIRST CORINTHIANS 11:2-16

Response to A Custom, Not A Command

Brent Sharp | Shannon Hills, Arkansas, USA

To begin with, let's fix the opening line: The apostle Paul's message in 1 Corinthians 11 concerning head coverings has been variably interpreted by our brethren since the turn of the 20th century. Prior to the turn of the 20th century brethren were united on Paul's admonitions for women to have long hair and coverings in worship, and men to have short hair and bare heads in worship. In fact, nowhere in what we might broadly call "Christendom" was there any variable interpretation as to whether women should have their heads covered in the assembly for almost two thousand years.

Brethren who oppose Paul's teaching on women's headdress in I Corinthians 11 make much hay of the word "custom" appearing in verse 16. As we previously saw, the custom Paul is referring to is allowing women with short hair and no covering (and men with long hair and a covering), and that Paul's plain, divinely inspired statement was that no church, anywhere in the entire universe, allowed that to go on in the assembly. The Corinthian custom of feminine rebellion through bear headedness is what the Holy Spirit is referring to by use of the word "custom".

As for the context: Paul presents multiple arguments for the commands he relays from God in verses 2-16. First, he states that the command on a hierarchy of the Father to Christ to man to woman (verse 3). This is a universal truth, it is in no way consistent with the context to make this a local custom. In verse 7 Paul tells us another reason for these rules; the man is the image and glory of God; the woman is the image and glory of man. This is a universal truth, it is in no way consistent with the context to make this a local custom. In verse 10 Paul stresses that a woman should have a symbol of being in submission on her head "because of the angels." I am uncertain as to the exact meaning of this verse; nevertheless there is no indication that it is in any way limited to Corinth; this too is a universal principle. In verse 14 Paul states that "nature" teaches us the difference between male and female hair length. This is a universal truth, it is in no way consistent with the context to make this a local custom.

As to women wearing the head covering as etiquette, we have now reduced Paul to Ms. Manners. This is, frankly, absurd. This is also a purely modern invention. The covering was, and is, a divinely commanded article of clothing demonstrating feminine submission (see Adam Clarke; Albert Barnes; Jameson, Faucet and Brown; Dummelow; Matthew Henry; Johann Peter Lange; Matthew Poole; **Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges**; Lipscomb, etc.). Paul did not tell the Corinthians to make sure they used proper etiquette because the woman was created for the man. Such a line of argumentation reduces the entire passage to nonsense.

Next we apparently have to deal with the idea of "apostolic recommendations." Paul's appeal to the Corinthians to be able to understand his command by using their own judgement does not reduce four direct commands to take 'em or leave 'em "recommendations." The idea that Paul makes arguments based on the order of creation, on the inherent nature of the sexes, that he says to disobey the commands he is giving is "shameful" and that a woman who disobeys should have her head shaved.... The statement that this is just a "recommendation" displays a disturbingly flippant attitude towards divine authority. Paul is an apostle of Christ, he gives four direct commands, he explains multiple reasons for those commands, he is speaking by direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and we are supposed to believe it's just a "recommendation" and we don't have to do it if we don't want to. That is not exegesis, it is high-handed rebellion.

Please note as well, when Paul gives instructions which are not binding insofar as sin is concerned (marriage in I Corinthians 7) he specifically states that is what he is doing, and further clarifies the matter by saying he is speaking on his own account and not according to divine inspiration in that matter. In the passage we are studying, however, Paul is speaking by direct inspiration and is giving specific commands as ordered by the Holy Spirit.

The word "nature" in this passage is the same word, used in the same way, as his condemnation of homosexuality in Romans 1 (see Vine's Dictionary of New Testament Words, in addition to the various scholars listed above). When Paul said the homosexuals were doing that which was against "nature" in Romans 1 he meant that their actions were a violation of God's created order. The same is true of short haired women and long haired men in I Corinthians 11. As to the Nazirite, the long hair of a Nazirite man was a symbol of humility before God, and was an exception to how other men were wearing their hair (See Albert Barnes, Numbers and I Corinthians commentaries; Adam Clarke commentary I Cor. 11:10). This does raise the question as well, would it be acceptable for a man to have hair to his waist, wear a ten gallon cowboy hat, and wait on the Lord's Table? Remember, don't bind your customs and recommendations on others! Or are we just concerned about the "etiquette" involved?

Next Brother Stewart argues that since different people have used head coverings for different reasons in different times and places we may dispense with it if we see fit. Perhaps we could apply this to the Lord's Supper as well? After all, people have eaten unleavened bread for many different reasons in different times and places, and the Lord's Supper is in this immediate context as well, so maybe that's just a matter of etiquette, and as long as we "remember the principle" we can dispense with actual unleavened bread if we

see fit? And certainly men have drunk the fruit of the vine for many different reasons in many different locations in many different times, so as long as we “observe the principle” certainly we can dispense with the necessity of actually using the fruit of the vine? After all, that admonition is right here in the same context where some would have us believe Paul is just making recommendations. Now we are certain Brother Stewart doesn’t actually believe such, but unfortunately he’s left himself without a leg to stand on against such nonsense by his argumentation on the immediately preceding passage.

Brother Stewart’s entire argument depends on the fallacious assertion that the word “custom” in verse 16 refers to women wearing a head covering; as we have seen that is the opposite of the truth. When Paul said “we have no such custom” he was referring to the fact that the universal practice of every church in the world at that time, other than Corinth, was that women were to be covered, and no church other than Corinth practiced the degraded custom of allowing their women to be uncovered (Mike Willis, commentary I Corinthians). God, through Paul, commands the covering and gives multiple reason for its necessity; unfortunately most of the church has departed from this command and now makes the command of God of no effect by their custom.

It would also be well to note that this is a very new doctrine. Prior to the 20th century the universal practice of all who claimed Christianity was to have women covered in worship, and all referred to Paul’s teaching in I Corinthians as the authority for this doctrine (Chrysostom, Calvin, etc.) Perhaps we should note that one of the main arguments brethren have held against instrumental music over the years is that it is an innovation which did not appear in worship services until the 7th century. Now I hold that this is, in fact, a legitimate and sound argument against instrumental music; I fail to see, however, how it can be made in good faith by men who defend an innovation in worship that “did not appear until the late 19th century, and was not widely accepted until the middle of the 20th century. I do not ask that brethren abandon the aforementioned argument against instrumental music; rather I find I must insist that we apply the same standard to our own practices concerning God’s commands in I Corinthians 11.

“Men with long hair and women with short hair is a matter of decorum, not sin” is the modernistic teaching of men; “14 Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? 15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering” is the direct command of God given through his apostle. I know which I choose.

DISCUSSION OF FIRST CORINTHIANS 11:2-16

Response to Hats, Hair and Harridans

William J. Stewart | Kingston, Ontario, Canada

When brethren come together, we see a variety of greetings. Many offer a good strong handshake; some might exchange a delightful and cheery “Hello;” others may even share a warm hug. But where is the “holy kiss”? The apostle Paul wrote to the Romans, “Greet one another with a holy kiss.” In fact, we find the same thing in 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; and 1 Thessalonians 5:26. Why have we exchanged holy kisses for holy hugs, handshakes and hellos?

On the same night Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper with His apostles He also washed their feet. After He finished, He said,

Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you (John 13:12-15).

When was the last time you washed a brother’s feet or vice versa? Why are we not washing one another’s feet? Jesus commanded it!

I trust our brethren in Amarillo, Lagos, Florence, and elsewhere demonstrate love for one another both in their greetings and through acts of service. That said, I doubt they are doing so with holy kisses and foot

washings. The universal applicability of the Corinthian letter which our esteemed brother mentioned in his article (which is true of the New Testament as a whole) does not enjoin adherents to maintain societal practices or arrangements. We understand the principle behind the “holy kiss” – the warmth and comradery of brotherhood. We grasp the reason behind the foot washing – service to one another. However, in neither case is it necessary to enforce for ritual sake practices which are rooted in Jewish culture and an age of dirt roads and open sandals.

I share my esteemed brother’s concern about men wearing ball caps (with or without logos) or ten-gallon Stetson hats while serving in the assembly, though not for the same reason. He condemns such as a violation of God’s law, transgressions of 1 Corinthians 11. Conversely, I believe it to be in poor taste, flying in the face of acceptable cultural expectations for such an assembly. The same is true for the eligible elder candidate with long hair and the bare-headed or short-haired ladies mentioned. These are all cultural or personal sensitivities, not Divinely legislated clothing and grooming practices.

The text certainly has “a strong emphasis on maintaining the proper role” of men and women. In fact, this is the principle established in the text. The covering or uncovering of the head is an application of the principle (like the foot washing and holy kiss mentioned above). Several other texts speak about the role of men and women (1 Corinthians 14, Ephesians 5, 1 Timothy 2, Titus 2, and 1 Peter 3) but none of them mention the need for women to cover their heads to properly reflect their relationship to men or to the Lord. That is not conclusive evidence of this being a custom rather than a command, but it is curious that 1 Corinthians 11 is the only time the covering is mentioned despite the roles of men and women being discussed multiple times.

Our brother would have us believe the instruction of 1 Corinthians 11 requires women to wear a covering in our worship assemblies. Please note verses 5, “...every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head...” Paul is not talking about women listening to men pray or prophecy – the woman in question is praying or prophesying. However, in 1 Corinthians 14:34, the same apostle wrote to the same Corinthian church, “Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says.” Women are not permitted to pray or prophecy in the assembly. This text is not about women covering their heads in an assembly of the church.

We’re told for eighteen centuries basically no one “...who claimed to be Christians disputed this matter.” That is an exceptionally broad statement. Does our brother have access to written records from every quarter of the world in every century between then and now to support his claim? Even if all Catholics, Orthodox and Protestants imposed the head covering on women in worship assemblies for eighteen centuries, they have failed in their application of the text. Again, it is not about the assembly.

Our brother aptly pointed out the inconsistency of those who excuse women from wearing the covering, reasoning it is a custom, but still bind short hair and no covering on men. He’s right, it is inconsistent. I am one of the few my esteemed opponent says will “...at least excuse men along with women from adhering to this...” I do not expect my brethren to wash feet, but I do expect them to serve one another. I do not expect my brethren to wear coverings or have a certain length of hair, but I do expect them to adhere to distinct roles which God has given to men and women.

What custom did the apostles and the churches of God not have (verse 16)? Our brother says it is “...the abhorrent Corinthian practice of having women appear uncovered...” and that Paul was “...explaining that no other church anywhere in the world allowed their women to behave in such a fashion.” He affirms the instruction for women to be covered was spoken universally by the apostles and given to all the churches of God, and cites Mike Willis (Commentary on 1 Corinthians, p. 308) as a hostile witness to that end. But where is the biblical evidence showing such a command was given universally and proclaimed by all the apostles? There is no instruction about the covering in the New Testament except what Paul wrote to Corinth.

If the “no such custom” of verse 16 is women not having their heads covered, it essentially makes Paul’s statement a double negative – “we do not not do this.” Neither Paul nor the Spirit are so convoluted in the presentation of truth. And yet an impressive list of commentators are cited in support of this muddled explanation. Many commentators agreeing on a position does not make it biblically correct. Nineteenth century commentator B.W. Johnson observed of verse 16, the “...no such custom... refers to covering the head, etc. The lesson of this whole passage is that we must not defy existing social usages in such a way as to bring reproach on the church” (**People’s New Testament Commentary**). Our brother warned us about the “first-wave feminism” of Johnson and others like him, for not only did he identify the head covering as a custom, but he also advocated for deaconesses in the local church. That said, if our brother can unapologetically support his claims with denominational preachers who were either unable or unwilling to teach truth about salvation, then I will also freely quote a man who admittedly went beyond the scope of Scripture about deaconesses, but who obviously had a better handle on truth than his denominational counterparts. The pursuit of the perfect commentator will always leave us disappointed.

Sadly, our brother had little to say about the text itself or the greater context in which it is found. Instead he hung his hat on a perceived feminist agenda as the reason for brethren permitting women to worship God with uncovered heads. A plain reading of the text reveals the principle of headship (verse 3) with a contextual application (verses 4-5) which has unfortunately been misconstrued as Divine legislation about coverings within the assembly. Did Paul command in verse 5 (women praying and prophesying in the assembly with covered heads) what he would later forbid in 1 Corinthians 14:34? There are several statements in the text (“if” clauses, “judge among yourselves,” and the appeal to nature) which indicate this is not a Divine command but a matter of reason and judgment.

The custom of the covering is not the discovery of a new meaning of 1 Corinthians 11:16, it is the result of sound and careful Bible study. It does not undo fourteen verses of teaching – it accounts for the content of the text and the greater context which focuses on the compromise between Christian liberties and the need to not cause offenses (6:12; 8:1, 9; 9:19-22; 10:23-24; 10:32-11:1). The principle of headship is still binding, just as principles of brotherhood and Christian service are binding today, but the cultural applications of these principles (the washing of feet, holy kisses, hair length and head coverings) were never introduced as the Divinely decreed method (and only way) to fulfill these principles. The Scriptures do not bind head coverings on women.

The History of the Institutional Controversy (Pt 5)

Jefferson David Tant | Roswell, Georgia, USA

The Arguments Advanced by Non-Institutional Brethren

In his tract on this subject, Steve Wolfgang well defined the major issues.

- That God has revealed in Scripture patterns to be followed in the work and worship of the church (Hebrews 8:5).
- That authoritative patterns are expressed in terms of—
 - Generic or specific statements or commands.
 - Examples for churches to follow.
 - Necessary conclusions or implications (Acts 15)
- That the generic statements or commands allow expedient ways of obeying, while the specific directions are more restrictive and do not allow changes.
- That the differences between general and specific instructions can be distinguished by common sense principles of interpretation.
- That there is a difference in individual and church responsibilities in carrying out their respective roles in glorifying God.
- That the church’s treasury is to be used for the purposes of the edification of its members, assisting saints who are in need, and supporting preachers in their proclamation of the gospel.
- That there is no authority in Scripture for human organizations or super-church arrangements through which local churches may do their work (2 Corinthians 11:8-9; Philippians 4:15-18).

- That the church Jesus died to purchase is a spiritual institution, and was not intended to provide for the recreational or social needs of its members, nor to be a worldwide benevolence organization.
- That human societies or organizations (hospitals, publishing houses, colleges, etc.) may provide services on a fee-for-service basis, but the Scriptures do not allow for those to become permanent appendages to the church.
- That individual churches do not compose the universal church as in a denominational structure, but that it is individuals who are the universal church.
- That there is no provision in Scripture for the universal church to function, for it is a relationship of people rather than a structured organization.
 - The human race exists, but has no organizational structure.
 - The human race lives and functions in nations, which have organizational structure.
 - The universal church exists, but has no organizational structure.
 - Its members function in local churches, which have organizational structure.

The Yellow Tag of Quarantine

The lines of fellowship were further broken by the policies of the "Gospel Advocate." Although discussions and divisions would continue for at least another decade, in 1954 the editor of the Advocate agreed to the idea of a "yellow tag of quarantine" to be placed on the "antis." This harks back to the days before WWII and "wonder drugs" when those who had infectious diseases were "quarantined" and a yellow flag posted on their homes to warn others away. This is similar to the treatment of lepers in Biblical times, and even in modern history. Part of the blame for the extreme liberalism today must be placed at the feet of B. C. Goodpasture for closing the pages of the Advocate to further discussions, thus preventing future readers from seeing both sides and weighing the evidence based upon the Scriptures.

In this environment, the pressure on other institutions to "line up" would be resisted at the risk of losing prestige and financial well-being. There were efforts to close Florida College by discouraging students from going there, and by discouraging individual contributions. The administration and Bible faculty were pretty well committed to conservative views on the issues. In addition, business ventures such as Bible bookstores were boycotted if its owners were thought to be antis. Churches were pressured to line up and let their position be known. I heard of urgings to put some human institution in the budget for at least \$5 to let everyone know that they were not "anti" churches. Church treasurers who dared to voice a reservation about these schemes were told to either sign the check or resign and go elsewhere.

Preachers were threatened, fired, and had meetings cancelled. I cannot tell how many meetings my father had cancelled, but on occasion he was allowed to go ahead and hold the meeting, and was well received. (The church found out he did not have horns and a tail after all.) They were told, "If you espouse such a doctrine, you won't have any place to preach." They were told by elders not to preach on these matters. "Confessions" of preachers who recanted their "anti-ism" were featured in the pages of the "Gospel Advocate," including names well known to that generation—Earl West, Pat Hardeman, Hugo McCord, C. M. Pullias.

The ugliness of a partisan spirit was manifested in many ways. Ads for preachers contained such statements as "No anti need apply." Lawsuits over ownership of church buildings were paraded before the world. I was present in Cordele, Georgia in 1966 when a group of liberal-minded brethren came to the building with a telephone pole made into a battering ram, intending to break down the door and take over the building. On more than one occasion, they broke into the building, even getting into the preacher's study and smashing his eyeglasses. One night they broke in while brethren were waiting for them with cameras. One of those entering the building then shouted to someone outside to "Get the gun." And all this was done "in the name of the Lord."

I heard a tape of a radio sermon preached by Malcolm Hill in Waycross, Georgia, stating that if a child got run over by a car in front of the Tebeau Street Church of Christ there, the church would not allow the church phone to be used to call an ambulance for the bleeding child. Subsequently, I called Hill and chided

him for such a statement. He responded by saying he was going to give my name to the judge of Juvenile Court in his county, because she was always trying to find homes for children. Sure enough, in a short time I received a call from Judge Trudy Boswick, a member of the Forest Park church where Hill preached. She had two 15-year-old girls who had been made wards of the court, and needed a home. In a few days I had a home for them. That began a succession of calls from her. Then one day she called needing help for a 19-year-old pregnant girl who already had one baby, and had been kicked out of where she had been living with her boyfriend. After talking to my wife, we took her and the baby in. Soon Margaret became a Christian. This was the beginning of over three decades of taking fifty or more pregnant girls into our home, and some into the homes of others, and helping to place scores of babies for adoption. I think in all there were about 80 children we placed for adoption. And all of this because Hill thought he was "calling my bluff." One day I asked Judge Boswick if she understood why I could find homes for these young people, when the large congregation of which she was a member could not help. She replied, "Why is that?" I then explained that where she went to church, they were told to drop an extra dollar or so into the collection plate to care for orphans, but we taught people to take them into their homes. This good lady later became an "anti."

Not too long ago I tried to call Malcolm and thank him for the blessings that came to so many because of him, but unfortunately, he had passed away.

In the debate between G. K. Wallace and Charles Holt in Florence, Alabama (1960), Wallace ranted and raved about Holt taking money to buy fertilizer for the church lawn, but wouldn't take a dime out of the church treasury to feed a starving orphan child. Isn't it interesting that Charles and Jewell Holt had themselves adopted four children? But of course, some would claim that the Holts were not fulfilling James 1:27, because when they adopted these children, they were no longer orphans. That claim was actually made!

Brother Wallace's softening attitude towards Biblical authority was seen in a statement Yater Tant made in 1956. "In Tulsa last year G. K. said that the Bible contained no such thing as a 'necessary inference,' and that he had quit preaching that twenty years ago."

In short, by the 1960s the clear message was sent to the minority "antis"—"go away, you bother me." Hate mail came into my father's mailbox. One postcard contained the following message.

*"Tant's group uses slander and libel,
(And knows nothing about the Bible),
They'll find at the end, After judgment day,
They'll spend Eternity down with le diable."*

"(The last two words would let people know that you have at least one contributor who has traveled, has an education, and is above the general troglodyte level of your usual trash. No charge) – Regus P."

What once were defended as expedencies were now defended as something necessary. One writer claimed that children were raised better in orphanages than in the home of Christians.

"We contend that the homes perform a service more effective than the average private home in developing habits of work and industry... We contend that the homes do a more effective work teaching good, moral behavior than the home... We contend that the homes are more successful than the average private home in making Christians of the young people...this statement is no indictment of the private home. It is the best organization in the world" (Said by a defender of Central Kentucky Orphan Home).

It's hard to believe that a sane person would make such a statement. I worked with a church in Portales, New Mexico where the Eastern New Mexico Children's Home was located. A family in the University Drive church there had worked at the home for some time previously. They said they had never known a single child to leave that home and remain faithful as a Christian. It is obvious that this is not universally true, but it does cast some doubt on the above quote. That orphan asylum would send out trucks and buses

throughout three states collecting food from churches, but would collect more than they could possibly use. They would unload their surplus at a local grocery store and sell the products. That store was owned by a son of one of the elders of the church where I preached. ENMCH had one of the finest farms in the state, which was donated to them, and they had all sorts of free labor from their residents, so raised much of their own food.

On one occasion I was having a study with a family in this small town, and evidently some folks at the church that sponsored the orphanage got wind of this and tried to move in. This family was having some financial difficulties, and the liberal church brought food and clothing in abundance. One day Naomi Bruce asked me if I could take some of the stuff away, as her house was getting too full. (I declined.) Then she said that the assistant superintendent of the home said I could have the children if I could find homes for them. I immediately went to her home and placed a call to the man, asking when I could come and get the children, as I thought I could find homes for them in a couple of weeks. He began to hem and haw, acting as if he didn't know what I was talking about. Then Naomi got on the phone and reminded him of their conversation. I asked him how many orphans they had. He admitted that of the 50 children, none were true orphans, as they all had living family members who could have cared for them. Of course, I didn't get the children. He was just trying to "call my bluff." After Naomi was baptized into Christ, she told me, "They tried to buy me with things, but you taught me the gospel."

A study was conducted some time ago showing that among the institutional churches, the average church member was giving seven cents per member per week. Thus they were willing to cause division over seven cents per week. And they accused those who believed in taking orphans into their homes of being "orphan-haters."

What is abundantly clear is that the majority of the men and institutions that were centers of influence were with the institutional majority.

A clear indication of liberal thinking is seen in Henderson, Texas. In 1939, John W. Aiken donated some property for the church to build on. The deed had a restrictive clause which read:

"As a part of the consideration for the transfer of said described property to said Trustees it is understood and agreed that no innovations, such as mechanical instruments of music in the worship, Church shows, festivals, suppers, or human societies, such as are not authorized by the New Testament . . . shall be tolerated in the church building to be erected on said property, etc."

In time, the church grew and they needed a larger building, but they did not want to be bound by such a restrictive clause. The new clause read:

"And as a part of the consideration for the transfer of said described property, and as a material inducement for the transfer of said property, it is understood and agreed that no innovation such as the use of mechanical instruments of music of any type or form in any kind of worship service by the Church; church shows, festivals, suppers, or human societies, such as are not authorized by a well-defined and clear-shown majority of the Churches of Christ in Texas, shall be tolerated in the church building to be erected on said property, etc."

Thus the basis for authority changed from the New Testament to a majority opinion! There was a time when the majority of churches of Christ in Texas did practice these things, and it is obvious that many are practicing these very things today. I wonder what Bible passage they cite to support that "majority rule" for their authority?

(To be continued)

The Lost

Jim Mickells | Lewisburg, Tennessee, USA

In Luke 15 the Pharisees and the scribes complain about Jesus receiving and eating with sinners (verses 1-2). This was certainly true. He came for the very purpose of seeking and saving the lost, which included these men who were complaining (Luke 19:10). Throughout the rest of this chapter in Luke 15 Jesus speaks several parables which reveal various things which are lost. Our Lord emphasizes the dedication, joy, and repentance of seeking the lost and their return to Him. Yet, it seems to me, that each of the things mentioned by Him are lost for different reasons.

The sheep (verses 4-7). The sheep may well have been lost because of its own negligence; whether not watching and listening to the shepherd or simply going off in a different direction seeking greener pasture. Many people are overtaken in sin today because of their own carelessness. Paul warned, "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12). One can begin to neglect studying the Bible, praying as they should, attending all the church services, their giving, etc. and find themselves in total apostasy. This usually does not happen overnight but over a period of time through the dereliction of duty.

The coin (verses 8-10). The coin was lost because of the carelessness of someone else. Every Christian must be careful about how they conduct their lives. We influence others by the words we say, the places we go, the deeds we do, and even our failure to act when we should. As parents and grandparents, our children and grandchildren can be lost if we fail to teach them (Ephesians 6:4; 2 Timothy 1:5) and to set good examples before them day by day (1 Timothy 4:12). The harsh words, the critical spirit, and the ungodly lives of brethren have directly affected the faithfulness of some Christians. There is no excuse for unfaithfulness; it is not the Lord's fault. Yet, there is no defense for the actions of some brethren either.

The younger son (verses 11-24). This young man was lost because of a choice he made. He chose to go live in a foreign country and waste the possessions he received from his father on prodigal living. The older son said he "has devoured your livelihood with harlots" (verse 30). I am sure all of us have seen the decisions made by individuals lead to their demise spiritually speaking. It could be a decision about a place to go, some deed done, where to attend college, one's friends, whom to marry, and the list could go on and on. Good and evil are set before us (Deuteronomy 30:15-16). We must always choose the good to be pleasing to the Father, remaining faithful to Him. Please understand, though we are creatures of choice, what we choose has consequences as well.

The older son (verses 25-32). The older son was lost because of his attitude. It seems Jesus was describing the Pharisees and the scribes when speaking of this individual. The mind-set of this older son was one of jealousy and self-righteousness. The correct attitude is so important when serving God. In the Sermon on the Mount, which was preached by Jesus Christ, notice some of the beatitudes; poor in spirit, ability to mourn, meek, merciful, pure in heart, and peacemakers (Matthew 5:3-9). This was the opposite of the inward spirit possessed by these Jews to whom Jesus was speaking. May the Lord help each of us to be humble in spirit, exalting others, while faithfully serving Him who died to redeem us from our sins.

May we never be neglectful, be careful and cautious of how we live our lives and how we allow others to influence us, make wise choices with God in mind, while having a humble and meek spirit. We will then be pleasing to Jehovah and be able to help lead the lost to Him. If we do fail, please remember there is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents. The Lord wants to save us.

We See What We Want

Mike Thomas | Bowling Green, Kentucky, USA

Have you ever noticed that when we buy something, we tend to see it more often in others? We see someone else driving the same kind of vehicle we drive, or wearing the same style of shirt we wear, or reading the same book we read. These activities were already present in the world, but we did not notice them as easily until they became a matter of interest to us. Consequently, we tend to believe these items

appear more often than they do – because we are looking for them. Had we never created an interest in them, we would have rarely noticed their minimal presence. Having said that, consider this: if we fill our minds with fear, hate, and lust (as dominated in the news and social media), what kind of world will we see? What kind of experiences will we find in the community if we believe the world hates us, that everyone in a particular group is evil, or our mind is centered on immorality? How will we interpret the events of everyday life?

The Bible says, “To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled” (Titus 1:15). This is another way of saying we see what we want in life. If we are pure in heart, we will find pure and upright endeavors. If we are defiled, we find defiled things. Jesus said it this way, “The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!” (Matthew 6:22-23). I believe He was referring to our outlook on life. If we have an evil heart, we will see evil in every situation. If we have faith and uprightness, we will see something else. Thus, “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life” (Proverbs 4:23). Our perspective and heart have a lot to do with the kind of life we experience.

If we believe the world is against us, we will accuse people of acting with ill-will toward us when they are not. If we want to see our self as a victim of injustice and hatred, we will see those motives in people even when they are not present. Instead, if we choose to believe the world is made up of people who are for the most part kind and friendly, we see a different world. Life is what we make of it. This does not mean that good and evil only exist in our perception – there are some truly wicked people in this world that we must avoid. The Bible warns: “But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived” (1 Timothy 3:13).

However, not everyone is evil nor is everyone against us. It is up to us to give people a chance to prove themselves. And a true child of God will do just that.

The Bible says, “In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother” (1 John 3:10). A servant of God is distinguished from a servant of the devil by two things: righteous living and love. If a person lacks either, he is not of God... regardless of what he believes about himself. Hatred is a serious matter. “Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him” (verse 15). For that reason, we should extend mercy and sympathy to people instead of hate. Nevertheless, let us not commit the other sin of seeing hatred and evil in others when there is none. It could be our own darkness we are seeing. “For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you” (Matthew 7:2).

God Talks To Me (2 of 3)

William J. Stewart | Kingston, Ontario, Canada

Does God speak to folks directly, by visions or in dreams today? Many in the religious world will answer yes, citing personal experiences as evidence. As we noted last month, such claims cannot be authenticated, and the messages attributed to God by people are often contradictory.

There are several new Testament texts about communication from God. We want to look at some of those herein.

John 10:27 - *My sheep heard My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.*

Does this text demand that His voice be audibly heard? The idea of hearing His voice is used throughout John 10 (v 3, 4, 16, 27). Is He saying that one must literally hear His voice to be His? Notice verse 6:

Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them.

It's an illustration. Many heard His voice in the 1st century but didn't believe. Were they saved? His point is not we will audibly hear His voice, but we will know Him and His word. In contrast, we don't hear the voice of strangers or follow them. Does that mean Christians cannot audibly hear strangers? No, it means we won't follow false teachings of a stranger. But if we make one an audible voice, of necessity the other must be too. Foolishness!

God Speaking In The New Testament

While Jesus was upon the earth, many people heard His voice. However, the number of times He (apart from being in the flesh) or the Father speak audibly in the New Testament is very few. When the Father does speak, it is worth noting what He said. Notice:

...suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased' (Matthew 3:17).

And again,

...a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!' (Matthew 17:5).

When the Father spoke directly to people, He pointed them to His Son. That is the very thing we saw in Hebrews 1:1-2, God has spoken at various times and in various ways, but now speaks to us by His Son. Does that mean Jesus is not speaking audibly from heaven?

Read through the Scriptures and search for Jesus speaking audibly with people after His ascension in Acts 1. We don't see Jesus audibly speaking from heaven until Acts 9, when He spoke to Saul of Tarsus. No text after that has Jesus audibly speaking with someone on earth until the book of Revelation. But there, John says he was "in the Spirit" (1:10; 4:1-12; 17:3; 21:10), that is, he received the Revelation as a vision. If Jesus were speaking regularly with people on earth in an audible way, we should expect to see such in the New Testament, but we do not.

Well, maybe the Holy Spirit is speaking audibly to people today. The Holy Spirit did speak to a few people a few times in the New Testament, but again, it was rare. The first time we have a record of the Spirit speaking to someone is in Acts 8, when the Spirit told Philip to go to the Ethiopian eunuch. After that, we have a record of the Spirit speaking to Peter in Acts 10, calling Barnabas and Saul to a specific work in Acts 13, and perhaps to Paul and Silas in Acts 16. That's all. God's Spirit was not speaking directly to Christians on a regular basis.

What About Visions & Dreams?

We know that the Lord used visions and dreams to reveal things to people. But, as it was rare for the Lord to speak directly, visions and dreams were also seldom experienced. We see a record of visions in Acts 9, as Ananias was commanded to go to Saul; Acts 10, as the Lord showed Peter that the Gentiles could receive the gospel; Acts 16, as Paul was called to go to Macedonia; and Acts 18, where Paul was given assurance by the Lord in the city of Corinth. Later, when writing to the Corinthians, Paul wrote:

It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord: I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago - whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows - such a one was caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man - whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows - how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter (2 Corinthians 12:1-4).

If visions and dreams are commonplace, why did Paul not mention the man who received a vision or a dream or a revelation last week? Why does he need to go back 14 years to speak of this? It is because they are not commonplace, and they were not given to every and any Christian. They were given to specific people at specific times.

Well, At Least Angels, Right?

If God speaking directly to people or through a dream or vision was rare, then maybe He is sending angels regularly to His people, right? No. Appearances of angels in the New Testament are as rare as the Lord audibly speaking, visions and dreams. There was heightened angelic activity in the months before Jesus' birth (angels appeared to Zechariah, Mary, Joseph and to the shepherds in the field when Jesus was born). Angels also bore witness to His resurrection at the tomb. After this, messages coming from angels become exceptionally rare: an angel freed Peter and John from prison and told them to preach (Acts 5:17-20), an angel told Cornelius to send for Simon Peter (Acts 10:1-5), an angel led Peter out of prison a second time (Acts 12:1-9), and an angel assured Paul that no lives would be lost on the boat he sailed upon (Acts 27:21-24).

Two texts for us to consider about angels. First from Hebrews 1:

Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those who will inherit salvation? (Hebrews 1:14)

Angels are ministering to God's people. Whether we ever see them or not is another question. Hebrews 13:2 speaks about some unwittingly entertaining angels. Angels of God may have ministered to us in some way without us knowing it. However, part of their ministry to us IS NOT revelation. Hear the apostle Paul:

...even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed (Galatians 1:8).

God is not sending angels to reveal tidbits of truth to us. All truth has been given and is recorded in the Scriptures. We are commanded to read and understand (Ephesians 3:3; 5:17).

If God speaking audibly or by a vision or by a dream was so rare in the first century when the apostles were here, on what basis do folks today claim to have these on a regular basis. It is a claim set in ignorance or arrogance - perhaps both.

More next month...

If I Were the Devil, I Would Use the Following Thorns to Injure the Lord's Church

Timothy Massawe | Moshi, Tanzania

1. I would not give a penny to the church in collections but I would only divide the church on how the saint's collections should be spent.
2. I would never adopt or invite an orphan into my house but I would only demand the church to sign up cheques for the orphanage. In that way, I want many Christians to go to the grave having not practiced the pure and undefiled religion (James 1:27).
3. I would increase the virus of racism among Christians such that when a person of different ethnic group enters the church building for the first time, he will be wounded enough not to turn back. This strategy will effectively violate First John 4:11-12.
4. I would use the Bible more often to preach but my actions will say otherwise. I would replace God's wisdom with Human wisdom e.g. Patterns and specific commands with expediencies. I would decorate my views such that Christians will not understand my evil intention easily.
5. I would establish an agent or another spiritual organization on Earth to perform all the duties the lord Jesus vested to his church. It would be my secret kingdom within the kingdom of Christ. I would give my organization power to train, evangelize, appoint, hire and fire local preachers. I would do this intentionally to divert the instructions given to the elders of the church to feed the flock (1 Peter 5:1-2).
6. I would enact laws governing all local congregations through my Organization. I would go to Congregations in another country and solicit funds to run the Organization.

7. If my plan succeeds, my organization will shine and be known more than the Lord's church. Local Churches will start fellowship with my organization and abandon the New Testament pattern of fellowship and cooperation among themselves. I would do this intelligently until all scriptures dealing with Congregational Cooperation are totally forgotten (e.g. Romans 15:25-27).
8. I would establish another Head Quarter on Earth to govern the local congregations. If the plan of establishing a Headquarter succeeds, my secret kingdom (Government) within the kingdom of Christ will have materialized.
9. The rationale behind establishment of the headquarter to govern the local churches is that when I have some false doctrines that I want to pass on to several local congregations, it will be easier for me to call on the local preachers I will have appointed in every congregation and instruct them what to teach.
10. I have learned a lesson thousands of years ago when Moses was raised in Pharaoh's family under Pharaoh's daughters (Exodus chapter 2). Pharaoh and his army were busy killing male children outside his house and unaware of what was happening in the house with the baby boy Moses.
11. In a similar way, my secret kingdom within the kingdom of Christ will advance gradually while Christians are fighting the denominationalism outside the church; Jesus' kingdom came into existence 2,000 years ago. Mine has existed way long before that. It hurts me that some people keep following him.
12. It would be much easier for me to win the war against this man named Jesus when his kingdom is divided. I told Jesus to worship me so I could give him all that I showed him, the kingdoms of the world but he refused (Mathew 4:8). I would use the same materials to trap those who want to follow him. How? Here is the deal:
13. My secret kingdom within the Lord's church will own all the properties including the church buildings where saints worship. Unless they abandon the New Testament pattern and follow mine, I will never allow them to enjoy the physical materials I have including the church buildings.
14. I would work hard to defeat the local congregational autonomy because if each congregation is working autonomously, the rat will smell a cat and my false doctrines will easily be challenged by other independent local churches. So the deal is to put all of them together under subjection.
15. With my organization, the need for eldership in those local congregations will become useless and, if the eldership is obtained, their oversight will be bypassed.
16. Those who work close with me will be recommended positively, those who challenge me, I will lower their reputation by circulating a very bad and false information against them. If they continue to challenge me, I would conspire and charge them for any criminal offense in the court of Law. My secret government in the Lord's church would also have a secret connection system with the civil governments.
17. I would use lay people/Christians to teach others spiritually and intelligent ones to rule over them physically. Those who know me in-depth, will have two options, either to work with me, get salary and shut their mouths or refuse me and be attacked vigorously.

Dear Christians, the devil has existed long before anyone living today was born, if you are a Child of God, you need to be ready to defeat him in all corners of conspiracy. If he enters the Church by wanting human power in God's kingdom, know how you should defeat him. If he comes through the love of money, know him and fight him strongly with the Holy Scriptures.

Remember, it is only God who has given us the way. The devil has never given us any book we should read to know his techniques, how he operates etc. He has read the Bible more than you think. He knows the scriptures and he can twist them to fit his intention easily.

The contents of paragraph 1-17 intend to show Christians the danger of a congregation drifting away from sound doctrine. Any departure from the truth provides a loophole for the devil to operate.

All the facts I have mentioned in this article attack Christ and his church more than you would attack me after disclosing them. Don't think harshly of me. Taking people out of the devil's hands has never been easy. This is the devil against God not me against another person.

(Brother Massawe is describing TZ2000, an American controlled missionary society controlling most churches of Christ in Tanzania. A similar organization in Nigeria is "Church of Christ - Nigeria," operated by a board of directors that tries to control all churches of Christ in Nigeria including their meeting halls.- KS)

Black Lives Matter is a Satanic Organization

Brent Sharp | Shannon Hills, Arkansas, USA

Christians have historically been concerned with issues of racism and unjust treatment of different people before the law and by the church. The Old Testament stated that the Israelites were not to oppress a foreigner amongst them, and to treat him justly (Exodus 23:9, Leviticus 19:33) while the New Testament declares that there is neither Jew nor Greek in Christ and James prohibits favoritism in who is received in fellowship. Many Christians have, however, joined forces and supported an organization which is diametrically opposed to Christ and His gospel, namely the "Black Lives Matter" organization.

What, exactly, is anti-Christian about "Black Lives Matter"? Let's look at what they believe, in their own words. The following quotes come from their own official website,

<https://blacklivesmatter.com/what-we-believe/>

"We are guided by the fact that all Black lives matter, regardless of actual or perceived sexual identity, gender identity, gender expression, economic status, ability, disability, religious beliefs or disbeliefs, immigration status, or location. "We make space for transgender brothers and sisters to participate and lead. "We are self-reflexive and do the work required to dismantle cisgender privilege and uplift Black trans folk, especially Black trans women who continue to be disproportionately impacted by trans-antagonistic violence."

The Black Lives Matter is at least as intent on pushing the "transgender" agenda as it is in addressing racism. This is found throughout their literature. They desire to "dismantle cisgender privilege" which means a desire to, amongst other things, dismantle the nuclear family, promote homosexual "marriage", indoctrinate children into accepting homosexuality and transvestites as normal, everyday, acceptable practices, and promote the agenda of Black transvestites. What they refer to as "women" are perverted men who dress as women, and in some cases have themselves surgically mutilated to try to appear female.

Additionally, from the same source above, the Black Lives Matter organization affirms:

"We disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure requirement by supporting each other as extended families and 'villages' that collectively care for one another, especially our children, to the degree that mothers, parents, and children are comfortable. We foster a queer affirming network. When we gather, we do so with the intention of freeing ourselves from the tight grip of heteronormative thinking, or rather, the belief that all in the world are heterosexual (unless s/he or they disclose otherwise)."

Their desire is to raise children, preferably without fathers present, in an setting where homosexuality is affirmed as the norm. They do not merely preach "tolerance" of homosexuality, they "affirm" it, and teach that the normal male/female relationship created by God is a form of oppression.

Insofar as fathers are concerned, all they have to say is, "We build a space that affirms Black women and is free from sexism, misogyny, and environments in which men are centered." They are having nothing whatsoever to do with husband/father centered families; you will be hard pressed to even find those words appearing anywhere in their writings, for reasons we will get to later.

As to Christianity:

The image to the right comes directly from the Black Lives Matter Little Rock chapter Facebook page.

Amongst other types of “white supremacy” they list “Judeo-Christianity.” Now, just to be clear, I am a Christian, not a “Judeo-Christian”, but we should at least understand that term in the context Black Lives Matters uses it, which is

“Judeo-Christian is a term which is used to group Christianity and Judaism together, either in reference to Christianity’s derivation from Judaism, both religions’ common use of the Bible, or due to perceived parallels or commonalities and shared values between the two religions”

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judeo-Christian>

The point is that the Black Lives Matter movement explicitly condemns the Bible and those who would follow it. This is not a grey area or one where there is simply a misunderstanding; it is a fundamental, bedrock foundation of the Black Lives Matter organization. Or, to put it more succinctly, if you’re a Christian you’re a racist Nazi.

Do the founders of Black Lives Matters really believe these things? Well, the first of the three women on the list of founders is one Alicia Garza.

“In 2003 she met Malachi Garza, 24, who was a transsexual man and a community activist. In 2004 Alicia informed her family that she was gay. In 2008 Alicia married Malachi and took the name Garza, settling in Oakland”

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alicia_Garza).

Next up we have, “Patrisse Cullors (born June 20, 1983) is an American artist and activist. Cullors is an advocate for prison abolition in Los Angeles and a co-founder of the Black Lives Matter movement.[1][2] She also identifies as a queer activist.[3]” “In an interview, Cullors has described herself and Alicia Garza as “trained marxists”

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patrisse_Cullors).

The third founding member of Black Lives Matter had this to say: “Opal Tometi: I want to see all candidates have a substantive racial justice agenda. This would be a robust agenda that addresses race at every major issue area: jobs, economy, immigrant rights, health care, housing, LGBT rights and so on”

<https://www.opaltometi.org/2015/07/24/blacklivesmatter-founders-discuss-charleston-the-presidential-race-and-the-black-spring/>).

It’s clear from their own words that the Black Lives Matter movement fully embraces the homosexual agenda, pushes that agenda, and explicitly rejects Christianity. One may be a member of this movement, or one may be a Christian, but you cannot be both. To embrace this movement is to have “fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness” and in so doing to forsake Christ.

Black Lives Matter Little Rock
August 25, 2017 at 7:07 PM · 🌐



BYP 100 August 25, 2017 at 6:36 PM · 🌐

“The presence of Nazis and other forms of blatant white supremacy allows white people to construct a false separation between themselves and explicit white supremacy, allowing the “good” white people to return comfortably to an implicitly white supremacist system that oppresses people of color through its laws and institutions.

Philippians 2:12 in it's Context

Trevor Campbell | Pyatt, Arkansas, USA

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12). This verse is commonly quoted, but the context is often neglected. In this brief study we’ll take a closer look at the surrounding

text. Let's begin by considering three points made by Paul in the context:

1) He speaks to the church about unity in chapters one and two - "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel..." (1:27), "fulfill my joy by being likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind" (2:2). In these two verses the word "one" is used four times combined: one spirit, one mind, one accord, and again one mind. It's clear that Paul is focused on unity in the local church. He later says, "do all things without complaining and disputing" (2:14). A true church of Christ works together, but this can only be accomplished when individuals act in humility. Which brings us to our second point.

2) He speaks of humility.

"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interest, but also the interest of others" (2:3-4).

He later says, "become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault" (2:15). If they were to be a unified church of Christ, each member would need to have a spirit of humility.

3) He gives an example of humility. Paul gives the example of Jesus.

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (2:5-8).

Looking to Jesus as the example, they were to "Let this mind" be also in them. Jesus Christ showed a spirit of humility, and exemplified humble obedience. Paul then shows that Christ was rewarded for His humble obedience- "Therefore God has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name" (2:9). Paul here is teaching an idea that Jesus repeated during His ministry - "he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Matthew 23:12, Luke 14:11; 18:14). So in Philippians chapter two we have an example of Jesus' humility, His humble obedience, and His subsequent exaltation.

Having highlighted these several points in the text we see a focus on humility. We see that humility is necessary for unity, for obedience, and if we want to be exalted by God. Coming back to our initial text of Philippians 2:12, Paul commands- "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." To "work out" refers to working to achieve some goal, in this case salvation. The words "fear and trembling" are both associated with the subject of humility. In context this verse teaches us to do our work in Christ with a humble spirit, working toward salvation, and working toward our exaltation. Philippians 2:12 is a verse best understood in it's context, with a focus on humility.

"And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast saying, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 18:13-14).

Outbursts of Wrath

Keith Sharp | Mountain Home, Arkansas, USA

Atomic energy, the most powerful, earthly energy source used by man, is capable of amazing good or incalculable harm. Estimates are that at least 225,000 Japanese died as the result of the atom bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. But in 2016 almost 20% of electricity in America was generated by nuclear power plants.

Anger is the most powerful human emotion (Vine. 1:55). Anger is closely associated with wrath (cf. Ephesians 4:31) or "outbursts of wrath" (Galatians 5:20). Anger, properly directed and controlled is a righteous characteristic of God (Romans 2:5-9) and Christ (Mark 3:5; Revelation 19:15). It is not sinful in

itself to be angry (Ephesians 4:26). But improperly directed or uncontrolled anger is sinful and destructive (Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 4:31).

What kind of anger is sinful?

Six closely related sins are enumerated in Ephesians 4:31: "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice."

"Bitterness" is "animosity, anger, harshness" (Arndt & Gingrich. 663). It is smoldering resentment, holding a grudge. It might be manifested in harsh speech to or about someone or even by refusing to speak to that person.

"Wrath," well translated "outbursts of wrath" in Galatians 5:20, as one of the sinful works of the flesh, is fierce anger that quickly blazes up and as quickly subsides (Thayer. 293; Vine. 1:56). It is manifested by angry outbursts or even physical attacks. King Saul's wrath rooted in jealousy led him to try to kill his faithful and best soldier, David (1 Samuel 18:6-11).

"Anger" is the more general word, indicating "a strong feeling of displeasure and usually of antagonism" (Meriam-Webster).

"Clamor" involves "outcry... shouting" (Mounce. 1195). The angry, "loud outcry" of the Pharisees and Sadducees toward one another over the apostle Paul in Acts 23:9 is a translation of the same word translated "clamor." "Clamor" is angry argument.

"Evil speaking" is otherwise translated "blasphemy." Both the **NASB** and the **ESV** render it "slander" in Ephesians 4:31. King Saul, because of his hot wrath at his loyal servant David and his faithful son Jonathan, called Jonathan "you son of a perverse, rebellious woman"! (1 Samuel 20:30) His wrath led him to slander both his wife and his son.

"Malice" is "ill will," the "desire to injure" another. When a fellow says "I'd like to punch that guy!," he's confessing malice. Malicious gossip stems from malice.

Paul states another display of sinful anger in Colossians 3:8 where he warns against "filthy language out of your mouth." The phrase "filthy language" means "obscene language, foul talk" (Mounce. 1074; so **ESV**). When a crude, foul mouth yells curses and four-letter expletives, he is guilty of the "filthy language" caused by an outburst of wrath.

Sinful anger leads to cruelty toward those at whom we are angry (Proverbs 27:4; Genesis 49:5-7).

It causes strife (Proverbs 15:18; 30:33), including strife in the church (2 Corinthians 12:20). Unrepented, it will cause eternal condemnation (Galatians 5:21).

How many cherished friendships have been broken, homes have been torn apart, congregations divided, innocent people caused to suffer, and souls have been lost because of sinful anger? "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice."

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