

**JUDGES 14:19-20**  
**ANGER, FRUIT OR FLESH?**

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Judges chapter 14 as we continue our in-depth study of the book of Judges.

We are currently looking at the last Judge in the book of Judges, and that is Samson. Only the Judge Gideon is spoken of more in the book of Judges than Samson and yet, when you compare the two, there seems to be a great difference.

And yes, Gideon, at the end of his life did not finish well, but he started out as a humble man and walked by faith, trusting in the Lord as God used Gideon to defeat the oppression of the Midianites.

But for Samson, he was a loner, he worked alone and most of the time, his actions were born out of anger and not for anything else. And we will see that here this morning as we look at this topic – ***ANGER, FRUIT OR FLESH?***

And what I mean by that is this. Do we see anger as a fruit of the Spirit or a works of the flesh? And I think we all know the answer to that one. Anger is not a fruit of the Spirit, but it is a work of the flesh, as Paul tells us in Galatians chapter 5.

Let me share this article with you from July 28, 2020. This article deals with Americans and their anger issues. How we seem to be angrier now than ever before. We are told,

I snaked through the Delaware Water Gap and headed westward on Interstate 80, the lush green foliage spreading out before me. My object was to visit some friends and linger for a few days in the Midwestern states that tipped the outcome of the 2016 election. What's the mood, I wondered?

After a few stops and conversations, the answer became clear. Nearly everyone I spoke with expressed frustration, anxiety, disquiet, despair. And anger, especially anger.

People are angry about the lockdowns. Religious folks are angry about the church closures. Some are angry about Black Lives Matter protests and toppled monuments. Still others are angry about the conservative movement, which they see as increasingly ineffective. Everybody is angry at the mainstream media, which they consider hopelessly biased.

One friend observed that he took the lockdown seriously, accepting the dictates of medical experts. It came at a great cost. His brother, ill with cancer, died in early May. He could not visit him or attend his funeral. A month later, the same public health experts endorsed BLM marches that numbered in the tens of thousands. My friend is infuriated by the duplicity.

In Western Pennsylvania, another friend expressed outrage at lockdowns and the suspension of civil liberties. He noted that the chief public health official in Pennsylvania is a transgender person, appointed by Governor Tom Wolfe. “It’s the worst-case scenario of identity politics,” he observed. “We have a mentally ill person controlling the lives of 13.5 million people so that the governor can feel good about being a paragon of inclusion.”

Some were equally pointed in their harsh assessments of the church closures, which they regarded as too draconian. One person called it “a clerical abuse of the laity” that he deemed more destructive than the sexual abuse scandals. Others were not so hostile, but nearly all agreed that the churches are increasingly irrelevant to our political-cultural struggles, even as they remain spiritually essential.

A friend in Minneapolis told me about his father, a working-class man who “isn’t political,” as he put it. My friend was therefore shocked when his dad showed him a copy of a letter he had written to Governor Tim Walz. In it, he expressed outrage that public authorities had not intervened to prevent the destruction of a statue of Christopher Columbus. “That’s so unlike my dad,” my friend observed. “He’s not the kind of person who gets wrapped up in political controversies.”

Others were less ardent. They expressed more despair than anger over *Bostock* and what they see as the ongoing erosion of a stable moral consensus in American society. “Where do we go from here?” they asked.

When I asked about the election mood in their communities, they reported that political realities are increasingly hidden from view. One said, “Right now journalists seem ignorant of what most people are thinking, perhaps willfully so.” When I pressed him about why that’s the case, he replied, “In all fairness, most people won’t say what they’re thinking. It’s too dangerous.”

A few told stories that suggest the Obama-to-Trump voters in Ohio and other Midwestern states are more supportive of the president, not less so. One spoke of a working-class neighbor with tattoo sleeves and four kids who struggles to stay ahead of his bills. He voted for Obama two times, but switched to Trump in 2016. His vote was reluctant. He regarded Trump as a mean-spirited man, which he does not like. But BLM has enraged him. He interprets the rhetoric of the past two months as accusing him of being a racist. My friend reports that this neighbor is now an enthusiastic Trump supporter.

I don't believe anecdotes [stories] predict elections. In any event, an election forecast was not the object of my travels. I wanted to get a sense of our national mood. I anticipated encountering heightened emotions. Most commentators have observed that our country is increasingly polarized. But I was taken aback by the intensity.

My sample of opinion was from the right side of the spectrum of American politics and culture. But people on the left side are clearly angry as well. Some are in the streets, angry about what they regard as systemic oppression of minorities. Columnists for the *New York Times* vituperate [vilify] and condemn with regularity, a sure sign of heightened emotions among the liberal establishment, not just the radical left. And pretty much everyone I know on the left is enraged that Trump is in the White House.

- <https://bit.ly/3akgwor>

Now you may be feeling that you have every right to be angry at what you see going on. But, once again, is this kind of anger a fruit of the Spirit or a work of the flesh?

And with the anger of American's rising, as Christians, is our anger a godly thing or a fleshly thing? What is being manifested in our lives as we are angry? What are the words that are coming out of our mouths as we are angry?

And, maybe by the time this message is over, or, even now, some of you may be angry at me. I would ask you to not go by your feelings, but listen to what the Word of God is saying, because that is our only answer, especially in the days we are living in.

We will see with Samson, his anger, his temper, was not a good thing, and in the end, he will lose his wife over it.

I have broken these verses we will be looking at this morning into two main points. They are,

***SAMSON LOST HIS TEMPER – JUDGES 14:19***

***SAMSON LOST HIS WIFE – JUDGES 14:20***

So with that as our background, let's begin reading in Judges chapter 14, beginning in verse 19 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word and look at this topic –

***ANGER, FRUIT OR FLESH?***

### **JUDGES 14**

#### **VERSE 19**

Remember what I titled this verse – ***SAMSON LOST HIS TEMPER!***

I think we can see that pretty clearly by the actions of Samson. Samson lost the bet, he had to get these guys 30 changes of clothes and he does this by going to Ashkelon, some 30 or so miles away and kills 30 Philistine men and brings their clothes back and gives it to these 30 young men that he lost the bet to!

Again, very clear, he was angry and out of that anger he killed these 30 Philistine men. And we could probably just leave it like that, except for the fact that the verse opens up by saying, **“Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon him mightily . . .”** Judges 14:19.

Now things get a little tricky here. Did the Lord do this or did Samson just act out of anger?

First of all, let's look at where Samson was at, Timnah. He was in the enemy's camp. He was not to be down there. In fact, why would he even make friends with the enemy? We are told in Judges 13:1, "**Again the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.**"

For forty years they were oppressed by the Philistines and now Samson is befriending them, he made friends with the enemy!

Not only was he down in the enemy's camp, but he is marrying a Philistine woman, not a daughter of Israel. Again, God warned the children of Israel not to do that.

Remember what Paul said in II Corinthians 6:14-18, "**Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.' Therefore 'Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.' I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty.**"

I think that is pretty clear, unless we don't like what it is saying and then we can make it say whatever we want, and that is a dangerous thing to do, as Samson found out!

Get the picture that Paul is trying to paint here for us. Being unequally yoked together does not work. You see, if you have an ox and a sheep yoked together to work on the field, how is that going to go?

You don't have to be a farmer to figure this one out. It won't work because they could not work together, they are unequally yoked! The ox can pull more than a sheep and the sheep is going to go where he wants and the ox where he wants and that will be nowhere, or, I guess, the ox will pull the sheep around to where he wants to go!

And that is the point that Paul is making for us. We are not to be yoked together with unbelievers.

In dating, don't date an unbeliever and don't marry an unbeliever. Now if you are already married and your spouse is not a believer, then, by your actions, let them see Jesus so that they may come to saving faith!

And this is not only for marriage, it is for business practices and life in general. Your best friend can't be an unbeliever because they will lead you down the wrong path, they will give you advice that may be great for your flesh, but not for your spirit. We see that here with Samson as he befriends these thirty Philistine men, they don't lead him in the things of God. In fact, he does the exact opposite!

I am not saying we can't know unbelievers, for we are to be a witness to them. But if we spend all our time with unbelievers, eventually we will be brought down to their level!

***“So Pastor Joe, are you saying that the Spirit of the LORD did not come upon Samson so that he could destroy those thirty Philistine men? This is confusing because that is what it seems to be saying!”***

Yes, I believe that the Spirit of the LORD came upon Samson, but it was not because Samson was doing what he was supposed to be doing. In fact, he fell far short of what he should have done.

Keep in mind that Samson was a Judge in Israel and thus, he was supposed to deliver the children of Israel from the bondage they were in at the hands of the Philistines. But he really is not doing that, is he?

Do you really think that the Spirit of the LORD came upon Samson to avenge the hurt feelings of Samson or to repay this bet? Of course not!

Remember why he is angry in the first place.

Samson did not have any friends down in Timnah and I don't think he had any friends in Israel either. So, at this seven-day wedding feast for Samson and his bride, they bring in thirty Philistine men to party with.

And Samson, being very prideful, is going to tell them a riddle. Listen to what transpired. We are told in Judges 14:12-14, **“Then Samson said to them, ‘Let me pose a riddle to you. If you can correctly solve and explain it to me within the seven days of the feast, then I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing. But if you cannot explain it to me, then you shall give me thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing.’ And they said to him, ‘Pose your riddle, that we may hear it.’ So he said to them: ‘Out of the eater came something to eat, And out of the strong came something sweet.’ Now for three days they could not explain the riddle.”**

Now Samson knew that they would never get that riddle and thus, he was secure that they would be giving him some clothes!

But they tried to get Samson's wife to tell the secret and she worked on Samson to tell her, and he did. You see, finally, on the seventh day of this wedding feast, she tells these Philistine men what the riddle is all about and they tell Samson!

And here is what transpired, **“So the men of the city said to him on the seventh day before the sun went down: ‘What is sweeter than honey? And what is stronger than a lion?’ And he said to them: ‘If you had not plowed with my heifer, You would not have solved my riddle!’”** Judges 14:18.

And Samson exploded with anger. He was going to get back at these men for what they did and thus, he would kill thirty Philistine men and take their clothes and give them to these men for guessing this riddle!

This was not done to help the children of Israel. This was not done to honor God by destroying the enemy. This is done out of anger and let me be clear on this, anger is not a fruit of the Spirit, not even close!

But what about the Spirit of the LORD coming upon Samson?

Yes, that is true and think about this. How many Philistine men did he kill?

Only thirty and yet, he could have pushed back and delivered the children of Israel from their bondage at the hands of the Philistines, but he did not.

Yes, God used Samson, but it was out of his anger at what was done to him and not what was done and is being done to the children of Israel. For Samson, he only began to deliver the children of Israel from their bondage at the hands of the Philistines, he did not deliver them as he should have, as a Judge was to do! (Judges 13:5)

And, as we can see, Samson doesn't deliver Israel any more than his selfish desires lead him to do.

The Lord wanted to direct Samson, but he was not going to listen and, like Psalm 32:8-9 says, **“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye. Do not be like the horse or like the mule, Which have no understanding, Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, Else they will not come near you.”**

The Living Bible puts these verses like this, **“I will instruct you (says the Lord) and guide you along the best pathway for your life; I will advise you and watch your progress. Don’t be like a senseless horse or mule that has to have a bit in its mouth to keep it in line!”**

I don’t know about you, but I am blown away that God loves me that much that He wants to guide my life, He wants to teach me, and He feels the same way about you!

How does He do it?

He says that He will do it with His eye. That means we have to be looking at Him, our eyes have to be focused on Him, it speaks of fellowship, it speaks of being in His Word.

Think about the defensive players on a football team. They watch the quarterback and they watch where he is looking, they pay attention to his eye contact because, more than likely, he is going to throw the ball in that direction and you can be ready to intercept it if you are paying attention.

The same is true with the Lord, we need to keep our eyes upon Him, especially in the days we are living in.

And we are not to respond out of anger towards people, because of situations that we are facing, but we must be guided by the Lord for as we follow Him, there will be much fruit that will be born out of that situation!

Now we don't have to follow the Lord. We can do our own thing. And yet, because God loves us so much and wants what is best for our lives, he has another way that He can direct us and that is by bit and bridle.

In other words, just as a wild animal is directed with pain in the way he should go, God will direct us. But God does not want to direct us this way. If we refuse to look to Him, He will lead us like a wild animal, by inflicting some pain in our life to get us to go in the right direction.

Thus, keep your eyes on the Lord, focus upon Him and obey His directions for your life as you read His Word and are in fellowship with Him!

And for Samson, he refused to listen and obey the Lord and thus, the Lord inflicted some pain upon his life to get him to move in the direction that He wanted him to go. But, as you can see, he fell far short of all that God had for him, only thirty Philistines killed and the oppression by the Philistines continued on.

I want to take a few minutes and deal with this idea of wrath and anger because, like I have said, this is not a fruit of the Spirit, it is a work of the flesh, and that is not a good thing!

In Ephesians chapter 4 Paul is speaking of putting on the new man, putting on Christ and if you put on Christ then you must put off the old man and all that went with it.

Look at what Paul tells us in Ephesians 4:29-32, "**Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.**"

What I want to focus on are three points that Paul says we need to have removed from our lives and that is bitterness, wrath and anger. Yes, there are others, but here with Samson, we see bitterness, wrath and anger drive him instead of the Lord guide him.

Let me deal with “**bitterness**” first.

This is the Greek word PIKRIA (pik-ree’-ah) and it speaks of a smoldering resentment. The kind that just keeps building and building inside of you making you sour and unloving.

Think of a little child eating a lemon for the first time and the way their face looks. That is how we look as we let bitterness grow in our lives!

And this is so important for us to understand, otherwise, if it wasn’t why did God mention it in His Word, and it is not only here in Ephesians? He wouldn’t if it wasn’t important, but it is!

Let me show you what I mean about bitterness and how it can affect our lives. And this is from someone who should have known better and today, many look to the teachings of this man for help with mental health issues.

But he was one who needed help, the help of God. This man is Sigmund Freud and listen to what is said of him. We are told,

Armand M. Nicholi, M. D., professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, explains that Sigmund Freud died at the age of 83, a bitter and disillusioned man. Tragically, this Viennese physician, one of the most influential thinkers of our time, had little compassion for the common person.

Freud wrote in 1918, “I have found little that is good about human beings on the whole. In my experience most of them are trash, no matter whether they publicly subscribe to this or that ethical doctrine or to none at all” (Veritas Reconsidered, p. 36). Freud died friendless. It is well-known that he had broken with each of his followers. The end was bitter.

- Discoveries, Summer, 1991, Vol 2, No. 3, p. 1

Make no mistake about it, that is what bitterness can do if we do not put it out of our lives, if we don't put off that old man and put on the new man, put on Christ!

For Samson, he was bitter that these men got his wife to tell them the answer to the riddle he gave them, and that bitterness did not help Samson, it hurt him. And the same is true for us. Do we want to be bitter or better in Christ?

And think about it. Samson had no friends. Could it be that he let bitterness drive them away? Could be.

Then Paul speaks of “**wrath**” and it is THUMOS, (thoo-mos') in the Greek and it is like a wild rage. A good illustration of this is straw that catches on fire, it burns very quickly and before you know it its out, but in its path, there is much destruction. I am sure you have seen this before in people.

He is so full of wrath because of what these men did to him, he runs from his wedding party and kills these thirty Philistine men. He just explodes and that is never a good thing because it will leave death and destruction in our path!

And lastly, there is “**anger**” or ORGE (or-gay') in the Greek and this is more of an internal feeling and reflects a long-standing continual anger, something you just can't let go and it builds inside of you.

You know how it is. Someone does something to you and you can't let it go and it builds up inside of you and finally it explodes and again, death and destruction in our path!

I am sure that many if not all of you have heard of Moby Dick. Let me share with you the real story that led to the book. We are told,

For hardy whalers, no ocean was too wide to cross in pursuit of their mighty prizes. In 1819, more than a dozen ships were launched from Nantucket, all headed for distant Pacific hunting grounds.

One, the three-masted Essex, was to suffer a calamity so dramatic that its fate inspired a classic American novel - Herman Melville's Moby Dick.

For months the ship survived the hazards of rounding Cape Horn and taking its prey. But one day a mammoth sperm whale rammed the Essex head-on.

Then the leviathan passed under the vessel, turned, and attacked again. The whale hit, as first mate Owen Chase recalled, "with ten-fold fury and vengeance." The crew abandoned ship, and from their whaleboats watched as the Essex slid into the sea.

- Today in the Word, September 20, 1992

That is how many people respond, they keep going after someone until they sink them. They let this bitterness, wrath and anger burn in them to the point of destruction and Paul is saying that we need to put off that old man and put on the new man, put on Christ or we will be like this whale and bring destruction in people's lives!

Let me share this with you to show you how you respond will affect your life.

During the playoffs in Basketball, many years ago, the Knicks and Bullets were playing. And, for some reason, one of the Bullets players came up from behind and punched Walt Frazier right in the face! Not only did Walt Frazier get punched in the face, but, for whatever reason, the referee called a foul on Walt Frazier!

Talk about having the right to be bitter, to be full of wrath, to be angry, Walt Frazier had that right, in human reasoning.

Think about what you would do in a situation like that!

But Walt Frazier did not complain. He did not retaliate and hit the Bullets player back.

All he did was call for the ball and he put in seven shots and won the game. He did not let anger control his actions!

What a lesson for us to learn.

We are to put anger out of our lives, not let it control us and thus, we must put off that old man and put on the new man, put on Christ!

And please understand that I am not saying that this is easy, that there is not a battle that goes on here.

Paul made that very clear about this battle between the flesh and the Spirit as he wrote in Galatians 5:16-26, **“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.”**

Do you see the key here?

Where are you walking, in the flesh or in the Spirit? There is a battle, so the walk is not going to be easy, but who are you focusing upon, the Lord or yourself?

You see, wherever you are focused upon, it is where you will be walking!

Thus, be in the Word of God. Be in fellowship with God. Be with other believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. And allow the fruit of the Spirit, *LOVE*, that Agape love to flow from your life and it will be manifested with joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Samson was so focused upon self that it was the thing that drove him instead of the Lord guiding him and it did not turn out well for Samson as he continued going down and away from the Lord!

And let me say this. Anger is not good for you, speaking of your physical well-being.

New studies show that regular feelings of anger increase the likelihood for heart disease, and that within two hours of an outburst, the chances of a heart attack or stroke skyrocket.

How much better to give it to the Lord, lay it at his feet and let His love flow from you and through you.

Now let me also say this. There is a righteous anger or indignation that is okay to have.

But let me also make this point. Most of the time that is not the issue. You see, the issue tends to be related to what has happened to me and thus, I respond in anger.

That is not a righteous anger.

Righteous anger is when people speak against our Lord, when there are atrocities done to others, and we are angry and what has taken place.

And for Samson, this was not a righteous anger, this was an anger that was born out of what happened to him and thus, he went out and killed thirty Philistines men because –

***SAMSON LOST HIS TEMPER!***

VERSE 20

What a sad commentary of events here in the life of Samson as we see – *SAMSON*  
*LOSE HIS WIFE!*

And the close of Judges 14:19 we are told after Samson killed the thirty Philistine men and gave their clothes to those who answered his riddle, that “**. . . he went back up to his father’s house.**”

What happened here in Judges chapter 14?

Samson went down to Timnah to marry a Philistine woman?

Now what happened?

He went home to his mom and dad because he was angry at his wife for telling these men the answer to his riddle!

How old was Samson here?

Chronologically, he was an adult, obviously, but maturity wise, he was acting like a child.

Look at what took place. And again, this is all because of what his wife had done. And also keep in mind that this was before they even consummated their marriage.

Samson goes back home mad; full of anger and his wife was given to his best man and Samson does not even realize this!

Can you imagine the marriage counseling on this one!

What is truly tragic is that the Spirit of God came upon Samson, but He did not listen, and he did his own thing and how did that work out? Not too well!

Now granted, he should have never married a Philistine woman, but as you will see next time, because of what transpired here, the giving of his wife to his best man, Samson will act in anger and in the end, it brings death and destruction down that path that Samson is traveling on.

As I have said, God wants to direct our lives, we need to not only listen but also obey, it is for our own good!

And folk's, what a joy it is to know that God wants to guide us, He wants to teach us, but how does He do it?

Like we have seen in Psalm 32, He will do it with His eye. That means we have to be looking at Him, our eyes have to be focused on Him, it speaks of fellowship, it speaks of being in His Word.

And again, the other way God directs us is by bit and bridle, as a wild animal is directed with pain in the way he should go. But God does not want to direct us this way, but if we refuse to look to Him, He will lead us like a wild animal, by inflicting some pain in our life, to get us to go in the right direction. I don't think Samson was listening, do you?

And, this is nothing more than anger on Samson's part and he is trying to get back at his wife. But, as I have said, that kind of anger leaves death and destruction in its path.

Let me share this with you to help us get a good perspective on anger. We are told,

Chances are, almost everyone here was angry at least once this past week. It may have been minor frustration with another driver or being irritated with your kids for not putting away their toys. It could have been a situation at work.

Some husbands and wives live with daily anger and hurt feelings. Some parents and their children are in a constant battle of outbursts of anger and abusive words. Many adults have hurts from childhood that keep bubbling to the surface. Every time they think about them, they seethe with anger.

If you're thinking, "Who, me, angry? I'm a Christian. I don't get angry," then you probably have a more serious anger problem than those who readily admit, "Yes, I struggle with anger."

In California an elder's face was red and the veins on his neck were bulging out as he angrily told me with a clenched jaw, "I'm not angry!" I thought to myself, "I'd hate to see you when you are angry!"

In *The Christian Counselor's Manual* ([Baker], p. 359), Jay Adams states, "Anger is a problem for every Christian; sinful anger is probably involved in 90 percent of all counseling problems."

Think of what would happen if everyone learned to deal with their anger! Child abuse and divorce would be eradicated. Murder, terrorism, and war would stop. And many health problems would clear up. Doctors believe that anger can harm the heart as much as smoking and high blood pressure do.

The number one predictor in cardiovascular disease - more important than cholesterol - is mismanaged anger (Los Angeles [3/88]). Besides high blood pressure and heart disease, anger can result in many other serious health problems.

So our text is very practical. Paul says,

Colossians 3:8: "***But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth.***"

If you're honest, your reaction to this verse is probably, "I agree! But, really, how do you do it?" It's easy to say, "Put all your anger and abusive speech aside."

But it's another thing to do it!

Paul's advice here reminds me of the hilarious Bob Newhart routine where he is a psychologist and a woman comes for counsel because she is afraid of being buried alive in a box.

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Newhart's counsel for her phobia, plus several other problems, consists of two words: "Stop it!" He screams it at her over and over, "Just stop it!" She tries to bring up how her mother treated her as a child, but Newhart says, "No, we don't go there. Just stop it!"

Well, here Paul seems to say, "You're angry? Just stop it!"

"But, Paul, when I was a child, my parents abused me. So now I seethe with anger."

"Put it all aside!"

"But, Paul, my wife nags me constantly until I explode with anger."

"Put it all aside!"

"But Paul, my husband is a workaholic who leaves all the housework and dealing with the kids to me. He's so inconsiderate! I'm so angry with him!"

"Put it all aside!"

"But, Paul, my kids sass me and don't do what I say, no matter how many times I ask them to do it. The only way I can get them to obey is to yell at them!"

"Put it all aside!"

"But, Paul, you don't understand. My boss at work favors his daughter who works for the company and he treats me unfairly. I get so angry. I just hate him!"

"Put it all aside!"

It's as if Paul had taken lessons from Bob Newhart! He doesn't say that it will take years of psychotherapy to work through your anger issues. He doesn't tell these new believers to sign up for an anger management class. He simply tells them, "Put it all aside."

I wonder if we've made things more complicated than they need to be. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul writes to people from pagan backgrounds who had been involved in some pretty serious sins which undoubtedly left them wounded and scarred (Col. 3:5-7).

They didn't have study Bibles and Christian books on how to deal with anger. There were no video series by famous Christian counselors. In fact, there were no Christian counselors!

There were no magazines offering self-help articles on anger management. And all Paul says is, "Put it all aside." That's amazing! . . .

Our relationships, especially in our families, are very important to the Lord! Don't live in anger all week long and then put on a veneer of worshiping God on Sundays. He wants us to put aside the old, dirty clothes of sinful anger and abusive speech and to put on the new, clean clothes of love, kindness, and forgiveness in Christ. The Lord's Supper is a frequent reminder of how He forgave us. Even so, we are to forgive and love one another.

- <https://bit.ly/3iHiy4R>

And that nails it but let me also say this. If your relationship with God is off, then your relationship with others will be off as well and you will see bitterness, anger, wrath in your life and that is not a good thing.

And you can know how you are doing with God by looking at how you are treating others! It is a very simple test.

Are you bitter towards others?

Then your relationship with God is off!

Are you angry towards others?

Then your relationship with God is off!

Are you full of wrath towards others?

Then your relationship with God is off!

Now I do realize some of you may be upset with me on that because you feel that your relationship with God is strong, it is good!

But let me ask you this. If your relationship with God is in line, if you are obeying Him and following after Him, then why are you having such a hard time loving people as He loves?

Remember what Jesus said in John 10:34-35, **“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”**

Also, we are told in John chapter 15 by Jesus, **“This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. . . . These things I command you, that you love one another.”** John 15:12, 17.

How important it is to let the love of God, according to the Word of God, empowered by the Spirit of God to guide us and not to let our emotions, our feelings drive us to do things that the Lord does not want us to do!

Make no mistake about it, anger causes us to lose our temper and lose our relationships and love, the love of God is something that builds relationships!

As I close this morning, let me leave you with this story We are told,

One winter in Chicago, a young man of dissipated habits was happily converted to God. His life was so radically changed that not a soul who knew him doubted the depth and genuineness of God's work of grace in his heart. He lived like a Christian for many months.

One stormy evening in November, after business hours, he was on his way home when he was delayed by an open drawbridge. A large, brilliantly lighted bar stood right at hand. He had often frequented such places before his conversion, but never since that time.

This evening, however, as he waited for the bridge to turn and let him through, he stepped into the bar for no other reason than to get out of the pelting sleet.

Suddenly, all the familiar temptations closed around him, and almost before he was aware of his danger, he had ordered a drink. One drink led to another, and before he left the place he was partially intoxicated. Before he reached home he despaired of his salvation. "My family, my friends, the church, will all know about it," he groaned within himself. "No one will have any confidence in me. I am disgraced, lost."

- Illustrations of Bible Truths

Let me say this. The lesson for us is this. Don't play with fire, don't go places that God doesn't want you to go, it is going to hurt you. We see that here with this man who came to faith and let Satan tempt him into sin and he was devastated over it, he thought he lost his Christian witness.

For Samson, he too played with fire and got burned. Did God use the events of Samson's life to punish the Philistines?

Yes, He did, but not to the extent that He wanted to do through Samson. He killed thirty Philistines and not for God, but because of His anger, and that is never a good thing.

Now, what about this man who came to Christ and one day, entered a bar and went back to his old lifestyle, his old ways, he got drunk. What happened to him? Did he walk away from the life in Christ that he had because of this or did he return to the Lord? Well, now for the rest of the story. Listen to what we are told,

But two young men from his church who had seen him leave the bar came up to him and said, ***“Charlie, don’t go home tonight. Come with us and we’ll take care of you. We promise that no one in the world shall ever hear from us a word of what happened tonight.”***

They encouraged him, saying that God would forgive and restore him.

Next morning he was himself again. They knelt together in earnest prayer, and when he rose from his knees it was with the glad assurance of pardon and God’s favor restored.

This young man never again yielded to such a temptation and went on to become a successful minister of the gospel.

- Illustrations of Bible Truths

It reminds me of what Paul said in Galatians 6:1-3, **“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.”**

Did these men have to help this man out?

No, they did not!

Then why did they do it?

Because they saw a brother in need and came to his aid, they came to help him and restore him with gentleness.

They did not look down upon him, put him down, but they lifted him up and what a wonderful thing that is.

How can they do something like that?

Because of Christ in them and living through them. They saw themselves as sinners and thus, they didn't look down, but they looked at him eye to eye and they realized that by the grace of God they are able to live and breath and do those things that God has called them to do.

And since grace has given them life, they wanted to extend that grace and love to this man. And he was **RESTORED!**

The sad thing for Samson is that he did not have any friends to correct him and he refused to listen to his parents and now, he is suffering the consequences of turning from God!

Anger is not a fruit of the Spirit; it is a work of the flesh and that is not a good thing. May we walk in the Spirit, obeying the Lord and see the fruit that He will produce in our lives. If you don't deal with anger, if you don't deal with your rebellion against God, for that is what it is, then you will suffer loss.

But God wants to restore you and thus, come to Him, lay that anger at the foot of the cross and walk in the love of God and let that love touch the lives of others!