

GROWING IN GRACE

Anger's Answer

"what are you
willing to kill?"

- Paul is developing an interchange in these verses between what happened to us positionally when we trusted Christ, and what now needs to be happening practically. (**Colossians 3**)

--Believers are constantly in the process of working out practically what is already true of them positionally.

- so Paul has been saying--when you were saved...

- you died to sin and self...
- you were raised a new person in Christ

1) that affects what you're "going after" (vs. 1 - seek those things which are above)

2) it affects what you set your mind on - (vs. 2 - set your mind on the things above)

3) and it affects what you and I must be willing to put to death.

- that is a main thrust --you can tell how much a person is convinced about the preeminence of Christ by how busy (and how aggressive) they are at killing (putting to death//putting off) habits that are not pleasing to God.

- now of course, this is just the first half of the put off--put on process, but it is a very important part.

- and every believer should ask questions like:

- 1) what habits are hindering me from being more pleasing to God?
- 2) how hard have I been working at putting them off?
- 3) what could I do to put more effort at killing sinful habits?

- Focus now on verses 5-9

- let's read them again to refresh our memories

- the verses break down in an unusual way.

- Paul begins with a list of things to kill (put off) - verse 5
- then he gives some reasons why these things should be put off (verses 6-7)
- then he goes back and gives a second part of the list of things to put off

- the outline we're using follows that same development of thought.

I. Here's What We Should Put To Death – (5) Immorality, passion, greed,evil desire, impurity.....

(How would you fill in your own list?)

II. Here's Why We Should Put These Things To Death - verses 6-7

A. These things bring wrath on those who don't know Christ.

- now, the Scripture teaches that you and I have been delivered from the wrath to come (I Thes. 1:10) and that we will never experience God's full wrath (I Thess. 5:9).
- but, we surely ought to hate the things that will bring God's wrath on unbelievers.
- and that's what Paul is talking about here:
 - why would a Christian get involved in anything that he knew would bring the wrath of God on anyone?
- we also ought to know that God will chasten His children who are not growing Heb. 12:5-6.
- if you and I are not actively and aggressively seeking to put these things to death--it may reveal that we need a healthy dose of the fear of God.

B. That's the way you used to walk

- now let's pause there a moment and try to evaluate how much these two reasons actually motivate you and me.

- how would you answer this question:

INPUT - If you and I are not putting sinful habits to death (verse 5) at the rate we should, what (based on verses 6-7) might that reveal about us?

- we lack a healthy fear of God
- we're unconcerned about what brings wrath on those who don't know Christ.
- we're not convinced that the way we lived before we were saved was all that bad.
- we're not convinced that the sinful habits we have now are all that bad.

- now, as we said earlier, after Paul gives those two reasons, he returns

to:

III. Here's What Else we should put to death

- you notice in verse 8 that Paul uses the phrase "put off" (KJV), "put aside" (NASB), rid yourselves of (NIV).

- it's important to see that Paul is using a clothing illustration
 - the same word is used in Acts 7:58 - "And when they had driven him out of the city, they began stoning him, and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul." (laid aside is the same word used in Col. 3:8)
- now, let me ask you this:
 - what is the relationship between "put off" in verse 8 and "mortify" in verse 5?
 - the answer is - they are being used synonymously
 - Paul is giving us different ways to look at the same act
 - we're still talking about what you and I are willing to stop doing in order to grow in the way and at the rate that God desires.

With that in mind, let's look at this list:

A. Anger

- this is the original word orge
- it means a deep, smoldering, resentful, bitterness
- one writer describes it as "the settled heart attitude of the angry person."
- not everyone blows up with their anger.
 - some of us clam up, and let that anger smolder, and smolder....
 - over time, it ferments and turns to bitterness.
- often then, at the slightest provocation, that anger comes out
 - it usually comes out sinfully
 - because it was used for the wrong reason
 - the original issues have now become distorted
 - the present issue is blown out of proportion
- I wonder how many folks (even in church) would have to say, "you know, that word describes me all too often--i'm an angry person."
 - are you willing to put those sinful tendencies to death?
- in a few minutes, we'll cast this in the put off/put on format--but are you upset enough about that sin that you'd be willing to do whatever is necessary to get it handled?

B. Wrath (rage - NIV)

- this is the word thumos
- the idea here is more of an explosive anger
- it's a sudden outburst
- the Greeks likened this kind of behavior to fire in straw
- it's explosive--and it's over quickly

- you may know someone who handles their anger that way--and or you may handle your anger that way.

- INPUT - characteristics that go along with this (wrong) approach to handling anger?

- Paul says -- this habit has to be put to death.

C. Malice

- J. B. Lightfoot - "the vicious nature which is bent on doing harm to others."

D. Blasphemy (slander - NASB, NIV)

- the word here is blasphemia
- when it's used to describe sinful speech about God, it's translated blasphemy
- when it's used to describe sinful speech about people, it's translated slander
- the context here seems to be emphasizing the way a person talks about other people...that's why the NIV and NASB translated it slander.

- some people have been saved a long period of time but they don't seem to be concerned about overcoming their habit of slander.

- Paul says -- that ought not to be.
- that habit needs to be put to death.

E. Filthy communication (abusive speech - NASB, filthy communication - NIV)

- we're talking about "abusive and derogatory speech intended to wound someone."
- this would go along with our third rule of communication-- attacking people instead of problems.

F. Lying

- we could obviously take a lot more time on each of these areas, but we've said enough to give most of us some things to work.

- let me ask you this:

INPUT - what do you make of the fact that in both of the major Put off/put on passages (here and Eph. 4) the subject of communication receives a great amount of emphasis? What should that tell us?

- What questions should that cause us to ask?

- now, let's take a minute and tie this back into the overall argument of the book.

- **how convinced are you about the preeminence of Christ?**

- one of the ways you can answer that question is by looking at how aggressive you are at putting sinful habits to death.
 - the issue today especially focuses in on sinful habits of communication and anger.

- are there some habits that the Lord would have you to put to death, and are you willing to put the work and effort necessary to put those habits to death?