

Don't Let Anger Control You

(Ephesians 4:17-32)

Yearly Theme: "Love Is..."

Series Title: *Don't Push My Buttons*

August 11th, 2019

Something to think about:

Have you ever been irritable or angry? What is it that really gets under your skin? Do the ones you love the most irritate you at times? How do you deal with your feelings of irritability and anger? Have you ever been in a fight with someone and your words were pretty heated and the telephone rings? Notice how quickly you can manage your anger! You've got a lot more control over your anger than you think you do.

This month, we continue on in our theme of LOVE, and the definition of love found in 1 Corinthians 13; specifically the verse that says that love, "is not irritable," or as some versions of scripture declare, "easily provoked." We turn today to Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus in the New Testament to learn more about how love is not irritable...

Turn in your Bibles to: *Ephesians 4:17-32*

It's important to note where Ephesians pops up in other New Testament writings in order to get a bigger picture of the Church at Ephesus. It's considered by most Biblical scholars that Paul's letter to the Ephesians was written sometime in the early 60s AD (and Paul was the founder of the Church there). If we flash-forward to John's reference of the Church at Ephesus in the book of Revelation in the New Testament, nearly 25-30 years have passed. In John's writing, Jesus speaks directly to the Ephesian Church, saying...

Turn in your Bibles to: *Revelation 2:1-7*

The Ephesian church was known for its love early on. In his letter to them Paul mentions the word "love" more times than he does in any of his other letters or writings. However, in just a few decades after Paul writes his letter to the church at Ephesus, we see the strengths of the Ephesian Church becoming their weakness. Their love for God and one another that drew them together in the first place, had been replaced by a heavy-handedness that was destructive. In essence, their love had been replaced with irritability and anger.

Key Point: "When we allow irritability and anger control us, we give a foothold to the devil."

How do we notice this playing out in the Church at Ephesus? Let's take a look...

- Before they became Christ-followers, the people at Ephesus were calloused and corrupted by sin.

Ephesians 4:17-19 (NLT),¹⁷ With the Lord's authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused.¹⁸ Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him.¹⁹ They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity.

- When they became Christ-followers, the Ephesians surrendered their sinful nature to Christ and worked hard to live out their love and faith for Christ and each other.

Ephesians 4:20-24 (NLT),²⁰ But that isn't what you learned about Christ.²¹ Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him,²² throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception.²³ Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes.²⁴ Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.

- Over time the Ephesian Church became calloused again, merely going through the motions and neglecting to love God and each other like they once did.

Ephesians 4:25-27 (NLT),²⁵ So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body.²⁶ And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry,²⁷ for anger gives a foothold to the devil.

Something to take home:

Like the church at Ephesus, we can come to Christ in complete surrender in love for Him and others completely, but slowly allow anger and irritability creep in and take over our souls. When we do this, our first love becomes our last thought.

How often have you allowed anger and irritability to control you? What do you do when someone irritates you? What is your first response? How do you handle issues that cause you to become angry? Does your anger and irritability stamp out the love you have for others; even your enemies? If so, this type of anger is sinful, and shouldn't be in your life. Be careful that when you are tempted to irritability that you are not overtaken with sinful behavior. Take time to pray; seek God's face in the midst of anger. Don't allow the devil to have a foothold in your life through your emotions.

Key Point: "When we allow irritability and anger control us, we give a foothold to the devil."

NOTES:



North Main Exists to...

"Develop completely committed followers of Christ who:

Know Christ intimately,
Grow in Christ continually, and,
Go for Christ daily;

Through:
Core Families,
Community Partnerships, and
Global Connections."

DON'T PUSH MY BUTTONS



Love is not Irritable
(Ephesians 4:17-32)

LESSON 2:

"DON'T LET ANGER CONTROL YOU"

(EPHESIANS 4:17 - 24)
AUGUST 2019

Don't Let Anger Control You

(Ephesians 4:17-24)

Series Title: "Don't Push My Buttons"

KICK STARTERS:

- ⇒ What makes you "irritable?"
- ⇒ When was the last time you were "angry?" If you're willing, explain why...

SCRIPTURE: (Before studying this material, consider listening to the corresponding message online at: <http://www.northmaincog.org/media/sermon-media>)

Ephesians 4:17-32 (NLT)

¹⁷ *With the Lord's authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. ¹⁸ Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him.*

¹⁹ *They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity.*

²⁰ *But that isn't what you learned about Christ. ²¹ Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, ²² throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. ²³ Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. ²⁴ Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.*

²⁵ *So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. ²⁶ And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ for anger gives a foothold to the devil.*

²⁸ *If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. ²⁹ Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.*

³⁰ *And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.*

³¹ *Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. ³² Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.*

GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. What's Paul talking about in this passage of Scripture? Give a brief synopsis...

2. Before they believed in Christ, the people that became the church at Ephesus were calloused and hardened to sin and sinful behavior. What causes a person to become "numb," calloused, or desensitized to sin and sinful behavior?

3. When the people in Ephesus became followers of Christ, their lives changed completely. Their love for God and one another was evident and strong (Ephesians 1:15-17). However, Paul reminds them they need to remain pure and throw off their sinful nature and to allow the Holy Spirit to renew their thoughts and attitudes. Why does Paul remind them of this?

4. Paul also tells the Ephesian church to put on their new nature, created to be like God, being truly righteous and holy. How is it possible to be truly righteous and holy? Is it harder or easier to be righteous and holy in a culture than is not either of these things? Explain...

5. Again, the Ephesians who were coming to Christ were coming to Christ out of a culture of calloused, hardened behavior. Paul explains that they are to stop telling lies and to be truthful with their neighbors. Why is this important?

6. Finally, Paul tells the Ephesians to *not* let anger control them. What reason does he give for this (v. 27)? How does anger give a foothold to the devil?

7. Read Revelation 2:1-7. Several years after Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus, Jesus the risen Lord has John write to them again. In this passage, describe how the Ephesians had allowed anger to creep in and smother the love they had for God and others. Explain how this is possible for the believer in Christ...

SELF-EVALUATION/APPLICATION:

- ⇒ **LIKE THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS**, we can come to Christ in complete surrender in love for Him and others completely, but slowly allow anger and irritability creep in and take over our souls. When we do this, our first love becomes our last thought.
- ⇒ **HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU ALLOWED ANGER AND IRRITABILITY TO CONTROL YOU?** What do you do when someone irritates you? What is your first response? How do you handle issues that cause you to become angry? Does your anger and irritability stamp out the love you have for others; even your enemies? If so, this type of anger is sinful, and shouldn't be in your life. Be careful that when you are tempted to irritability that you are not overtaken with sinful behavior. Take time to pray; seek God's face in the midst of anger. Don't allow the devil to have a foothold in your life through your emotions.
- ⇒ **MEMORY VERSES:** *Ephesians 4:23-24* and *Revelation 2:4-5*