

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, January 9, 2013 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

VICTORY IN JESUS OVER ENEMIES THAT DEFEAT US

“Oh, Oh, Oh, I Feel My Temperature Rising”

“The Red Faced Enemy”

1 John 5:4-5, Genesis 3:1-13, Ephesians 4:26-2, Various Scripture

“⁴For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith ⁵Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.” -1 John 5:4-5

The song, “Victory in Jesus” written by Eugene Bartlett, a prolific hymn writer, having composed several hundred hymns. Bartlett was born in Christmas Eve in 1885. He dedicated his life to Jesus Christ at an early age. He is considered by many to be the founding father of Southern Gospel Music, and he was inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame in 1979. Throughout his 56 years of life, he composed more than 800 hymns and gospel songs. He was the founder of the Hartford Music Company and Music Institute. The school attracted many talented artist and became known for publishing great Christian songs and hymnbooks, many of which he wrote himself. He gave many very famous hymn writers their first opportunities to publish their music. Among them was Alfred E. Brumley who wrote “I’ll Fly Away” and “Turn your Radio On.”

Bartlett had a massive stroke that ended his career and he became confined to one room in 1939, unable to communicate. Dying, he spent almost a month writing his very last song, when most of his hymns were written in just a few simple minutes. Although broken in health, and unable to speak, he wanted to demonstrate that his great faith in Jesus Christ had not cracked under suffering and his great victory over doubt and despair. That last hymn was “Victory in Jesus.” Bartlett died in 1941,

VICTORY IN JESUS

By E.M. Bartlett (Hymn #426)

I heard an old, old story, how a Savior came from glory
How He gave His life on Calvary to save a wretch like me
I heard about His groaning, of His precious blood's atoning
Then I repented of my sins, and won the victory

I heard about His healing, of His cleansing pow'r revealing
How He made the lame to walk again, and caused the blind to see
And then I cried, "Dear Jesus, come and heal my broken spirit,"
And somehow Jesus came and brought to me the victory
I heard about a mansion He has built for me in glory

And I heard about the streets of gold beyond the crystal sea
 About the angels singing, and the old redemption story
 And some sweet day I'll sing up there the song of victory

(Chorus) O victory in Jesus, my Savior, forever
 He sought me and bought me with His redeeming blood
 He loved me ere I knew Him, and all my love is due Him
 He plunged me to victory beneath the cleansing flood

Christians are overcomers and truly are to live victorious Christian lives every day, but let's be honest, there are many enemies along that way that daily steal our victory and sometimes defeat us. We know the saying we may win the war, yet lose the battle. We ultimately know that we win and will be victorious in the end, but it's the daily battles that defeat us and keep us from living the victorious and abundant life that Christ came to give us daily. This study is about finding victory in Jesus over those enemies that so often defeat us. They can be numerous and varied. They can make an insidious assault on our lives as believers, stealing our joy, dashing our hopes, creating disillusionment and despair in our lives, and keeping us from the abundant life that Jesus desires for us.

THE ENEMIES THAT CAN DEFEAT US IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE: We have looked at four of them so far. They are:

1. **FEAR** - We started off in this study looking at the enemy of FEAR and its paralyzing effect on our lives as believers. We talked about what the Bible has to say about fear and more particularly about overcoming our fears in order that our faith can flourish and grow. Remember **Ralph Waldo Emerson** said, *"Fear defeats more people than any other one thing in the world."*
2. **DOUBT** - Then we turned our attention to another enemy... the enemy of DOUBT. Doubt defeats and disillusiones the lives of many professing believer and keep them from enjoying the full benefits of their faith and the victorious Christian life that Christ died to give them. So we've talked about how to defeat and overcome fear and doubt in our lives as believers in order that we might be able to live victorious Christian lives and not be held captive by these deadly enemies that can often plague our lives even as believers. Remember **Charles Haddon Spurgeon** said, *"Doubt discovers difficulties which it never solves; it creates hesitancy, despondency, despair. Its progress is the decay of comfort, the death of peace... doubt nails down his coffin."*
3. **SELF** - Then we talked about how fear and doubt really aren't your worst enemies... not really. Those two things, fear and doubt, can defeat us as believers and take a terrible toll on our spiritual and even physical life, yet then may in fact, actually be alerting us to something deeper going on with us... warning signs of a greater enemy at work within. Your worst enemy is named SELF. It can become the greatest enemy that a believer will face. We talked about how the enemy of self, is a powerful, controlling enemy, that blinds us, hardens us, and holds us captive... this enemy clouds our judgment and even deceives us, and we talked about how to defeat the enemy of self. Remember **Francis of Assisi** said, *"Above all the grace and the gifts that Christ gives to his beloved is that of overcoming self."*
4. **WORRY** - Next, we talked about a deep seeded enemy that lurks within, but often shows on our face. The enemy of WORRY! Our minds are frequently weary with worry... our spirits

are often weighted down. It defeats our faith like a deadly enemy waging war against us. Remember, Vance Havner said, *“Worry is like a rocking chair, it will give you something to do, but it won’t get you anywhere.”* It’s really worse than that... it will keep you from living the life of faith that God desires for you to life. It will stifle your joy and the peace you can be experiencing in life and will enslave you to a life of misery, fretting, and anxiety!

5. **TEMPTATION** – Last week we focused on the enemy that we let in... temptation. Remember Henry Ward Beecher said about temptation, *“All men are tempted. There is no man that lives that can’t be broken down, provided it is the right temptation, put in the right spot.”* We often have a mistaken notion that the older we get, the wiser we get, and therefore the less tempted we become. Oh how mistaken we are by the clever deception that this enemy can throw our way. Temptation never goes away on this side of heaven, it just take on a new face. What may have tempted you as a young man may have less appeal to you now, but you can be sure that the enemy of temptation will find a new appeal to you. And I love Oswald Chambers’ take on the subject. He said, *“Many of us suffer from temptations from which we have no business to suffer.”* We are tempted to gossip, to steal, to become rich, and to desire popularity. We’re tempted to take revenge, to be lazy, to overeat, to cheat, to fight, and to yield to sensual desire. We are also tempted to be selfish, to envy, and to hold grudges. Then there comes a time when we are tempted to give up, to quite, to fear, to doubt, to worry!

These enemies (fear, doubt, self, worry, temptation) are so real, and their warfare against us so successful, that we often just resign ourselves to living in their grip, imprisoned as captives of their onslaught against us... “We’ll that is just life... everyone worries! Everyone is tempted! Everyone has fears! We are all a little selfish, and doubt plagues us all at some time!” We stop waging war against these deadly enemies and therefore our Christian faith become less than abundant, less than victorious, and less that what God desires for us to experience. And the truth is, those are just four of the enemies that war against our Christian faith and walk on a daily basis.

This evening we want to take a look at another enemy that usually shows its red face in our lives at some of our most vulnerable times. Easily sparked, this enemy can sometimes catch us off guard, rising to temperatures that often escalate us to places we never thought we would go, saying things we never thought we would say, acting in ways we never thought we would act, and sometimes causing great harm. This enemy can do irreparable damage in our life and the lives of those around us. One of the most persistent and disturbing enemies the Christian faces is the enemy of “anger.” It has a way of disarming and frustrating him or her, of taking away his or her testimony, of affecting most every area of his or her life. In wrestling with anger, our resolutions to improve seem as futile as our attempts to keep it in check. It comes in many forms... from irritation all the way up to rage and uncontrollable temper... form inner uneasiness to actual displays of violence.

I. WHAT IS ANGER AND WHAT IS ITS ORIGIN?

“A strong feeling of displeasure and usually of antagonism. Emotional excitement induced by intense displeasure.” - Websters

“Anger is an emotional reaction to hostility that brings personal displeasure, either to ourselves or to someone else.” – Dr. Charles Swindoll

Synonyms of Anger: ire, rage, fury, indignation, wrath

Fundamentally, anger comes is a response to pain of some kind. It is a secondary emotion, always a reaction to some form of pain. In fact, you could say that anger is deflected pain. Pain comes in and our self-protective instincts put up a shield of armor and that pain is reflected back out as anger. This response to pain that we call anger is usually an emotion of hostility towards others.

Question: Is anger always our enemy? In other words is anger always wrong... sin? It can be a deadly enemy, but anger held in check and under control can be a great motivator.

It is true that Jesus got angry, God gets angry, and at times Christians ought to get a lot more angry than we do. But let’s face it most of the time our anger is selfish anger that directs feelings of hostility, even if only momentary, towards others. It is a relentless enemy often times in our lives... and very destructive.

Read Mark 3:1-6: Notice that Jesus was angry. What do you think was the cause of his pain and why do you think that was painful to him?

Read Genesis 4:1-8: Why did Cain murder Abel? Describe the pain that was the origin of Cain’s anger.

Many forms of pain generate anger, but three forms of pain seem to stand out: 1) the pain of frustration, being blocked in reaching our goal, 2) the pain of injustice, having our rights violated, and 3) the pain of having our self or self-esteem attacked. Our human make-up is such that we regularly endure these three types of pain, so it should not surprise us that we struggle with the enemy of anger. Let’s look more closely at these three:

3 Forms of Pain That Generate Anger in Us:

1. **Anger resulting from the pain of frustration in reaching a goal** - Define the word, “frustration.” (*Webster’s – “An act of hindering someone’s plans or efforts, a feeling of annoyance at being hindered or criticized.”*) How is “frustration” a generator of anger? Can you give an example? Give an example of frustration generated anger from your own life (your anger or a family member’s anger) Do you see anything in our nature that would make us prone to frustration driven anger? **It happens all the time the enemy of anger jumps on us and we begin to unload on our family and vent in anger because we have had a frustrating day in which nothing went right. The pain of frustration in our lives often empower the enemy of anger in us.*
2. **Anger resulting from the pain of injustice or having our rights or the rights of others violated** - Do you think Christians ought to get more angry than they often do about sin, about certain issues in our world, about the way children and innocents are routinely abused today, or about how unborn children are slaughtered through abortion, etc.? Describe an instance from your life in which you got mad because you were

unfairly treated. Think about the kind of things we often lose our temper over at home. Which of these seem to be related to what we think are our rights? **Now a note is helpful here... this motivator of anger can actually produce in us a right kind of anger if properly channeled for good and not harm. Anger resulting from the pain of injustice is what produces what is called "righteous indignation." Jesus was angry at injustice and the mistreatment of others (go back to Mark 3:1-6), but He did not sin in His anger. He used it as a motivator to stand for what is right! Even this form of anger can become our enemy when it causes us to act out in such a way that it cause more harm than good... damaging others... sometimes even those who are generating the injustice. Remember Jesus died for His crucifiers!*

3. Anger resulting from the pain of an ego-wound or a wound to our self-esteem –

Our egos are a much more fragile thing than many of us think. How do you feel inside when you are made to feel stupid? How do you think husbands injure their wife's self-esteem, provoking anger? How do you think wives cause their husbands to feel rejected, provoking anger? How about our children... what do you think the Bible means when it tells us not to provoke our children to anger? Could it be the pain of a wounding of their self-esteem by belittling, demeaning, or damaging a fragile ego? Go back to the Garden of Eden and you will see the pain of an ego-wound surfacing... when accused of eating fruit from the tree God had forbidding, Adam protected himself (ego) by blaming Eve... Eve protected herself (ego) by blaming the Serpent. The pain of an ego-wound generates anger. Can't you just hear the dialogue between Adam and Eve as they are being forced to leave their perfect home in the Garden of Eden,

ADAM: Eve, I am so mad at you for giving me that fruit from the tree that God told us to stay away from me!

EVE: Mad at me, I'm mad that that sneaky Serpent who tricked me, besides that you ate some too! You, who are supposed to be my brave protector!

ADAM: Oh great... just go ahead and blame for what you did!

EVE: I didn't know! Stop blaming me!

Do you see it! All the I's, the me's, the my's... the ego wound and self-protection... the anger resulting from the ego-wound? When we feel attacked in some way the enemy of anger is often generated and pushed to the extreme will act out in a damaging way.

II. HOW DOES THE ENEMH OF ANGER PROGRESS?

This enemy, anger, does not remain the same. Unchecked, it moves through stages of intensity. Be aware that with each stage this enemy gains greater strength and hold, and become more destructive.

5 Stages of Unchecked Anger:

Stage 1: Anger begins with mild irritation – The irritation may perhaps be innocent. It is a mild feeling of discomfort brought about by someone or something. Like something itching on our skin it can irritate to the point that it grow and must be scratched.

Stage 2: Anger turns from irritation to indignation – Indignation is the feeling that something must be answered back, that there must be an avenging or a punishment. This can go unexpressed... and therefore grows

Stage 3: Anger changes from indignation to wrath – Wrath has the idea of expression. This stage turns from feelings to expression... I'm going to get even.

Stage 4: Anger switches from wrath to fury – Fury characterizes violence, a loss of emotional control.

Stage 5: Anger grown from fury to rage – Rage is a temporary loss of sanity.

III. SOME BIBLICAL OBSERVATIONS REGARDING THE ENEMY OF ANGER (Ephesians 4:26-27)

²⁶ *“In your anger do not sin”^[a]: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ and do not give the devil a foothold. – Ephesians 4:26-27 (NIV)*

²⁶ *“Be angry, and do not sin”:^[a] do not let the sun go down on your wrath, ²⁷ nor give place to the devil.” – Ephesians 4:26-27 (NKJV)*

Paul's letter to the Ephesians is perhaps one of the most practical components of the New Testament. Chapter 4 offers us down-to-earth advice about the problem with the enemy of anger. From the text (vv.26-27), three critical observations can be made about the enemy of anger.

3 Three Observations About the Enemy of Anger from Ephesians 4:26-27:

1. **God is aware of the enemy of anger** – As a matter of fact it can be argued that just as God has given us the emotion of compassion to feel compassion and love, He has also given us the emotion of anger to feel upset and irritated and certain things in life.. Our pattern of emotions was designed by Him after all. Just as there is something inhuman about one who never shows love, so it is with the person who shows no anger particularly at the wrongs and injustices of this life. This thing we are calling an “enemy” does not have to be our enemy, but can be a great motivator of good when brought captive to Christ. The text says, *“In your anger...”* indicating that it is a given that you will deal with this thing, “anger,” can quickly escalate into an enemy or can be used for good.
2. **The enemy of anger does not necessarily have to lead us into sin and defeat** – The text is qualified, *“In your anger do not sin...”* Paul seems to be separating the two as if to say, “Listen don't let anger defeat you and cause you to sin! Conquer it and channel it for what is good and righteous!” That means when there are actually times when anger is appropriate and good... and even helpful. If we are angry (having just cause), we are not to carry that anger to the point of sin... hurting and damaging ourselves and others by it!
3. **There is a way to control (defeat) the enemy of anger** - The apostle Paul put it this way, *“... do not let the sun go down on your wrath (anger), nor give place to the devil.”* We may casually read Paul's instruction and miss his God inspired strategy for keeping this enemy at bay in our lives... or at least learning how to bring captive the enemy of anger and actually use it for something positive in our life and world. Notice it... he gives us two safeguards or ways of defeating this thing that can become our enemy:

2 Safeguards to the Enemy of Anger: 2 Ways to Control (defeat) the Enemy of Anger

Safeguard 1... Do not let angry thoughts and feelings linger - Can I say it like this, “Don’t nurse your wounds too long!” “Don’t marinate in your anger!” “Do pal around with anger!” Have you ever heard someone say, “I just want to me mad for a while!” Not good! We need to get over it quickly or it will take a stronghold on our lives. In Paul’s day the closing of the day occurred with the setting of the sun, hence the idea “... do not let the sun go down on your anger...” What do you think he was saying? We cannot afford to sleep on wrong feelings. Forgiveness must be in our heart at day’s end... not anger! Why? Listen, this enemy will get a hold of your life, and you will eventually be taken over with it and it’s companions... malice, vengeance, hate, slander. It will damage you! And it will separate you and keep you out of right relationship God. In **Matthew 6:15** Jesus gave us this strong warning, “*But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.*” (NIV) or as the New King James says it, “*But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*”

Safeguard 2... Do not let anger open the way for the entrance of the ultimate enemy of your soul - The enemy of anger, can weaken us and make us very vulnerable and susceptible to being used by the ultimate enemy, the devil, to do much harm. Listen, not to sound like an alarmist, but you need to know that unchecked anger may lead to satanic involvement in our lives. In Matthew, the 16th chapter, just following Peter’s great confession of Christ as the “Son of the Living God.” Jesus begins to the disciples what is about to happened to him... he will suffer and be abused, and eventually killed at the hands of the Jewish religious leader. Peter becomes “angry” and in verse 22 Peter’s perhaps “righteous indignation” turns from irritation to indignation and then to wrath, fury and maybe even rage as he begins to rebuke Jesus in Matthew 16:22. Jesus words to Peter in **Matthew 16:23**, “*Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the thing of God, but the things of men.*” Do you see it? Why did Jesus use such a harsh rebuke of Peter as to essentially call him “Satan”? What did he see in Peter’s mind (heart) when he said “you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.”? Unchecked anger at it’s worst... perhaps in Peter’s mind was murder, “I’ll kill them first, before they kill you!” and at least an unwilling to yield to what might be God ultimate plan... Jesus’ death on all of mankind’s behalf, even those who would kill him. The point, anger out of control weakens who we are in Christ, obscures our perspective (Christian perspective)_ and brings us more in like with the enemy who came to “steal, kill and destroy” (Jn. 10:10)

Read: Mt. 16:21-23

IV. SOME BIBLICAL EXHORTATIONS ON DEALING WITH THE ENEMY OF ANGER (Selected Proverbs)

- 1. Learn to ignore petty disagreements** – The old saying, “Chose your battle wisely” hold true here. There are something that is better to just let go so “Let it go!”

“The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, and his glory is to overlook a transgression.” – Proverbs 19:11 (NKJV)

“It is honorable for a man to stop striving, since any fool can start a quarrel.” – Proverbs 20:3 (NKJV)

2. **Refrain from close association with anger-prone people** – Anger-prone people, friends, family and associates can quickly spread their disease. A person prone to easily anger may cause the same reaction in you.

“A man of great wrath will suffer punishment; for if you rescue him, you will have to do it again.” – Proverbs 19:19 (NKJV)

“²⁴ Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man do not go, ²⁵ Lest you learn his ways and set a snare for your soul.” –Proverbs 22:24-25 (NKJV)

3. **Keep close check on your tongue** – Not only should we be careful that our words don’t stir up anger, but also that we lean to put the fire out rather than to stoke the flames. This is not just about not speaking, but being careful when you do speak... speaking wisely, with careful words. It is sometimes helpful to check yourself that your words are not a knee-jerk reaction in a given situation. We say, “Stick and stone may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” That is simply not true! Words do hurt and sometimes are the surest kindling for the fires of anger.

“A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” –Proverbs 15:1 (NKJV)

“Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles.” –Proverbs 21:23 (NKJV)

4. **Cultivate honesty in communication without letting anger build up** – Say what you mean and mean what you say. As scripture says, “Let your yes be yes and your no, no!” (James 5:12) Cultivate honesty in your communication

“⁴ Wrath is cruel and anger a torrent, but who is able to stand before jealousy? ⁵ Open rebuke is better than love carefully concealed. ⁶ Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.” –Proverbs 27:4-6 (NKJV)

5. **If anger is not controlled, it will destroy you** – Anger, like bitterness and resentment, is a spiritual cancer to the soul. It will destroy you and take it’s toll physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

“Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, without walls.” –Proverbs 25:28 (NKJV)

“Do you see a man hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.” –Proverbs 29:20 (NKJV)

V. THE ABC'S OF OVERCOMING THE ENEMY OF ANGER

So how do we really overcome the enemy of anger? What are some helps? The following are a few suggestions called "The ABC's of Overcoming Anger." This is certainly not an exhaustive list of how to defeat this enemy, but it may help?

The ABC's of Overcoming Anger

1. A if for Acknowledge that your inner temperature is rising - Proverbs 4:23 says to us, "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life." This commanded is translated both "guard" your heart and "watch over" your heart. How do you *guard* your heart? How can *watching over your heart* help you with managing your anger?

2. B is for Backtrack to the pain – Remember that we said that anger is a secondary emotion. If you try to deal just with the anger, you are dealing with symptoms, not the root of the behavior. Look for the primary cause of anger--pain.

3. C is for Christ - Take the pain to Christ. God never wastes pain. He always has a purpose for it... he really does. Romans 8:28-29 says, "²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers." What is God's goal for those he has predestined? When we realize in verse 29 that God's plan is to shape us into Christ-like character, how does that shed light on verse 28? The things that happen in our life can either make us mad (anger) or they can drive us to Christ... to be more like Him... the be conformed to His likeness. Let me ask you, How did Christ respond to the pain of the cross? Father, forgive them! Not in anger, but in grace and forgiveness. Wow!

4. D is for Damage - Repair the damage done by your anger. In Matthew 5:21-24 (21-22 is a review) Jesus says, "²¹ 'You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' ²² But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell. 'Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.'" After commanding us not to let our anger cause us to verbally assault others, Jesus tells us what to do if we have. In your own words what is Jesus saying to do? What damage do you think is done to the relationship between a man and his wife if he wounds her with words but never seeks her forgiveness. What damage do you think is done to a son or daughter if a father wounds them with his words but never seeks their forgiveness?

5. E is for Express your pain to your brothers and sisters in Christ - In speaking of the body of Christ, the Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 12:26, "²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it." What is Paul saying about the kind of relationships God wants us to have with other Christians? Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 says it like this (very interesting... just listen), "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: ¹⁰ If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! ¹¹ Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? ¹² Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken." Verse 11 may

seem strange but mountain climbers and soldiers understand this principle. Though their body is exposed to the hostile elements of cold and wind on three sides, the side turned toward their brother is protected from these raw elements, receiving, instead, the life-giving warmth they need. Every man needs this kind of safe place—a band of brothers who love him, with whom he can process the painful, harsh experiences of life. Do you have that kind of brother? Verse 12 talks about two men being able to defend themselves. When it comes to your spiritual battles, do you have a friend standing beside you in his prayer for your battles, and watching your back? Do you have a friend who even knows what your spiritual battles really are? That is why we need each other. That is why the body of Christ... the church is so important. We need each other to defeat not only the enemy of anger, but all the others as well.