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**THOUGHTS FROM JEREMY**

There is a joke in my family (at my expense) about me getting hangry. Things are said like, “don’t poke the hangry bear.” When I am hungry it seems like everything makes me angry. Anger is not necessarily a bad thing. In fact, God created our emotions in His own image. We see throughout the Bible, God and Jesus getting angry at different times. However, the difference is God is perfect and focuses and controls his anger in righteous and just ways. We have a harder time controlling our anger in a righteous way.

Many things in this life make us angry, and some things should anger us. However, we must, as Ephesians 4:26 says, *“be angry and yet do not sin.”* Following are three biblical steps to help us to do just that.

**Rest:** First, we must rest. I am not talking about taking a nap or going to bed. This is about slowing down and taking pause. Anger can quickly turn to sinful behavior if we respond too quickly and out of control. We have all said or done things in anger that we later regret. James 1:19 tells us, *“be slow to speak.”* Many experts say things like count to 10 or take 3 slow deep breaths. The idea is to help us get our thoughts and emotions under control.

**Reflect:** After we take a pause, we must reflect. Reflection is about gathering information and gaining perspective. James 1:19 also says, *“Be quick to listen.”* By listening and reflecting we gain perspective. Sometimes we may have misunderstood a situation or comment. By gaining perspective, we can better assess our next actions. Which brings us to the final step.

**Resolve:** Anger must always be resolved. If we allow anger to continue unresolved, we put ourselves in further danger of sinning. This can lead to prolonged sin such as, gossip, slander, jealousy, bitterness and even hatred. Unresolved anger can also lead to broken relationships and a lot of pain. I believe this is why Paul says in Ephesians 4:26, *“Do not let the sun go down on your anger.”*

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**Elder’s Corner**

**The Demolition Phase**

Over the Christmas holidays, Darlene put some gentle pressure on me to do a day trip to Laurel, Mississippi. Some of you will instantly recognize and know what I am talking about. She wants to check up on the homes renovated as shown on the program “Hometown” with Erin and Ben. These are two people we do not know who we think we know because they share their heart felt views on home renovation and we may think of them as caring friends who might show up at a family gathering unannounced. I do not have anything against Laurel or the show or Ben and Erin, but I just said, no thanks. I felt that was a lot of work and effort to get over there (more fun to be lazy) and Laurel has a way to go to attract me to come over there. Maybe someday if there is good barbecue involved!

What impresses me about these home renovation shows is the demolition part of the process. That is when the workers come in with hammers, crow bars, axes, saws, or anything else that will tear down the parts of the house that are ugly or unsound or in the way or termite infested and need to go.

As I was discussing on our Zoom call last night, the pandemic has been a time for me to do some work like this in my life. It is a profoundly discouraging time when a person could just sort of get quiet about God, because we are not understanding what is going on in our world. Another way of saying this is that I have had to get down to the foundation of my beliefs. My conclusion is that there are many compelling evidences of God, especially the world we live in.

***“By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.” Hebrews 11:3***

Yes, there are times that we have to reinforce the fact that science seeks to understand God’s creation, but it does not and cannot disprove the existence of God. There is no explanation for the existence of our world, and especially reasoning, feeling human beings who obviously have an eternal soul.

If we accept that God made this world, we then have to ask ourselves can we comfortably live as an Agnostic? Paul answers this in Romans 1.

***“ For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.”***

And returning to Hebrews 11:6

***“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”***

I have reinforced that I have no choice as an enlightened human being (Hebrews 6:4) other than to believe in God, seek to know God, love God, and serve God. Since I know Christ, I have no choice other than to strive to be like Him. That is the foundation, the back to basics and ready for renewal new me. 2 Corinthians 10:5…

***We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.***

Sending my love and concern,

Vince Formica

**THOUGHTS FROM JEREMY (CONTINUED)**

Oftentimes, anger can be resolved personally without a response at all. Therefore, the reflection step is so important. When we reflect, we may realize that we misunderstood the situation or that the situation was not as worthy of anger as we may have initially thought. We may simply need to forget it and move on. Other times our anger is legitimate and demands a response. This is why rest; and reflecting is important. Once we have paused and gained perspective, we can make a response using Christian principles. Our response must be done with principles such as, love, patience, humility, kindness, gentleness, and self-control.

The next time we are angered by someone or something we see, let us all remember to Rest, Reflect and Resolve our anger.

Blessings,

Jeremy

**From a Woman’s Point of View**



***Leave the Past Behind You***

Count it all joy that we are able to read the January 2021 edition of The Messenger. We have been blessed to see a new calendar year and thus, God still has purpose for your lives. To fully embrace this gift and allow the light of Christ to be a beacon to those around us, we must shed some things. When I mention the need to shed some things, I am not referring to weight as many endeavors to do in the new year…no, I am referring to thoughts, language, habits and maybe even people. 2 Corinthians 5:17 (KJV) states, *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.”* Our Christian walk and growth require us to study the Word (2 Timothy 2:15), live the Word (Philippians 4:9) and share the Word (Matthew 28:19). Hindrances to studying, living, and sharing the Word may be the television programs we watch, the music we listen to, the books we may choose to read and the people with whom we keep company.

We are a peculiar people (1 Peter 2:9) that were called out of darkness into the marvelous light. Therefore, make time to conduct a self-evaluation with prayer and supplication so that God may reveal what must be shed … let go of … so that we may bring glory and draw souls unto Him. By God’s grace and mercy, may we all be encouraged to boldly leave the past (people, places, and things) behind us and move forward to eternity with Christ. May your light be luminous (Matthew 5:16)!

In Christian love,

Arletha Willis

TEEN NEWS

**Growing up, my youth group attended a youth conference every year called Evangelism University or EU. Evangelism University is hosted by the Savannah church of Christ. The actual event is held across the street from the church at the local high school. Evangelism University is an intense weekend of in-depth and practical evangelism training. Classes will equip students with skills to share the Good News with their friends, as well as increase their knowledge of mission works at home and abroad. Elective classes will give young people the opportunity to learn about areas of evangelism most pertinent to their lives.**

**The COVID-19 Pandemic changed EU, as it has many events this year. Instead of an intense weekend, they have been releasing one video a week for the first five weeks of 2021. This year’s theme is “The Gospel: Good News for a Change.” Each Wednesday night our teens have seen a different aspect of the Gospel. I have been very exited about being able to participate in EU this year and introducing it to our teens. If you would like to watch the first few weeks you can find them online at www.evangelismuniversity.net/thegospel**

**Your Partner in Ministry,**

**Paul**