

## IGNITING GOD'S ANGER

*"I know that what I'm doing is wrong. Some may call it a 'sin' but that's their opinion. I look at things differently than they. No one is 'perfect' so no one has the right to judge and criticize and hate someone who lives different than they do. God does not hate people. He loves people. God hates the situations that people have but that is different than God hating the people in those situations. It's like 'God hates the sin but loves the sinner.' So don't get upset at what people do. God doesn't so why should you?"*

This lesson touches on the reality of an absolute truth that people in the Postmodern Period strenuously deny. In fact the conclusions reached in this lesson will almost instantly ignite the bitterest reaction you can face when discussing the anger of God. This is because culture wishes to ignore the fact that God's love can be turned into wrathful anger. Suggesting that God can be angry at the person who is involved in ungodly lifestyles, actions, attitudes and worship practices is judged by the Postmodernist as absolute blasphemy (although if the Postmodernist is consistent with his ungodly rejection of a universal authority he cannot affirm or believe anything is either "absolute" or "blasphemous!").

Psalm 7:11 states, "God is a righteous judge, and a God who has indignation every day." The context points out that the anger that God displays "every day" is toward those people who commit wickedness. These are the ones who have ungodly behaviors. The Bible teaches that God does become angry with behavior that is contrary to His commands. BUT the Bible teaches that God becomes angry with the people who are involved in those behaviors! This single verse emphasizes this conclusion with these words:

- ✓ *God "judges"*—This word refers to one in authority who has the right, position, and power to look at an object (man or situation) and pronounce a *sentence* (for or against) about its moral quality. It is used by implication to refer to a decision to *vindicate* or *punish*. It is also used to refer to the right to *govern* or to *litigate*. It is used in connection with these terms: to avenge, condemn, contend, defend, execute judgment, to be a judge. It refers to reason and rule. This term identifies God as morally situated to pass a declarative opinion on man's attitudes, actions, lifestyles and choices. God unerringly "judges" (examines; investigates) man (Psalm 7:9).
- ✓ *God "has indignation"*—this refers to the intense emotions of anger that result in one foaming at the mouth, that is, to be enraged, to abhor, to view as abominable, to be angry, to have indignation.
- ✓ *God feels this anger "every day"*—against "the wicked" (KJV). His anger is not whimsical. His anger is not temporary. One cannot shrug off the anger of God and expect the Almighty to forget the sin committed. Contrary to the prevailing attitude of our ungodly culture God "does care" about people and their sin. And those who continue in sin without seeking repentance and forgiveness will face the "indignation" of God!

Postmodernism seeks to detach man from his sin. This cultural philosophy maintains that the environment is to blame for the problems. The word "sin" has long been banished from our vocabulary. Today there is no such thing as "sin." When have you heard the word "sin" used recently as an adjective describing a person's actions? Such phrases do not exist in the Postmodern Period because there is no universal standard of right or wrong—each is allowed his own "personal freedom." If one finds himself with trials, struggles, anguish and anxiety, the cause is NOT the person's lifestyle choices but is the fault of his environment. If he is a drug addict it is because he "didn't have a chance" to do better" or because "he really has great pain from which he must find relief." This same justification is parroted to enable mankind's irresponsibilities. So mankind is excused and enabled to live a life that is worthless and it is not his fault! To suggest that God is angry at such an unfortunate victim of the environment is to be cruel and heartless and unloving. There are those who gasp at the thought some would say this "victim" is not "saved."

There are a number of phrases that are used to excuse the sinner's accountability to God's commands. The Postmodern Period strongly maintains there is no absolute right or wrong. Thus the "god" of postmodernism must ignore the sinner's actions but maintain some semblance of ire toward wrongs that are termed "unfair."

So how are the “unfair” elements of life explained? How can Postmodernism explain God’s love in the unfair situations that are termed “sin”? This is very interesting to consider.

Postmodernism has coined a cliché seeking to mitigate the anger of God toward individuals—“God hates the sin but loves the sinner”? Like most clichés this is a half-truth. There are two ways in which it could be taken.

The first, which is undoubtedly the way that most people take it in the Postmodern world, is made as a comment about the wrath of God. This suggests that God's displeasure is against “the sin” but not against the sinner. This is because Postmodernism cannot accept the fact that divine anger could be directed toward an individual. So somehow the cliché suggests a disassociation between the act and the one committing the act and seeks to absolve the sinner.

The comment lessens the despicable act committed by the self-indulgent, godless person. This is blithely said to absolve the sinner of his evil choices and continuing practices of sin. So are we to hate child molestation but love the child molester because such has no control or choice?

Such simplicity fails to defend the justice that is due to the person committing actions that are evil. Hence this perspective has to be rejected by those holding fast to the Bible.

The second view of this quip is to admit it as incorrect. As William Temple observes, “that is a shallow psychology which regards the sin as something merely separate from the sinner, which he can lay aside like a suit of clothes. My sin is the wrong direction of my will; and my will is just myself as far as I am active. If God hates the sin, what He hates is not an accretion attached to my real self; it is myself, as that self now exists” (Temple).

One text offers an excellent illustration of this comment—John 8:3-10. This is one of the more cherished stories used by the Postmodernists to support their all love and no condemning position. The wresting of this text by the Postmodernist is obvious when the text is considered. In study of this passage the following are observed...

- ✓ There is a clear understanding that immoral “sin” was committed and such deserved retribution.
- ✓ There is clearly shown that the “sinner” was not loved and shown compassion except by Christ.
- ✓ There is clearly shown that Christ’s love for the sinner did not excuse her to continue her immorality. Christ commanded her to “go and SIN no more.”

The narrative shows that if the sinner stops the sin then God is pleased but if the sinner does not stop sinning God’s command is disobeyed. There is no middle ground where God loves the sinner as she continues sinning with only a tacit rebuke.

There are three specific texts that give the biblical insight on this discussion that “God loves the sinner but hates the sin.” Other texts can be added but these three pointedly refer to God’s anger focused not only on the sin but specifically on the sinner.

*First, Proverbs 6:16-19: “(H)ere are six things which the Lord hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, a false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers.”*

The Proverb writer specifically focuses on the sinner whose actions are sin. God’s attitude toward such is “hates” and that strong negative is further emphasized by saying that such actions are identified as “abominations.” The Hebrew word refers to “something disgusting (morally); an abhorrence.” You will observe that the disgusting view that Inspiration records is directed toward the “one” committing such sins. Not only are the sins abominations to God BUT those doing such are disgusting to God!

There cannot be a stronger combination communicating the most extreme negative than these two words (hates; abominations) used in this text. God hates, abhors, is disgusted, finds odious, identifies as an enemy to be destroyed. These are such strong terms that many do not want to accept the message!

Such is drastically different than what Postmodernism seeks to communicate. The Postmodernist will allow actions to be "evil" but will then try to present the situation in a way that not only excuses the sinner but gives tacit approval for him to continue in his sin. It is as if the sinner is to be pitied and embraced instead of rebuked and educated so he will repent and change. It is as if he has no control over his choices and so his continuing in sin is sad but unfortunately a situation to be accepted and association is to continue as the sin is "the elephant in the room" that is ignored.

The Proverb writer again mentions this point in 26:25, 16: *"When he speaks graciously, do not believe him, for there are seven abominations in his heart. Though his hatred covers itself with guile, His wickedness will be revealed before the assembly."* Notice that the sinner is condemned because these abominations are in his "heart." Also the phrase "His wickedness" specifically identifies the sinner as the object of God's anger.

*Second, Isaiah 59:1-3:* The prophet declared, *"Behold, the Lord's hand is not so short that it cannot save; nor is His ear so dull that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken falsehood, your tongue mutters wickedness."* God was obviously upset with the sin but He held the sinner accountable and therefore the sinner was also the object of divine wrath. The sin is personalized—the repeated "YOUR" indicates that the divine anger was focused upon the sinner.

*Third, Revelation 21:8:* *"He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."* Once again Inspiration's focus is upon the sinner and his sin and *both* anger God. The point to observe in this text is that the results of God's anger prevent this one from going to Heaven. Most certainly God loathes the actions catalogued in this verse but this reaction of the Almighty is not limited to the actions but also includes the person involved in the actions.

So, God hates the sin *and* (contrary to the Postmodernist thinking) God *hates* the sinner. This hatred will result in the reality that the sinner will NOT be permitted into Heaven but will receive the strongest measures of the divine anger because of their choices to refuse to submit to God's commands.

This conclusion about the cliché, "God hates the sin but loves the sinner," is not welcome news to either the world or some of the Lord's disciples in the Postmodern Period. There are some who are resolved to deny that God "hates" the sin and sinner. This position will be castigated as unloving and callous. Those maintaining that the sinner is the object of God's anger will be characterized as legalistic and unloving. The fact that one seeking to follow God's counsel (Ephesians 5:3-7) refuses to tacitly approve the sinner's choices and actions is not popular, but it is biblical. You cannot approve and encourage those whose choices in life are sinful without becoming a partner in their sin (Romans 1:28-32).

God has commanded His faithful follower not to remain silent but to confront those who are living in sin. This command is given because God loves the sinner and seeks the sinner's repentance and restoration. It may be "uncomfortable" to confront but there is no option IF you are around the Christian who has "turned back" to the world. Here are three undeniable texts revealing God's commands as to how association with the sinner is to be governed:

- ✓ *Association identifies you as a partner, participant, encourager, and supporter of the sinner's choices.* Your presence validates their choices. Your failure to offer correction makes you joined with their sin. You may disapprove but your presence, without any rebuke, makes you complicit in their sin. This is stated in Romans 1:28-32. This silent association is contrary to God's clear commands in Ephesians 5:7-11 where God says, "Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret" (verses 11, 12).

- ✓ *Association is possible only if a confrontation and exposure is made.* God does not want you to be silent because your silence only encourages evil lifestyle choices. Jeremiah was commanded to go into the Temple and rebuke and expose their sin. If the prophet remained silent then his silence would be condemned. God told the prophet, "(S)peak to all the cities of Judah who have come to worship in the Lord's house all the words that I have commanded you to speak to them. Do not omit a word! (Jeremiah 26:2)
- ✓ *Association with sinners cannot be excused on the basis of relationship.* You cannot say, "Well this is 'family' and God's rules apply differently to 'family'." Do you not realize this justification is the product of the Postmodern Period? It is culture influencing you to accept feelings and not God's Word as your authority?

When do "feelings" absolve one of disobeying God's Word?

Where does the Bible teach that "feelings" regarding members of one's family who live in blasphemy are to be treated differently than others in the world?

The Lord had the perfect opportunity to give divine approval to a double-standard of treatment towards family. Mark 3 presents Christ as being encouraged to relent in God's boundaries and specifically his "mother and brethren" were mentioned. If one's "family" is to be treated with a different standard than others this was the perfect setting to teach that point. But the Lord refused to give a "special exception" to associating with family members living with lifestyle choices conflicting with God's clear commands.

Instead of granting a special exception to tolerate a friend or family member's rejection of God's commands, our Lord pointed out that one's earthly family does not allow exceptions. In becoming a Christian one has another family that is priority in life. "Then His mother and His brothers arrived, and standing outside they sent word to Him and called Him. A crowd was sitting around Him, and they said to Him, 'Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside looking for You.' Answering them, He said, 'Who are My mother and My brothers?' Looking about at those who were sitting around Him, He said, 'Behold My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother'" (Mark 3:31-35).

Those who attempt to make special exceptions for associating with blasphemers (those rejecting obedience to God's commands and whose lifestyle choices reflect a loyalty to sin instead of submission to God) are addressed by Christ with the words in Matthew 10:32-39. Notice how our Lord stressed these points are in the context of the passage:

- ✓ Silence toward those living in disobedience is the same as "denying" Christ before men (verse 32). You may not verbally deny Christ but your silence refuses to speak for Christ's holiness. And the result is that you will be denied before God.
- ✓ Discipleship to Christ means you have vowed to follow God's will. This puts you at war with those living worldly (verses 34-36). Specifically the Lord highlights that the "enemies" will be those of his household. The Christian can never have "peace" with the world unless he keeps silent about God's Truth. And that silence brings condemnation upon the Christian because he has chosen to be at peace with the world rather than to be at peace with God!
- ✓ Those who choose to associate with family and friends whose life's choices are blasphemous have chosen a "family" that is NOT God's family. "For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother" (Mark 3:35). Your actions may seek "peace" but they insult God's Family.
- ✓ Those who choose to associate with friends and family who have rejected God's commands but remain silent "are not worthy" of Christ. These do not accept the difficulties of discipleship ("taking up their cross). These seek to live life from an earthly perspective but in so-doing lose heaven's reward (verses 37-39).

The Postmodern Period urges us to condemn no one; tolerate everyone; and ignore everything! This is encouraged because of the imbalanced god of Postmodernism (see lesson two) and the "love only" action that

is urged. The strongest incentive for this evil compromise is accepting and associating with one's family who live with lifestyle choices that scoff and scorn and ridicule God's commands. The somber point to remember when tempted by this incentive is the biblical reality that "God is not mocked!" (Galatians 6:7).

The governing commands of Inspiration speak to associations and relationships and all are to be treated with the same principles—there are no special exceptions! "But immorality...must not even be named among you...no immoral or impure person...has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God...for because of these things the wrath of God comes...Therefore do not be partakers with them" (Ephesians 5:3-7).

God states that there is to be no association with one willfully sinning. There is to be no excusing one who has rejected God's authority for the godless, selfish governing of "my choices." Perhaps an even greater tragedy (observed above) is in the actions those who give tacit approval to the sinner while damning the sin. Those who give approval of the sinner's lifestyle choices will be held accountable by the Almighty God. By their association they make themselves objects of the divine anger!

It is *not* biblical truth that God hates the sin but loves the sinner. Such sounds good in our Postmodern Period but it is biblical blasphemy. The cliché is rooted in man's wisdom, not Inspiration.

This pithy saying was coined by Gandhi, not God, nor Jesus, nor the Bible. It's found in St. Augustine's Letters which contains the phrase *Cum dilectione hominum et odio vitiorum*, which translates roughly to "With love for mankind and hatred of sins." The phrase has become more famous as "love the sinner but hate the sin" or "hate the sin and not the sinner" the latter form appearing in Mohandas Gandhi's 1929 autobiography). *The Bible speaks unapologetically that God hates evil-doing as well as evildoers. Whereas Gandhi would pit God's love for the sinner against God's hate for his sin, God has no such dilemma. He hates the sinner and his sin with a perfect hatred. That God is love does not mean that God must love the sinner. God was love before he created humanity and God is love even after we fell in our sin. He has acted freely in his love for the sinner, not under compulsion or obligation. Biblically, one must say that God hates the sinner and his sin.*

Nevertheless the cliché ("God hates the sin but loves the sinner") is false and should be abandoned. Fourteen times in the first fifty psalms alone, we are told that God hates the sinner, his wrath is on the liar, and so forth. In the Bible, the wrath of God rests both on the sin (Rom. 1:18ff.) and on the sinner (John 3:36)" (Thomas).

God does love sinners in the sense that He seeks their salvation in Christ. BUT His attitude toward sinners, as long as they remain unrepentant, is antagonism and wrath (such is described with the strongest possible negatives as God "hates" and God views such a "abomination"). Even in such blasphemy God's good will seeks their repentance and forgiveness. IF the sinner will repent and stop sinning then God's hatred and anger will be turned away (this point is addressed later in this lesson).

God's anger rests upon the sinner and his sin but there is always extended the opportunity of forgiveness. There are many who struggle with "the sin that so easily besets them" (Hebrews 12:1). Each Christian has a constant war in overcoming temptation. For the steadfast Christian engaged in this battle there is constant forgiveness because there is constant confession of sin, repentance and humility in fleeing sin and seeking God (1 John 1:9-10). But there are those who do not care about their rebellion to God and whose "besetting sin" is pampered and excused by relatives and friends. It is those in this group that face the irate fury of God.

This point was mentioned in lesson two and we remind you of it here. The forgiving love of God is illustrated by the Prodigal's father who kept watch for the wasteful son's return (Luke 15:11-24). While the son remained in sin he was unable to share the father's love. The father did not coddle the son's sin and enable the son's lifestyle. The father did not go and wallow in the pig's sty with the son. The father neither lessened the accountability nor absolved the son because of the "bad things that happened" to the son. The father remained distant UNTIL the son repented. Once the son came to his senses and returned and confessed his sin, he was received back and restored.

The anger of God is mitigated by the sinner's response to God. *If* the sinner continues in his sinful choices then he remains the object of God's anger. God's love has provided a means by which the sinner can change his relationship but this offer of mercy and grace has been treated with contempt. *If* the sinner repents and forsakes sin he will escape God's anger because he has changed his situation (Ephesians 5:6-8). *If* the sinner continues his evil practices that are contrary to God's commands, even if he claims to call upon God, he will not escape being the object of God's anger because he refuses to change his situation.

Colossians 3:6, 7 speak of sinners continuing in (living in; walking in) sins. Sinners who continue to practice sin are identified as among the "children of disobedience" and are the objects of the "wrath of God." Their situation will change only when they "put off all these things" (verse 8).

A new slogan might be "God hates the sin and is angry with the sinner." Therefore it is urgent for the sinner to do whatever is necessary to escape being the object of God's anger! He is to STOP sinning! It is also required for Christians to speak boldly and bluntly to those family and friends who are sinning so there is no possibility that one the Christian approves or accepts the blasphemous lifestyle attitudes toward God's commands.

The efforts to rationalize and justify the irresponsibility of sinners are understandable. Especially if those involved are beloved friends and family. Who wants to say their family member is a blasphemous sinner who has rejected God and whose eternity is damned?

But the reality of life exposes the useless justifications and rationalizations. In the real context of life there is no excuse that is adequate in allowing even the most beloved family or friend to remain justified in his flagrant rejection of God's Law.

God hates the sin and the sinner!

The Bible teaches that the sins a person commits ignites the divine wrath. These sins "kindle" God's anger and lay up treasures of wrath (Romans 2:8, 9).

### **The People Igniting God's Wrath**

The Bible teaches that God's anger is directed toward people. Of course God is angry at the action but His anger is pointed towards the person. This is illustrated in Malachi 2:13-17. In that text God hates the action of divorce but the hatred is the result of the attitudes and actions of the persons involved.

Discussed below are four groups of people who ignite the holy anger of God. It is because of ungodly attitudes and actions they ignite a divine hatred as referenced in Malachi 2 or Proverbs 6. Remember the word translated as "hate" comes from a Hebrew word translating these concepts: "to hate an enemy, foe; to view as odious." These people are odious to God. The Hebrew terms present the strongest possible negative. There is repulsion, anger, and vengeance resulting because the person is an enemy and odious to God. This is biblical truth that is difficult to accept. The Apostles reaction to the Lord's words reflect the same struggle, "(M)any of His disciples, when they heard this said, 'This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?' But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this, said to them, 'Does this cause you to stumble?'" (John 6:60, 61). The Lord realizes that man's weakness will try to excuse the divine commands and it is possible that some will "stumble."

There may be those who do not want to accept the Bible fact that God is strongly negative (as communicated in the words hates and abominations). But these must be careful they do not "stumble."

Look now at four groups of sinners that are the objects of this intense negative from the Almighty God. The references show that such people stir the strongest negatives in the Almighty God's response—these are "hated" because their lives are "abominations."

*God hates one who refuses to submit to the divine commands—Psalm 14*

These are described with these terms: fool; hypocrite; self-righteous; and those blind to personal sins. Each shares the trait that they do not "think" about God's commands. God asks us to "reason" the divine commands

(Isaiah 1:18). But sin deludes one into thinking that reason and logical understanding are invalid. Or some will admit the reasoning of the Bible but conclude that the point does not apply to them (it is not "their personal reality" or "meaningful" to their spirituality). These illustrate the great error in believing that the only factors involved in the decision-making matrix today are feelings. Remember the Postmodern Period deals with feelings and not facts!

There are those practicing their personal version of "religion." This rejects God's commands. These ridicule those who strive to follow the Bible and speak as the Bible speaks. These display contempt for the revelation of God and arrogantly set themselves as superior to God in deciding what makes worship "meaningful" or life "spiritual." They listen more to their "feelings" than to the biblical truth.

The "fool" is often referenced in Scripture. This personality is described in Psalm 14 as one who refuses to submit to God. They say "no" to God. The Psalmist describes them as, "They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good." The Psalmist observes that in spite of this reprehensible attitude "The Lord has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God." The tragic result is that such foolishness is too common. "They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one." The tragic conclusion is, "They are in great dread." The result of the fool rejecting God's Word is they "would put to shame the counsel of the afflicted" (verse 6).

The explanation for this person's abominable lifestyle is because, "They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds" (verse 1, 3). The word "corrupt" is translated from a Hebrew word meaning "to turn off from a course; decline, depart, eschew, go aside, rebel, remove, revolt, be sour, turn aside or away, to withdraw."

The term communicates that the "fool" is one who has once accepted God's commands but then turned away and rebelled against what he previously held as true. Now he is a rebel who has revolted against God's commands and has rejected his loyalty to God and withdrawn. Such describes a traitor!

Such a person ignites God's anger. This person corrupts God's holy commands without thinking of the consequences. This one is described by God as "worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned" (Hebrews 6:8). And again, "If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless" (James 1:26).

This foolishness is described by the Psalmist, "The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity" (5:5, KJV). The one described here makes a show of his rejection of God's commands. His attitudes and actions are described in this sobering text, "(A) man or woman, or family or tribe, whose heart turns away today from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of those nations; that there will not be among you a root bearing poisonous fruit and wormwood. It shall be when he hears the words of this curse, that he will boast, saying, 'I have peace though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart in order to destroy the watered land with the dry.' The Lord shall never be willing to forgive him, but rather the anger of the Lord and His jealousy will burn against that man, and every curse which is written in this book will rest on him, and the Lord will blot out his name from under heaven. Then the Lord will single him out for adversity from all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant which are written in this book of the law." (Deuteronomy 29:18-21).

This "fool" boasts and celebrates his actions. He says, "Well I USED to believe like that but I learned better! I used to be so traditional but not now!" Such a person is "hated" by God because this person is now an enemy and odious and abominable in God's sight!

The sad fact is that this abominable enmity and hatred is recognized neither by the guilty person nor by those associating with him! And those who continue to associate with this enemy of God become enemies of God and viewed with the same strong negatives. Such association is inexplicable for one seeking to obey God (2 Chronicles 19:2; Ezekiel 13:22).

*God hates those speaking "empty words"—Ephesians 5:6*

There are those who talk religious talk but their words have no substance—they are “empty.” These speak long and strong about “feelings” and “spirituality” but there is no substance to their words. All they speak is “empty.”

A biblical text identifying such a person who ignites the anger of God reads: “Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 5:6). A study of this text reveals the following points...

- ✓ *There is "deceptive" religious verbiage that is used.* The term “deceive” refers to behavior that cheats, deludes, and deceives regarding what is truth. This refers to those who profess to follow God but whose speech is delusional and cheats God’s commands!
- ✓ *There are those seeking to "deceive."* These know God’s truth but think they know better than God. These are cheaters regarding spiritual matters. They are untrustworthy and unreliable. They trust in feelings more than facts. As “cheaters” they are more interested in serving self rather than submitting to God.
- ✓ *There are religious terms that are "empty."* These use language that sounds “religious” but it is “empty” or “vain.” The Greek term selected by Inspiration to describe these people is a tragic term. The Greek term used is **ΚΕΝΌΣ** (kenos; ken-os'). It is an adjective describing the absence of anything good. It is empty and hollow in substance. Thus it is without any real meaning. When this term is used in regard to people it describes the person as lacking in any good. Since there is an absence of good the person is filled with evil (James 2:20). Such a person is fruitless, useless and unsuccessful. This is a person in whom there is nothing of truth in his reality. All he does and speaks is false and deceitful (Zodhiates).
- ✓ *There are those who speak empty words and ignite the wrath of God.* This situation is not hypothetical but is historically documented. There have always been those who invade and infect God’s People and led them away from God. Jude warns of those who sneak into the congregation with devious and devilish objectives to change God’s truth. They appear innocent but their evil attitudes bring destruction and damnation.

The words of Inspiration do not soften the situation of these individuals, “These men revile in the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed. Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. These are hidden reefs in your love feasts without fear, caring for themselves...doubly dead, uprooted...for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever” (Jude 10-13).

*These are "sons of disobedience."* This is a distressing characterization. The term refers to those who are in kinship or related with the object specified. The object specified is “disobedience.” This term refers to disbelief (a refusal to accept God’s Word); to an obstinate and rebellious disposition (a rejection of rules and authority). These are people who know the commands of God but refuse to believe, accept and follow it. They are rebellious and obstinate.

“Because of these things” is a phrase affirming that God’s anger is ignited by people who rebel against God’s Word and scorn God’s commands. There is no justification, no rationalization and no excuse for this arrogant person. He ignites the anger of God!

*God hates those practicing Sin—1 John 3:8*

➤ *Those who practice sin...rebel against God.*

This is a very interesting point to consider (1 John 3:8). The point brings up a significant fact about the Koine Greek grammar. We have already observed that God selected the Koine Greek to communicate His message

for a number of reasons (universally applicable; it is now a dead language so cannot change). The Koine uses verbs that are very descriptive. "In English, and in most other languages, the tense of the verb mainly refers to the 'time' of the action of the verb (present, past, or future time). In Greek, however, although time does bear upon the meaning of tense, the primary consideration of the tense of the verb is not time, but rather the 'kind of action' that the verb portrays. The most important element in Greek tense is kind of action; time is regarded as a secondary element. For this reason, many grammarians have adopted the German word 'aktionsart' (kind of action) to be able to more easily refer to this phenomenon of Greek verbs" (Keating).

The verb is **ποιέω** and is translated as "committeth" (KJV), "doeth" (ASV) or "practices" (NASB). It should be noted that in most of the older translations, the KJV and ASV, this continuous present verb tense is translated with "eth" on the end of the word.

Inspiration communicated that God expects a certain "kind of action" in regard to His commands.

In regard to this verb ("practices") the emphasis is that the one involved is continuing to do the action; there is no break in the behavior. The action described is continual and present. The action is being done with a constant pattern.

The context of 1 John 3 shows a dramatic contrast between verses 7 and 8. In verse 7 Inspiration addresses the "righteous" person and describes him as "doing" righteousness. The continuous present verb tense is used and indicates that this man has a constant pattern of righteousness. This continuous devotion to God's righteousness identifies him as a child of God. Just the reverse is affirmed in verse 8. The one who practices sin is identified as the son of Satan! These are opposites. Their lifestyle choices separate them and identify their devotion to either God or Satan. One does and keeps on doing righteousness while the other does and keeps on doing sin.

The contrast is amplified by Inspiration's urgent warning, "make sure no one deceives you." This warning has fallen on deaf ears in our culture because the doublespeak of Postmodernism has confused and blurred these contrasting lifestyle choices. Incredibly today people are excused from lifestyle choices that constantly place them "practicing sin." And it is treated as a small matter of no eternal consequence.

But they are "practicing" sin!

In commenting on 1 John 3:8 the Expositor's Greek Testament makes this observation regarding the powerful impact of the verb describing the one involved in sin, it is "an emphatic and interpretative variation—'he that makes sin his business or practice'" (Robertson).

This verse is blunt—God hates those who purposely makes a habit of sin. The pattern of his life is not devotion and loyalty but rebellion, selfishness and sinful living. Everything in his life is directed against God. In reality he is an "enemy" of God and a "son of the Devil." His character is the same as "Cain" (1 John 3:12).

Look at his lifestyle. He makes a deliberate choice to continue to practice sin. He makes sin his constant and repeated business. His life illustrates his tragic choices. His life is a continued series of sinning. The tragic conclusion...he is of the devil.

Here is an excellent comment on this one who "practices" sin:

1 John 3:8 forms the diametrical opposite of 1 John 3:7 inasmuch as it signifies the man whose life is a service of sin, "who lives in sin as his element" (Sander). While the former belongs to Christ, and is a child of God, the latter is "of the devil"; being "of the devil" does not signify here either merely connection, or similarity, or imitation, but, as the expression "children of the devil" (1 John 3:10) shows, origin: the life that animates the sinner emanates from the devil (Meyer).

The Postmodernist will object saying that "no one is perfect" and attempts to justify a lifestyle of sinning by this quip. This point should not be used to lessen the demand that people stop practicing sin. The Christian is not expected to live a "perfect" life. He will sin. But the life choices of the faithful Christian are in stark contrast with the compromised Christian who has decided that his lifestyle choices are his personal business and God's

commands are "optional." The Christian's sins were addressed by the continuous present verb in 1 John 1:9—when he confesses and repents the blood of Jesus constantly cleanses him of sin because he is practicing submission to God ("walking in the light").

The Christian seeking to follow righteousness is not dominated by sin. The righteous Christian may fail God, but the pattern of his life is not one of rebellion and sinfulness against God. Rather, his desire to please God is paramount and he quickly confesses and repents his sin.

God's anger is directed toward those who continue to practice sin; those who "live in sin." God's anger is also ignited against those who think that their justifications and their excuses allow a "special exception" in associating with those whose lifestyle choices identify them as "children of the Devil."

This is a simple point in Scripture. It is taught from Genesis to Revelation. It is amply illustrated by narratives and supported by direct commands. However the Postmodern Period's doublespeak has removed all damnable consequences for "living in" and "practicing" sin. Today, NO ONE is identified as a child of the Devil even if every choice of every day is contrary to what is taught in the Bible!

Do they consider whom they serve, and against whom they fight? Do they consider that they are doing those very works which proceed from and characterize the devil, and which Christ was manifested to destroy? Reflect on your conduct, brethren, in this view, and then judge, whether ye do well to continue in it (Simeon).

➤ *Those who practice sin...are of the devil.*

Although this point was stated in the previous discussion it is important to restate it and emphasize that the anger of God is ignited by those living in sin because they join the fellowship of Satan. They have rejected the fellowship of God and His saints. This serious point is often ignored. By choosing to practice sin, this person chooses to reject God. By choosing to continue in sin, this individual chooses "pleasures" for the moment and the torment of eternity that await the Devil and those in his fellowship.

Again the question asks, "Do they consider whom they serve, and against whom they fight?"

➤ *Those who practice sin...live without self-control.*

The fundamental requirement to become a Christian is "to deny your self's interests." In submitting to God you deny self, you crucify self (Galatians 2:20). There are many today who seek the blessings of faith but refuse the cross of submission. These want God on "their terms." These reject God's terms and dictate to the Almighty God what they are willing to do in their "religious" activities.

This attitude is blasphemous. These reject the submission that God requires and follow their imagined religious devotion. They think that God is very pleased with their ingenuity and their "thinking outside the box." These imagine that God must be proud of their courageous repudiation of the "old" as they cram the "new" down the throats of those they charge are blinded by "tradition."

All of these actions illustrate the Postmodern Period's efforts to restructure culture so that self-denial and self-control are seen as negatives. The urging is for everyone to discover the self-fulfillment that will bring them "personal happiness."

The Postmodernist urges each person to look "within" themselves and find what will give them "true personal fulfillment." From a number of sources that offer guidance on how mankind can find true personal fulfillment in earthy life this summary is compiled: You need to spend quiet time in looking "inside" your person and discovering what gives you the greatest pleasure. Pleasure will give you satisfaction. And satisfaction gives you meaning in life. So your fulfillment is most critical. Understand that this will be a work in progress—you will travel through life finding various things that give you pleasure. Be sure to stop at each one and "drink deeply" of its pleasure. This will arouse your curiosity and stimulate your creative juices so you can imagine more. It will bring excitement. Each day will result in your vision of what brings fulfillment to a changed focus—what satisfies today may not satisfy tomorrow. But the lack of satisfaction will only remind you that there is "more"

awaiting you. So look into your deepest self and feed the pleasure central and enjoy earthly fulfillment to the max!

Being prescribed by this counsel from culture is for one to abandon self to a sensual pleasure scavenger hunt! But this is delusional. Did you hear where this sought pleasure is unattainable? Urged is the surrender of all control and to engage all of life in the uncontrolled search for pure pleasure. No rules. No restrictions. Nothing is allowed that makes you "feel bad" as you seek to gain pleasure. Sadly this counsel to abandon self-control has invaded and compromised the Lord's Church.

Many Christians today have abandoned the Scriptural boundaries and embraced the deceptive and delusional philosophy that asserts "pure pleasure" is possible only when we turn our imaginations loose and operate without any control. There is an interesting inconsistency seen in those who urge the rejection of the "old" in favor of the "new, exciting, out-of-the-box" ideas. These claim there are "no boundaries" but they then erect boundaries for THEIR positions! Amazing inconsistency! They want a worship that is "new, exciting and out-of-the-box" but they want it governed by THEIR boundaries! If something is unacceptable to others that these Postmodernist's compel the unacceptable upon the whole. Any opposing the "new" are criticized because they have transgressed the boundaries of the "new, exciting, out-of-the-box" actions.

Such is the nature of the Postmodern Period and those advocating its positions. Amazing inconsistency! Incredible hypocrites!

The anger of God is ignited by those who refuse to demonstrate self-control. Those who surrender God's absolutes for "personal satisfaction" and "personal fulfillment" will face God's wrath. This applies to self-control in any aspect of earthly living—religion, health, speech, entertainment, business, social, civility, morally, etc. God expects self-control to be demonstrated in ALL aspects of earthly living. It is sad to hear some congratulate themselves exerting self-control in areas where they are not tempted but to bash others who have weaknesses in those areas. One may be repulsed at those who cannot exert self-control in drinking alcoholic beverages or doing chemical drugs but then utterly fail to demonstrate self-control themselves when it comes to food or physical well-being!

ALL of life must be self-controlled OR one becomes a "son of disobedience" (a child of the Devil 1 John 3:10).

The principle of a failure to demonstrate self-control and the consequential igniting of God's anger is stated, "Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience" (Colossians 3:5, 6).

"Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable" (1 Corinthians 9:25).

Self-control is not optional. A lack of self-control in earthly life causes one to practice sin and that practice ignites the anger of God!

➤ *Those who practice sin...live unrighteously and forfeit their value—"worthless"*

The fact that God's anger is ignited by the actions of "worthless" people invites the outrage of the Postmodernist because he believes no one is "worthless." If you want to upset some people just state this point—some are "worthless"! Immediately is the angry rejoinder, "God NEVER sees any person as 'worthless!'" The simple answer is "Yes! God DOES see some as 'worthless.'" This is shown throughout the Bible. Just run a search on the word."

The objector continues, "But ALL life is valuable to God!" That is true. All life is valuable to God. It is so valuable that He gave His only begotten Son to save mankind. But even though all life is valuable to God, man has the free-will to decide what he will do with his life's value. Christ asked, "For what will a man give in exchange for his soul? (Mark 8:37). King Ahab tragically illustrates how one exchanges the valued life for a worthless life. Forever Ahab is remembered with these words spoken by God's prophet, "You have sold

yourself to do evil in the sight of the Lord" (1 Kings 21:20). There are too many who have followed Ahab's tragedy. They have been given a valuable life but they have wasted it and now they are "worthless."

Mankind has the choice to guard the value of his person or to trash it! The metaphor of man playing the "harlot" illustrates how mankind sells his soul and corrupts the value. Instead of being valued man becomes "worthless" because he has rejected the only standard of true value for his life—the commands of God. Those who follow God's commands are valued as "well done, good, and faithful." Those who reject God's commands are valued as "worthless."

This is a blunt and harsh fact that Postmodernism deliberately ignores! Unfortunately some in the Lord's Church has been duped by Postmodernism and fail to admit some are valued in God's sight and others are worthless.

God's anger is ignited by those who took the eternal value of their souls and corrupted it and devalued it and wasted it and are now "worthless" (Matthew 25:30).

There is an encouraging point that should never be forgotten...even after one has "played the harlot" and depreciated and devalued their eternal soul, God is still willing to accept them back if they return in repentance. The story of Hosea and Gomer illustrate the forgiving love of God toward those who sold out to Satan but then repented and returned (Hosea 1-3). This is the wonderful message offers the available blessing but sadly many who have wasted their lives and depreciated their soul's value refuse to return in repentance.

Read and study these verses that show how mankind can become "worthless" (as translated by the NASB) and ignite the anger of God:

- ✓ Individuals who blasphemously rejected obeying God's commands (Judges 9:4; 19:22; 1 Samuel 2:12); Proverbs 6:12; 16:27; Jeremiah 13:10)
- ✓ Christians who did not serve as God commanded (Matthew 25:30)
- ✓ Christians who "profess" but do not do (Titus 1:16)
- ✓ Christians who fail to obey God's commands to be faithful (Hebrews 6:8)

The Bible does identify certain persons as "worthless." The various words that are translated from the Hebrew and Greek indicate that these people profess allegiance to God. These speak religious words but their lifestyles are useless, unprofitable, unapproved, rejected; empty; without profit; destructive and wicked. They have absolutely no value because, like Ahab, they have sold their souls to the devil! Their value is absolutely "zero." Peter describes these as appearing one way but in reality they are worthless (2 Peter 2:1-22).

➤ *Those who practice sin...ignore God*—"trampled under foot the Son of God"

Hebrews 10:26-31 is a passage that comments on the attitude and actions of those whose lifestyles embrace sin and who consequently ignore God. Perhaps the most disconcerting metaphor used is that of "trampling under foot." This term is translated from the Greek word communicating a rejection with the strongest possible disdain. These words can also be used to translate the attitude described here—they have contempt; despise; scorn; think it is unworthy of their concern; show the greatest possible insult. This action reveals a strong feeling of contempt; a show of haughty arrogance and pride. This same term is used by Christ in Matthew 7:6 to describe what some do to His Pearl of spiritual Truth.

The attitude of these in Hebrews 10:26-31 exposes a hardened heart. This person is earlier described in Hebrews 6:4-6, "For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame."

In the Eastern nations the greatest contempt is shown by showing one the bottom of his foot. Those traveling in this region of the world are cautioned to avoid showing the bottom of the foot/shoe/sandal because that is the greatest possible insult. The English words communicating this idea are "spurn," "reject," or "contempt."

The Encarta Dictionary defines scorn as “to reject a person, offer, gift, or advances with scorn and contempt | to reject something by pushing it away with the foot (archaic) | a contemptuous action.”

In response to this insulting treatment of God’s Word this blasphemer can expect to face these actions detailed in Hebrews 10:26-31. Think on these points and realize the justification of God’s anger:

- ✓ Indicted as “sinning willfully”
- ✓ Without hope because there “no longer remains a sacrifice for sins”
- ✓ Awaits “a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire”
- ✓ A “severer punishment”
- ✓ “Has insulted the Spirit of grace”
- ✓ Eternity will be decided as “the Lord will judge”
- ✓ His for ever and ever destiny is “a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God”

This is the true spirit of one who practices sin. He takes the Word of God and treats it as trash! He shows the greatest possible contemptuous action to the Heavenly Father. He has been offered so much by the grace and mercy of God and he has kicked it away with his foot!

Such ignites God’s fierce anger!

*God hates those who shirk back—Hebrews 10:35-39*

Reference to this group immediately follows the reference regarding those who despise God and ignore God’s commands. The group identified in Hebrews 10:35-39 are not those who make a show of their contempt for God’s commands. This group is composed of those who use stealth in their apostasy. The term “shrink back” comes from Greek terms that communicate the idea of “shrinking back in timidity or fear; to cower; to have the boldness shrink away; to conceal, shun or withdraw” (Vine). The idea being communicated is that there are those who do not openly rebel and show contempt for God’s commands. These simply remain silent and “shrink away” from confrontation.

These “shrinkers” are those the Postmodernist would call “peacemakers” because these do not force their opinions and do not confront. The philosophy of those in this group is simply “Let it be,” “Don’t rock the boat.” This group fits perfectly with the Postmodern Period. But they do not fit with the expectations of God.

God expects His People to “live by faith.” This requires boldness and confidence not timidity (2 Timothy 1:7). Those who cower and silently shrink away from confrontation are NOT living according to God’s expectations. According to the Hebrew author such will become the object of God’s anger—“My soul has no pleasure in him” that shrinks back! This declaration offers a harsh reality to those who think they are being “kind” and “loving” because they do not challenge the blasphemer.

The phrase “no pleasure” is significant. The word “pleasure” communicates the idea that one is held in high regard and well thought of as a follower of God. It means such is approved and commended. It is the best compliment possible (synonymous with the “Well done good and faith servant”). Communicated is that “pleasurable” thoughts are associated with such a person.

Sadly the wonderful compliment that the word “pleasure” communicates is negated by this group’s actions. God has “NO” pleasure in those people. The word translated “no” is an absolute negative—there is never, none, nothing that is commendable or complimentary about those who silently shrink away from the boldness that should be expressed when sin’s blasphemy and Satan’s evil are present.

The great tragedy is those in this group are a part of God’s Church but they have allowed themselves to be intimidated so their boldness has cowered until there is silence. They may not approve what is being done by those present but they definitely will not speak out! Consequently they “shrink back to destruction.” This word “destruction” is tragic. It communicates the idea of absolute ruin, loss, damnation, perishing, and waste. It is translated as “perdition” in some texts.

By remaining silent and shrinking back in cowardly timidity, those in this group have become “worthless”—they are a waste. They could have been useful to God as bold supporters of God’s truth but they chose to surrender their boldness for a cowardly withdrawal. These are identified with other groups who face the anger of God:

- ✓ The adversaries of God’s People (Philippians 1:28)
- ✓ Those who cherish foolish and harmful lusts (1 Timothy 6:9)
- ✓ Those identified as false teachers (2 Peter 2:1, 3)
- ✓ Those identified as ungodly (2 Peter 3:7)
- ✓ Those who twist/pervert/distort the Scripture (2 Peter 3:16)

Please notice that those in this group are NOT openly advocating rebellion. These simply remain silent and slowly “shrink back” from a verbal and visible confrontation of the sinner and his lifestyle choices. Some will attempt to justify this silence by saying that such would not “listen” to what would be said. But this justification for “shrinking back” only confesses that one is not willing to follow the Lord’s command not to be in the company of those who treat the pearls of God’s wisdom as something to be “trodden underfoot.”

Those who will not listen are to be treated according to the Lord’s words, “Whoever does not receive you, nor heed your words, as you go out of that house or that city, shake the dust off your feet” (Matthew 10:14). This is the same response Paul urged in Ephesians 5 toward those who live ungodly in disobedience to God’s commands. You cannot ignore their blasphemy and remain faithful to God. If they will not listen then “shake the dust off” and leave them alone until they repent!

If there are those who will not listen to God’s truth and who treat it with contempt and scorn, WHY be a part of that group? Such association is not approved by God and will cause God’s anger to be focused upon you! (Ephesians 5:5-17; 2 Corinthians 5:7-9; Matthew 10:22-33).

- ✓ Do you really want to be identified with the group described as ungodly blasphemers?
- ✓ Do you really want to shrink back in silence and be the reason God’s truth is not being defended?
- ✓ Do you really want to become the object of God’s anger?

Let us be courageous and boldly affirm, “We are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul” (Hebrews 10:39).

### **Absolute Take Aways from This Study**

Our study has discovered that God’s holy anger is ignited into a fierce vengeance upon those who either do not know His will or those who do know His will but have chosen to treat it with contempt. The Bible truth is clear—one cannot treat God indifferently; one cannot ignore God’s commands; one cannot offer God a counterfeit devotion. God expects the full surrender, full loyalty and full consecration. Those who fail to offer God this complete submission ignite God’s holy wrath.

There are people who hate God. Their hatred is demonstrated in their choices and lifestyles. The Bible seeks to warn mankind about this catastrophic behavior. If one chooses to reject God and kick His commands away from his decision-making matrix, then he cannot escape God’s wrath. These two texts emphasize the seriousness of those who do not submit and obey all of God’s commands:

Psalm 81:15 “Those who hate the Lord would pretend obedience to Him, and their time of punishment would be forever.”

Romans 1:28-32 “And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.”

In summary this list offers a snapshot of those who ignite God's holy wrath and these will be severely punished "for ever and ever" because they refused to submit and obey God's will. They were convinced that they had a better way than God's way!

- ✓ The "fool"; the "worthless person"; the hypocrite; the self-righteous; the blind to personal sins (Hebrews 6:8) James 1:26
- ✓ Those speaking "empty words" (Ep 5:6)
- ✓ Immorality (Col 3:6)
- ✓ Hebrews 10:26-31—willing sin practices that bluntly ignore God
- ✓ Those who shirk back—Hebrews 10:35-39
- ✓ The disobedient (1 Peter 2:8)
- ✓ Those who live unrighteously (2 Peter 2:1-22; 18:5-8;)
- ✓ The ignorant, unstable, unprincipled (2 Peter 3:16-17)
- ✓ The one who continues to practice sin (1 John 3:8)
- ✓ Those in congregations who reject authority and are unreasonable; they destroy because of selfishness (Jude 11-16)
- ✓ Congregations who fail to honor God's Truth (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; Revelation 2:2-5; 2:14-15; 2:19-23; 3:2-5; 3:9-10; 3:15-18)
- ✓ The "elitist" of the world (Revelation 6:15-17; 16:19; 18:6-24)

From this study we learn...

*First*, there is no question that Satan has convinced many to despise God.

*Second*, there is no question that God hates those who despise Him.

*Third*, those hated by God will never find satisfaction and personal contentment here or hereafter—they will be eternally damned!

*Fourth*, there is a wonderful grace extended if all will submit and obey and become identified with "those who have faith to the preserving of the soul" (Hebrews 10:39). Let us make sure we are a part of this group!

## Sources Cited

Lesson Six: *Igniting God's Anger* (in final MSS will be at end with other citations)

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