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Trimming Back the Excesses

Sometimes for trees and bushes to look their best, you have to cut or trim the excess foliage off or back. Our yards always look nicer after the grass has been trimmed around all the objects in the yard and all of the trees and shrubs have been cut back and reshaped.

The same thought is true about our spiritual life and our inward man's wellbeing. If there is wickedness in our life, we must cut it out. Not trim it back but cut it out. There may be things that we do that are not wrong or sinful, but when they are done excessively (TV, Video Games, Recreation, Overtime) they become sinful and detrimental to our spiritual wellbeing.

Consider a few Scriptures which make this point.

Cutting out Sin

Matthew 5:27-30 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.' But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. "

Colossians 3:5 "Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry."

Purging out Excess

John 15:1-2 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit."

We need to cut sinful things from our lives. We have to trim back excessive things to help us grow stronger in the Lord. Rest assured, if we do not make the necessary changes the Lord will cut us off. John 15:6 "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned."
STACY

Be Angry and Do Not Sin

By Colly Caldwell

"Be angry, and do not sin.' Do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil" (Eph. 4:26-27).

Do you ever get so angry that your face turns red and you just can't seem to think straight? Well, I guess one would have to have lost it sometime or other to even be able to ask that question. I got mad one day years ago standing on a ladder trying to put up a new gutter. I hit a nail wrong and it was the only one I had. It flew off into a hidden and irretrievable place, and I threw the hammer after it into the bushes. I didn't hit anybody and I didn't say a curse word but my state of mind certainly wasn't my ordinary sweet self. J. Lynda did not say a word. After a little while I calmed down but I suppose I still haven't forgotten, have I? I don't know to this day why I got so angry. It was just plain dumb. One tends not to forget things he is ashamed of.

The major leagues are back. The summer season has been interrupted this spring by rain and snow but baseball is here through late October. Sometimes even mild mannered players in America's pastime get angry. This season you will no doubt read about hitters getting "beaned" and blaming the pitcher with deliberately trying to knock him out of the game. Usually what happens is this: the batter rushes the mound, takes a huge swipe at the pitcher, and both dugouts empty into a brawl near the mound. Multiple players get ejected from the game and receive fines in the thousands of dollars and suspensions from several future games. All of that because the "hit-ee" lost it (his cool) when the pitcher lost it (control of his fastball).

There is a relatively new musical drama on Broadway created by Lin-Manuel Miranda entitled "Hamilton." In 2016, it won eleven Tony Awards and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. "Hamilton" is Alexander Hamilton, writer of fifty-one of the Federalist Papers and George Washington's Secretary of the Treasury. Hamilton was an avid opponent of Aaron Burr. Burr ran for the presidency but became Vice President under Thomas Jefferson. Anger between Hamilton and Burr reached a boiling point when Hamilton allegedly expressed "a still more despicable opinion" of Burr at a dinner. It was reported and became a matter of "honor" to both men. A duel was arranged at Weehawken, NJ on the morning of July 11, 1804. Burr shot Hamilton who died the next day. Burr lost his political future. Hamilton lost his life. Both men lost their honor in their hatred and anger.

You may not be aware that over a period of seven years more than two-hundred murders and in excess of twelve thousand injuries have resulted from "road rage" on our nation's streets and highways. What a tragedy when people become so angry driving their automobiles that they kill or severely injure others whom they do not know and have never even met. Who is hurt? Well, certainly the victims: but also their families, acquaintances, and all of us in society. But don't forget the hurt that follows the uncontrolled angry offender.

In Ephesians chapter four, there are actually several different Greek words used to alert us to the dangers of anger in the life of the Christian. They are sometimes used synonymously but they may differ in intensity depending upon the context in which they are found.

In verse 26, Paul said, "Be angry (*orgē*) and do not sin." *Orgizō* from *orgē* is a reasoned state of mind that is aroused or provoked to the point of being indignant or enraged by conditions impacting the individual. That arousal may or may not be sudden but it is often the result of spontaneous reaction. This is a general word for anger and appears in many different settings.

In verse 26, Paul also said, "Do not let the sun go down on your wrath (*parorgismos*). This word is a stronger form of *orgē* implying a closely held or cherished anger. It may involve a more constant bad temper, settled infuriation, embittered wrath, or harbored irritation. *Orgē* seems to be more thoughtful and *parorgismō* more emotional. It may also be accompanied by bitterness remaining in the heart.

Finally, in verse 31, Paul said, "Let all bitterness (*pikria*; a spirit of resentment that refuses reconciliation), wrath (*thumos*, a boiling agitated exasperation), anger (*orgē*), clamor (*kraugē*, outbursts or yelling at those against those you are angry at) and evil speaking (*blasphemia*, railing, cursing, slander, backbiting) be put away from you, with all malice (*kakia*, a summary word indicating all other types of bad will toward another)."

All of us have emotions and all of us have been subject to mismanagement of our emotions at times. We want to be very careful with our anger. We don't want to do or say something that will have consequences we have to live with for the rest of our lives and in eternity.