

**DISCOVERING GOD’S WILL (8)**  
**THE IMPLICIT WILL OF GOD-Part Four**  
**“WORDS THAT HURT, WORDS THAT HEAL”**  
**Sermon 7/08/18**

We have been on a journey to discover the explicit and implicit will of God as revealed in Scripture. We looked at two sets of Scriptures several weeks ago that revealed the first two things that God requires of us. Then last week we looked at Ephesians 4:26-27 which says, *“Be angry and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity.”*

We saw how, like Jesus, we can get angry but, when we do, we should not allow that anger to cause us to sin. We also saw how the devil uses our anger to tempt us to sin through the things we say and the actions we take while angry. I know a man who always threw his cell phone against the wall of his house when he got angry. His anger costs him both relationally and financially. He needed his cell phone for work. Without it his business could not survive. But he literally threw caution to the wind every time he got angry, destroying his financial lifeline. This was foolishness on his part but he never learned his lesson. As a result the devil took every opportunity to stroke his anger and my friend took the bait, costing his family hundreds of dollars every time he got angry. And I will add that he got this angry at least once if not twice or more a month. He gave the devil an opportunity to use him to sin. And he willingly went along for the ride.

Some of us may not be quite as prone to destroy physical objects when we get angry but all of us have had the opportunity to destroy relationships with our anger. When we use the words, “you always” or “I never” we can come across as hurtful and unwilling to acknowledge any wrong doing on our part. Seeking to place the blame elsewhere we can seem rigid and unwilling to bend. This attitude can hurt others feelings, and if not checked can cause a separation in a relationship. We usually say the dogmatic “always” and “never” words when we speak to those we care about the most. Perhaps that’s because we feel the most comfortable or protected with those whom we know love us. But that is no excuse for speaking in harsh tones.

We saw last week that the best way to deal with our anger is to confront it right away; not to dwell on it or allow it to fester. But sometimes in our rush to express our anger before the sun goes down we may say or do things which may relieve our own pent up frustrations, but because of the way we express it we may also cause the person we are angry at to experience their own anger. It’s what we say and how we say it that can either escalate or de-escalate the conflict. It’s more important to obey the directive not to sin than it is to be legalistic about the timeframe for expressing our anger.

The Bible speaks of this. Ecclesiastes 7:9 says, *“Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools.”* If we want to we can quickly become provoked at someone and escalate the situation. But if we are careful with our words we can turn away from the anger rising within us and choose to embrace kindness. Proverbs 15:1 says, *“A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”* If we measure our words and speak with gentleness we can turn away not only our own wrath but that of others. But if we use harsh words these words will only stir the pot and bring anger to a boil.

We are to be patient when confronted with anger. Jesus said to turn the other cheek when someone strikes us. This applies to verbal as well as physical manifestations of anger. We are not to return kind for kind. The eye for eye logic of the Old Testament does not apply in the age of grace. The words “they started it” may be used by immature children as an excuse to return evil for evil but it is not something the Christian should use as an excuse for quarreling. If we give ourselves an excuse so we can get overheated in our anger, then we will most likely end up singing and making a mountain out of a mole hill.

Proverbs 15:18 says, “*A hot-tempered person stirs up conflict, but the one who is patient calms a quarrel.*” And Proverbs 14:29 says, “*Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly.*” If we are to be people who are controlled by the Holy Spirit and not the hot-tempered spirit that dwells within each of us, then we need to practice patience and self-control. We are to be the ones who calm a person who insists on quarrelling. We are to be the ones who show great understanding rather than ill-tempered folly.

James (1:19) says, “*My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this. Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.*” As I said last week, this is the crux of the matter. Human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. So the third thing we saw as the implicit will of God was this:

#### GOD’S IMPLICIT WILL IS THAT:

#3- We Do Not Sin When We Get Angry, Nor Let The Sun Go Down On Our Anger So As Not To Give The Devil An Opportunity

Since we all get angry from time to time there are some explicit ways that Scripture provides that can help us avoid sinning when do we get angry. This is what we will look today.

#### EPHESIANS 4:29-30

*“Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*”

James tells us that the tongue is a fire which sets on fire the course of our life. It is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men; from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. Then he says, “*My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.*” Paul agrees with James. That is why he tells us in Ephesians 4 that we should not let any unwholesome word proceed from our mouth. We should not give the tongue an opportunity to curse men simply because we are angry with them.

Jesus told us also that whatever comes out of a person’s mouth originates from within his heart. In other words, whatever fills a person’s heart will spill out into his words. So when Paul says not to let any unwholesome word proceed from out mouth he is speaking directly to what is filling our heart. Let’s take a more detailed look at what Paul is saying.

UNWHOLESOME

Rotten, corrupted, poor quality, worthless

WORD

Answer, remark, complaint, statement

These are words which, when spoken, do not support or encourage another person. These words are meant to tear down. They do not have the ability to bring life because they are corrupted. Have you ever noticed that when we get really angry about something we tend to make sweeping general statements rather than specific grievances? It's when we are confronted with the questions like "what" or "when" that we are forced to come up with specific instances where we felt offended.

When we answer someone with remarks or complaints which make broad negative statements we are actually revealing the negative things which fill our own hearts. These types of words are more a reflection of who we are than they are a statement about who the person is to whom we are directing our anger. We expose our weakness and our own corrupted thoughts when we allow unwholesome words to come out of our mouth. For this reason alone it might be wise to heed the age old advice of "Better to be thought a fool than to open one's mouth and remove all doubt." Our words are often a reflection of our innermost character. That's why Paul goes on to say this:

EPHESIANS 4:31a

*"Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."*

Once again let's take a closer look at what Paul is saying.

BITTERNESS

Bitter hatred, extreme wickedness

WRATH

Rage, boiling anger, indignation

ANGER

Wrath containing violence and a desire to punish

CLAMOR

Uproar, shouting

SLANDER

Abusive language, damage to a person's good name

MALICE

Ill will, desire to injure, to bring trouble

PUT AWAY

Remove, carry away what is attached

This is not your ordinary, everyday anger. This is a pent up, calculated, and willful desire to inflict harm and damage to another through anger. These are the types of emotions and actions that

come about when sin gains control over our anger. This is what anger looks like when we give Satan the opportunity to infuse it with animosity, hatred, and self-righteous behavior.

This is the type of anger that we see displayed on our TV screens today. It is permeated with hatred, unwholesome words, wrath, violence, shouting, abusive language, slander and a desire to injure or bring trouble to others. This is the anger of the world. This is not to be the anger of believers. Believers are to “put these types of behaviors away; to remove them from our hearts and minds; to carry them to the cross where they can be laid at the feet of Jesus along with all the other sins which we commit with our hearts and minds.

As believers we may not have these thoughts often. They may actually be rare for all of us here. But none of us are free from the tendency to think and act along these lines. We are not unfamiliar with them. They are emotions which arise out of our flesh and not from the Spirit of God residing within us. And until the day God calls us home we will have to fight against them. That’s why, even though he is writing to the believers in Ephesus, Paul instructs them NOT to let any unwholesome word proceed from their mouth. They are to put away the things which destroy the lives and reputations of others, as well as destroy any witness they might have for Jesus.

In their place Paul says we are to speak only edifying words; words that encourage and build up rather than tear down; words that bring life to the hearer, rather than kill the spirit of life within another. James tells us that the source of quarrels and conflicts among us is our own pleasures that wage war within the members of our body. We lust after something we do not have so we are willing to commit murder to get it. We are envious of others because they have what we cannot obtain by ourselves, so we fight and quarrel over it. James calls this pride and tells us to forsake pride and submit to God so that we might receive God’s grace instead of His opposition.

I have also noticed that what drives our anger is sometimes our need to be right. We would rather continue to disagree with someone and never give up the fight because we have to win the argument. It is more important for us to be right than to be kind or forgiving. This is a form of pride as well. Other times it is fear which drives our anger. When a child runs out in front of an approaching car we get angry and yell at the child to never do that again. But it is our fear for their safety that is driving our anger. If we took the time to see beyond our initial reaction we might find fear, pride, and lust as the driving forces for our anger. These are all things which God tells us to forsake, to put aside, and to disregard.

A fellow pastor recently called and told me he was very angry and wanted my advice as to what to do with his anger. As he revealed what had angered him I realized that it was fear that was driving his anger. He was afraid that what he had hoped for later in life was not going to come to fruition. What he had counted on as an end to years of frustration was not going to happen. When he realized that fear was driving his anger he was able to see the incident is a different perspective.

Like Job, what he feared most had come upon him. He now had to learn how to deal with a new reality rather than the one he had hoped for. I suggested the next step in dealing with his anger was to let go of his fear and begin to grieve for that which would never be. He had to give up the frustration of living with something disagreeable to him and accept that God would be with Him even though everything would stay the same. In simpler words he had to give up what he thought

was a solution to his frustration and begin to accept that God was sufficient for him to continue to handle the frustrating circumstances. Sometimes God wants us to walk through the difficulties rather than walk around them. God had the power and the desire to give my friend what he needed to deal with the hand that life had dealt him. He did not need to be angry or be fearful over his future. My advice for him was to grieve for the dream that was not going to happen and to stand on faith that what God had in mind for his future was far better than what he had planned for himself.

The last few things I have to say about this verse have to do with the Holy Spirit and the change He can make in our hearts. After saying not to let any unwholesome words proceed from our mouth but rather only words of edification which give grace to those who hear it, Paul says, *“Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”* We grieve the Holy Spirit when we speak things which tear people down rather than build them up. We are not just dealing with hurting other people with our words we are also dealing with hurting the Holy Spirit.

It grieves Him to hear us say angry and hurtful words to others, whether they are a believer or not. It grieves Him because it reveals the unwholesome things which we have allowed to grow and fester in our own heart. We are to submit to God’s Spirit, for His purpose is to make us into the image of Christ. When we use our anger to attack someone we allow Satan the opportunity to use us for the destruction of another. Satan comes to steal and kill and destroy and when we speak words with the intent to harm another we participate in that endeavor. That is how the Holy Spirit can be grieved. But if we obey the words of Paul concerning the type of speech we use when we are angry then we can avoid grieving the Spirit of Christ.

Lastly, in contrast to the evil things which we are capable of saying, Paul tells us to *“Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you”* (Ephesians 4:31b).

The most successful way to keep unwholesome words from spewing forth from our mouth is to be kind to one another; to become tender-hearted instead of hard-hearted, and to forgive one another regardless of what has made us angry. Holding on to anger can make us bitter; can cause us to want to get revenge, to lash out in hurt and frustration at someone’s actions or faults. That may be the way the flesh desires to respond but that is not the way of the Spirit. The way of the Spirit is to forgive each other, just as God in Christ has forgiven us.

In Colossians Paul puts it this way: *“Since God chose you to be the holy people He loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other’s faults and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others”* (Colossians 3:12-13-NLT).

Instead of putting on the clothing of bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander and malice as so many people do today, we are to clothe ourselves with kindness, tenderhearted mercy, humility gentleness, and patience. This does not mean that we will always agree with one another. There may still be plenty to disagree about. But we are to do so in a spirit of unity and from a place of kindness and forgiveness.

Things others do may rub us wrong; they may not always conform to something the way we think they should; they may not do things the way we want them to, and may even have faults which we find hard to live with. The older we grow the more this seems to be true. We get set in our ways and we find it hard to think differently. But Scripture says we are to make allowance for the faults of others remembering that they are not the only ones with highly visible faults. We have to recognize that we too have our own idiosyncrasies which drive others crazy. Others overlook our faults and we must overlook the faults of others as well. We must also forgive those who offend us whether that offense be big or small, occasional or constant. If we clothe ourselves with tender-hearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, forgiveness will not be as hard as we make it out to be.

One more thought. The forgiveness of others is not dependent on our good will. It is dependent on the forgiveness we ourselves have already received from Christ. We simply grant to others what has already been granted to us. It sounds easy but it is not always so. Sometimes we have to repent of the wrong we have done before we can see clearly to forgive another. Sometimes we have to lay down our will for God's will before we have the courage to grant forgiveness to those who have hurt us. Sometimes we have to grieve what we cannot have before we can accept what God has ordained for us to have. But all these are what we should willingly do as we submit to the will of God.

There is more that God tells us to do that will help in preventing the devil from having an opportunity to cause us to sin but we will deal with those in a few weeks. But I want to close today by summarizing the ten things we have learned so far about the implicit will of God.

God's Implicit Will is That:

#1-We Set Our Mind On The Things Above, Not On The Things Of This Earth

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#2-We Are To Be Anxious For Nothing by Letting Our Requests Be Made Known To God Through Prayer and Supplication

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#3-We Do Not Sin When We Get Angry, nor Let the Sun Go Down On Our Anger So That We Do Not Give the Devil an Opportunity

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#4-No Unwholesome Word Come Out Of Our Mouth, Only Edifying Words

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#5-That We Do Not Grieve The Holy Spirit

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#6-All Bitterness, Wrath, Anger, Clamor, Slander, and Malice Be Put Away

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#7-That We Be Kind To One Another, Maintaining A Tender Heart

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#8-We Forgive One Another As We Have Been Forgiven

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#9-Clothe Ourselves With Tenderhearted Mercy, Kindness, Humility, Gentleness, And Patience.

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#10-Make Allowance For Each Other's Faults And Forgive Anyone Who Offends Us, just As The

## Lord Forgave Us

This is admittedly a long list but everything God says to do is interrelated to each other. By putting away some things and clothing ourselves with others we will be better equipped to do what God requires. The good news: we are not alone in our efforts to obey. The Holy Spirit is active within us, working with our spirit to obey the word of the Lord.

By putting away the desires of the flesh and embracing the desires of the Spirit we can do what God asks of us. We can put away unwholesome words and that which grieves the Holy Spirit and we can instead clothe ourselves with kindness, tender-hearted mercy, humility, gentleness, patience, and forgiveness. God's Spirit will empower and embolden us to do whatever He desires us to do.

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