**Put Off “Going Off”**

Colossians 3:8-11

**Introduction**

Anger issues are destroying churches, families, and corporations today. Its manifestations include outbursts, quarrelsome debates, disrespect, violence, animosity, cruelty, antagonism, vengeance, malice, bitterness, and discouragement. Our Heavenly Father is clearly concerned about such behavior in the lives of His children and calls them to repentance (Proverbs 29:22; 22:24-25). Paul wrote to the Colossians to help them forsake their old ways of dealing with conflict. Whether their strife was a result of false teachers emphasizing the superiority of some over others, or they were arguing over religious practices or ethnic and social distinctions, Paul calls for radical action for the sake of their spiritual well-being. Unity is a gift of the Spirit to the church (Ephesians 4:3), and it is to be carefully guarded. It is essential to have the type of words and actions that will grow healthy relationships in a church, marriage, family, and workplace. In this lesson, we will identify the words and actions that are destructive to relationships. We at times use an expression such as “He went off on him” to describe someone who responds in anger to a situation. With that in mind, we will see why Paul said that we ought to put off such angry ways of living since they don’t fit us as Christians.

1. **There are destructive ways of relating to others that Christians need to put off. (v. 8-9).** 
   1. To “put off” means to rid oneself of; to take away; to throw it off like a dirty garment.
2. There are ways of thinking and acting that do not suit or fit a Christian.
3. The old ways of thinking and acting damage relationships.
4. Christians need to put off the deeds of the old man—any way of life connected with our previous unregenerate state.
   1. Paul specifically lists what needs to be put off.
5. Anger – retribution; a chronic attitude of smoldering hatred; a settled feeling of anger.
6. There is a difference between sinful anger and righteous anger.
7. Sinful anger is when I don’t get what I want—when my will is violated; it is motivated by love for self and being lord of my own life. Righteous anger is when God doesn’t get what He wants—when God’s will is violated; it is motivated by love for God and allowing Christ to be Lord of my life. Which describes why you are angry?
8. If there is sinful anger, how did it get there? Lou Priolo, author of The Heart of Anger, identifies five steps downward.
9. Hurt - a wounded spirit, produced by real or perceived offense.
10. Bitterness – the result of not responding biblically, by not seeing that it was not an actual wrong or by refusing to forgive or to pass over it. (Proverbs 19:11; I Peter 4:8)
11. Anger – not just momentary, but an angry way of life or characteristic, caused by giving in to sinful anger and thereby becoming bound to it.
12. Stubbornness – being your own ruler.
13. Rebellion – foolish living.
14. Wrath – fits of rage or angry outbursts.
15. Malice – hateful feelings; an attitude of ill will toward a person; hateful thoughts which lead to hateful words and actions. *“Words do not merely convey information or let off steam. They change situations and relationships, often irrevocably. They can wound as well as heal. Like wild plants blown by the wind, hateful words can scatter their seeds far and wide, giving birth to more anger wherever they land (Wright).”*
16. Blasphemy – slander; damaging someone’s reputation; tearing someone down.
17. Filthy communication – filthy language; shameful words; obscene speech; abusive speech; abrasive speech.
18. Lying – communicating what is false, with the evident purpose of misleading; to bend the truth. *“Satan is the liar…When a Christian lies, he is cooperating with Satan. (Wiersbe)” “Truth is often inconvenient, untidy or embarrassing, and we are constantly tempted to bend it into a less awkward shape. (Wright)”*
    1. A relationship cannot grow in this type of environment. If a person is destroying relationships with such behavior, they do not understand who they are in Christ or who others are in Christ.
    2. A Christian should not be dressed in that which they have discarded. Consider your own life:
19. Are your feelings towards others consuming your day?
20. Are you driven by revenge?
21. Does rage characterize your conversation?
22. Have hateful feelings latched onto your soul?
23. Have you slandered someone?
24. Have you told the truth in every situation?
25. Is the way you are thinking about others healthy or destructive?
26. Is what you are doing helping or destroying relationships?
27. Is there someone you have not talked to in a long time?
28. Is what you have said healthy to the relationship?
29. **Paul provides two reasons why they should put off destructive ways of dealing with each other.**
    1. They have put off the old man with his deeds. (v. 9)
       1. *“While transferred into Christ’s realm, we are still prone to think and live as people who still belong to Adam’s realm. Hence, with the celebration of a decisive change, there arises also the constant need for appropriation of that change.” (Moo)*
       2. They are part of a new family, and there are new ways of life that come with it.
       3. This is the result of God’s redemptive purposes. Through Christ, God has redeemed us to Himself. As a result, we are the new man (humanity).
    2. They have put on the new man. (v. 10-11)
       1. The new man is being renewed in knowledge. The old man could not know God nor His will; the new man can know God and His will.
       2. The new man is being renewed according to the pattern of the One who created him. (Genesis 1:26, Colossians 1:15, Romans 8:29, 2 Corinthians 3:18)
       3. The new man eliminates social barriers that divide. (v. 11)
30. The old man lived according to social distinctions. Divisions were very important to the function of their way of life.
31. Greeks and Jews, circumcised and uncircumcised, Barbarian and Scythian, bond slaves and free*. “The list of social distinctions mentioned throws light on the kind of frictions the Christian faith had to overcome.” (O’Brien)*
32. Christ should be the central focus of all believers. He is to be their all in all. Christ is all that matters. All believers are equally under His authority.
33. Being in Christ removes social barriers. It does not change a person’s nationality or social standing, but it does put them all on equal footing. Thus, Christ unifies those who love and follow Him.
34. **Central Idea: Christians should put off destructive ways of relating to each other because their new life in Christ brings unity.** 
    1. What is the solution to dealing with anger?
35. Know who you are in Christ.
36. Consider what God wants to do in the other person’s life.
37. Live under Christ’s authority.
38. Treat anger like an intruder. *“When a tide of passion or a surge of anger is felt, it must be dealt with as the alien intruder it really is, and turned out of the house as having no right to be there at all, let alone to be giving orders. This is often harder than it sounds, but it must be constantly attempted, in reliance on the grace which continually renews the life of the Christian. (N.T. Wright)”*
39. Make sure that you are directing your anger in the right direction—to the problem itself. This requires healthy communication and resolve. Blowing up destroys the other person; clamming up destroys you.
    1. Sinful anger has no place in the new life with Christ.

**Conclusion**

You should put off “going off.” Since anger does not suit a Christian, he or she should be clothed with Christlikeness. We will see what this looks like in the next lesson.