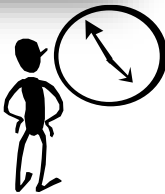


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### Time of Assembly



#### **Sunday:**

Bible Study 9:00 a.m.  
Worship 10:00 a.m.  
(every other week)

Worship 5:00 p.m.

#### **Wednesday:**

Bible Study 7:00 p. m.

## The Root Cause of Violence

By Jeffrey W. Hamilton

*“For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices”*

(Colossians 3:6-9).

Paul discusses the need to change with the Colossians. He already gave them a list of changes that need to be done in regard to sexual practices (Colossians 3:5) but now he brings up another common problem: sins that revolve around anger. It is a list similar to those found in Ephesians 4:29-31 and I Peter 2:1 but there is an order to Paul’s list in Colossians.

Some of the terms seem confusing because in English the words are synonyms.

Paul begins his list with “anger.” This refers to someone who is so angry that he has lost control and has become violent. Such destructive rage is easily recognized as wrong by Christians and non-Christians alike. Thus, the question should be how we can minimize that level of violence from occurring.

Before our pot boils over, we can see it steaming. Paul’s next term, “wrath” refers to heavy-breathing fierceness. Imagine, if you would, the classic cartoon of some character who is so mad that he is gritting his teeth while huffing and puffing. An example of wrath is found in Luke 4:28-29 when the Jews in Nazareth were so furious by Jesus’ reminder that God did favors to Gentiles over Jews that they were breathing heavily in rage and sought to throw Jesus off a cliff. People with this much hatred no longer think clearly and have little to inhibit them from becoming violent.

Such anger and rage do not spontaneously appear. There is a heart problem that precedes most sins. “Malice” is

acting with evil intent. This was the motivation of the Jews when attempting to trap Jesus (Matthew 22:18). Thus, people who already hate someone and wish that person ill will easily act out on their thoughts. *“But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes”* (I John 2:11).

“Blasphemy” is the willful vilification of someone with greater authority. Many of the translations use the broader term “slander.” Think about the various riots that break out. Before the uproar, there are almost always stories circulating that some authority figure is doing evil things. Without checking any facts, people begin thinking evil things about the person. Soon they are seething in anger and violence breaks out. You can see this in the riot in Jerusalem against Paul (Acts 21:28-31).

Prior to the slander, you will find people engaged in “trash talk.” Paul lists “abusive language” or “filthy language.” This is when people bad-mouth another person, saying mean and hurtful things. It is empty talk because there is no real content behind what is being said, but it does stir up resentment. People are likely to accept slander about someone they already resent.

But behind all of these are lies. People aren’t interested in discovering the truth. Lies are juicier and more shocking.

It is surprising how often lies are connected to sins of anger.

Romans 1:29 - deceit, malice, gossip

I Corinthians 5:8 - malice and wickedness versus sincerity and truth

Ephesians 4:31 - wrath, anger, clamor, slander, malice

I Peter 2:1 - malice, deceit, slander

So how do we keep from getting caught up in violence? The core is to be honest people who check their facts before telling others things that they have heard. Without the fuel of lies, fiery tempers cool. *“For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, contention quiets down”* (Proverbs 26:20).

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## The Root Cause of Sexual Sins

By Jeffrey W. Hamilton

I’ve become fascinated by the lists presented in the Bible when I came to realize that many of them are more than a collection of related items. Permit me to illustrate this with a list that Paul gave in Colossians 3.

*“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, and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them”* (Colossians 3:5-7).

Paul had been arguing that those who have become Christians should display a life

changed by Christ. Their focus should be on heaven and not on the earth (Colossians 3:2). As a result, they should consider themselves dead to sins.

To illustrate, Paul starts out with the sin of **fornication**. The NASB poorly translates the Greek word *porneia* as “immorality.” “Immorality” is far too broad of a term. The word means being engaged in sexual acts with another person where the two people are not married to each other. It would include acts done before marriage or acts of adultery when one person is married to someone else. While the world is losing its moral compass, it is still common to find people who realize that unmarried sexual acts are wrong. Yet, even those who admit that it is wrong will talk about how fornication “just happened to them” at one point. They got caught up in the moment, they didn’t mean for things to go this far, but now they worry that a child might have been conceived.

But it wasn’t a random accident. Things led up to the moment of intercourse. Paul covers that with his next term: **impurity** or uncleanness (depending on your translation). The term refers to actions that are the opposite of holiness. “*For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification*” (I Thessalonians 4:7). These are acts that you would not associate with a person who has been set apart by God for a holy purpose. In the realm of sexuality, uncleanness includes actions where two people act like animals, stirring up their desire for sex through inappropriate touching (I Corinthians 7:1). Impure actions naturally lead to fornication because that is how the human body was designed by God. But that design was for it to take place in marriage, not outside of it. “*Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body*” (I Corinthians 6:13). If your intention is not to engage in fornication, then you must not engage in what leads up to fornication.

Yet, we need to consider why people decide to act without restraint with someone they are not married. “**Passion**” refers to lustful things that a person observes that stir up the desire for sex. These can be the things people refer to as their triggers. They might be visual or verbal, such as seeing a part of a person’s body or the attention that another person gives them. These triggers nudge the person into arousal and thinking about sexual things. Because arousal feels good, people get into a habit of seeking out passion, such as looking at pornography, especially in times of stress or depression (I Thessalonians 4:3-7). Passion becomes a distraction but it is also a trap.

Yet, the problem of lust is not just external. It is rooted in an internal **desire for sin**. “*For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man*” (Mark 7:21-23). The things you accept in your thoughts become the things that you seek out and eventually do. “*Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them*” (Romans 1:24).

However, Paul takes it one step further. Behind all of these is a very basic problem – **greed** or covetousness. We usually think of greed as a desire for money or other worldly

things, but it can be connected to sex. “*You shall not covet your neighbor's wife*” (Exodus 20:17). People in the world give themselves over to wanting more and it doesn’t matter how they gain those things. “*They, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness*” (Ephesians 4:17).

What I want, what I desire, becomes the pivotal point of all my choices. It becomes my god that directs my life. It is my god that I made in my own image.

Thus, we now have the insight to get ourselves and others out of sexual sins. It begins with recognizing that God is in control of my life. I’m here to serve God and not my own desires (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). I must love God and my neighbor, which means I cannot allow my desires to lead me to harm my neighbor.

Conquer the greed within you and the succeeding steps into sexual sins fall apart.

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## The Collision Between Homosexuality and Christianity

By Dennis Abernathy

The agenda of the LGBTQ is to redefine the family. Bumper stickers are seen all over that say: “Burn the Binary.” What does that mean? It means to destroy the distinction between man and woman or male and female. Apparently, such foolishness is making inroads in our culture, since more and more people can’t seem to be able to tell the difference between a man and a woman, and even believe that a man can have babies. Even the medical profession is jumping on the bandwagon. Definitions are being changed and gender has been expanded to mean who knows how many. The family is the building block of civilized society, and it was the first institution ordained by God. Our Supreme Court foolishly acquiesced to this ungodly agenda allowing same-sex marriages in every state. Slowly but surely, religion is coming around to the acceptance of such ungodliness and perversion.

Homosexuality is not a new issue. Proof of its existence is seen in the literature and art of ancient cultures, dating back thousands of years. We read of it, and of God’s disdain for it, in the pages of Scripture, the wickedness of Sodom stands as a glaring example. See (Genesis 19; Romans 1:24-27; I Corinthians 6:10-11).

There can be no doubt that there is an escalating collision taking place between homosexuality and Christianity in our culture. Sensationalized by mainstream media, and propagated in many of our public schools and Universities, the normalization and acceptance of homosexuality and transgenderism have invaded every facet of our society, including our homes and churches. Such chaos is changing our understanding where a person can accept that they are neither a man nor a woman, and we are hearing of people who are nonbinary, genderfluid, or gender expansive and the pronoun “he” or “she” should not be used. Instead, transgenderism has adopted a vocabulary of confusion and chaos.

Robert Mohler, Jr offered the following: “The transgender movement offers false and dangerous promises. It is looking for freedom in all the wrong places. It is offering all

the wrong answers to life's most important questions. Transgenderism writes checks that bounce. It offers a lie veiled in truth and happiness. It will only end in more brokenness and pain, devastation and destruction" [*The Gathering Storm*, p 102-103]. Laura Jacobs is quoted in the New York Times: "I don't know what genders are going to look like four generations from now...the classifications we now live under will fall by the wayside." Such amounts to an all-out repudiation of the biblical dignity of maleness and femaleness! Think on these things.

## Don't Be a Victim

By Perry Hall

The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), in modern lingo, teaches these two counter-culture concepts:

1. Suffering doesn't make you a victim when you find your blessing from God and not circumstances.
2. Victimizing others doesn't make you powerful when your victims refuse to get their dignity through your oppressive eyes.

Check out the Sermon on the Mount and what it says concerning suffering.

- It's part of the Beatitudes.
- It's part of the practical section, "You have heard, but I say to you" (Matthew 5). This is where we go the extra mile and turn the other cheek.
- It's part of the "religious" section (Matthew 6) where people made themselves victims of their own sins and so fasted to get a righteous acclamation from those who they then victimized with their own self-righteousness.

I don't think the theme of the Sermon on the Mount is "Don't be a victim" because it is to be like God in true righteousness (Matthew 5:42) and not like the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 5:20). However, as an application God is never a victim, always a victor, and never victimizes the less powerful who is everyone else. But do you think some today find "righteousness" in living as a victim?

Jesus lived this:

- He walked the "extra mile" carrying his cross. But Jesus was not a victim.
- He turned the other cheek when slapped. But Jesus was not a victim.
- He didn't rely on acclamations from his peers because he said to God, "Not my will but yours be done". This didn't make Jesus a victim.
- He suffered for righteousness' sake because he got his blessing from God. And Jesus was not a victim.

Jesus lived the Sermon on the Mount, suffered and died, and rose again because his life was founded on solid ground. Jesus was and is counter-culture, and always a victor!