

WORKS OF THE FLESH

"WRATHS"

One of the essential elements in fruitful living as a Christian is self-control (2 Pet. 1:6). Man's passions, when held in check by inward discipline and fed with godly motives, can accomplish much good for the Lord. No passion serves better to illustrate this point than the passion of wrath or anger. When aroused by righteous indignation, man's anger help wield a deadly blow to sin and it's spreading influence. When allowed to explode out of control, wrath can give sin newer and firmer strongholds.

We observed in the word "jealousies" that a begrudging motive can turn imitating zeal into jealousy. Likewise, in the word "wrath", we notice a useful ardent temperament can be turned into ungodly wrath when fed with too much self-esteem and not enough godly principles.

May we be so impressed with God's displeasure towards "wrath" and its destructive power that we will develop proper safeguards venting anger's force toward accomplishing good, not sin.

I. WHAT THE WORD "WRATH" MEANS

- A. THUMOS - Occurs 18 times in the N.T. and means hot anger or fiery wrath. It is translated "wrath", "anger", "fits of rage" (NIV), "outbursts of anger" (NAS), "outbursts of wrath" (NKJ).
- B. A word associated with "THUMOS" and sometimes translated "wrath" is "ORGE". W.E. Vine say, " (THUMOS) indicates a more agitated condition of the feelings, and outburst of wrath from inward indignation, while (ORGE) suggests a more settled or abiding condition of mind frequently with a view of taking revenge. (ORGE) is less sudden in its rise than (THUMOS) but more lasting in its nature." Both, the sudden outbursts or rage and the long lasting anger are forbidden (Gal. 5:20, Eph. 4:26).

II. HOW THE WORD "WRATH" IS USED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

- A. "Wrath" manifests the righteous indignation of God.
 - 1. The obstinate rebellious spirit that sins against God aroused God's perfectly righteous fury (Rom. 2:8).
 - 2. Of the ten occurrences in the Book of Revelation, nine of these occurrences denote the fierce indignation of God.
 - a) Expressed as "wrath of God" (14:10, 19; 15:1, 7; 16:1).
 - b) Implied as to what the lustful ways of Babylon the great will cause (14:8, 18:3).
 - c) Expresses the fierceness (THUMOS) of God's wrath (ORGE) (16:19, 19:15).

- B. "Wrath" is a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:20).
1. Accompanies inward feelings of bitterness and loud outward manifestations of ill will or harm (Eph. 4:31, Col. 3:8).
 - a) Must put it away (cf. 2 Cor. 12:20).
 2. Arises when one senses the threat to a personal value.
 - a) Herod, when his authority is mocked (Matt. 2:16).
 - b) Gentiles, when they sense their god is exposed as false (Acts 19:28).
 - c) Jews, when their concept of exclusively deserving the favor of God is shattered (Lk. 4:25-30).
 - d) NOTE: Such rage leads one to want to inflict violent personal harm (Matt. 2:16, Acts 19:29, Lk. 4:29).
 3. Used as a victory substitute. When one can't have his or her way, then fits of rage are used as a substitute.
 4. Can become a cause of continual harm (cf. Prov. 19:19).

QUESTIONS:

1. What distinguishes the good wrath of "righteous indignation", manifested in God and Jesus (Rom. 2:8, Jn. 2: 13-17), from sinful wrath?

2. Describe in your own words the two types of anger that God condemns along with Scripture dealing with both types:

3. What does the sudden outburst of wrath often lead one to do next?

4. What all is lacking when one manifests fits of rage?

5. Must one learn to control his or her temper in order to enter heaven?