

Gospel Identity 6-2

An Angry God?

Here's the question: **Is God always angry with me when I sin?**

We need to be careful how we answer this question, we need to maintain a faith based view, rather than a works based one (if you don't know what that is don't be afraid to ask). Unfortunately, some would answer our question above with an unqualified "Yes". In a legal "works based faith", the emphasis is on external sins and obedience. With such an understanding, it's easy to *appear* obedient—there's less apparent sin for God to get angry about! A typical legal answer is, "when I disobey, I no longer live under God's blessing." A real life example goes like this: "When I travel 56 mph (one mile over the speed limit) I have moved outside the sphere of God's love." But is this correct—especially when we ask a few follow up questions about the extent of heart disobedience in our lives?

If God is always angry with you when you sin, consider the following questions:

- How often do you disobey God? Quite a bit? Well then, God must be angry with you fairly often. What about the many sins you're not even aware of? What about ongoing sins like lust and anger?
- Luke 17:10 says "So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'we are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.' If God only smiles when you are "good", it would be a very small infrequent smile indeed. After all, who is good but God alone (Mark 10:18)? How much more "good" will you have to do until God smiles on you continuously?
- James 2:10 says, "whoever keeps the whole law yet stumbles at one point, is guilty of breaking all of it." Hypothetically, if you broke only one of God's commands, because of how connected all of God's commands are, you would be guilty of breaking them all!

If we seek God's anger or pleasure in terms of what we do and not in terms of what Christ has done on the cross, we find that God is not pleased at all. If God is always angry when we sin, either we end up believing that he's angry at us all the time, or we believe that we aren't that bad of sinners!

Of course, this raises the question; "*should we sin so that grace may abound? Why should I not go 100 mph for the security of the gospel? Because God smiles on me, I can do what I want.*" Clearly, this is not a life of faith. the life of faith says, this is such good news!! I really do want to live a life pleasing to God; Lord, show me my offensive ways (Psalm 139:23-24).

Faith says, you are pleasing to God; now go and be pleasing. You are righteous; now go and be righteous. You are loved; now go and be loving (1 John 4:11). You are forgiven; now go and be forgiving.

The Christian life flows from faith in the good news, not from some silly belief in God's anger or happiness relying on my feeble performance. There is a major difference between, "he is pleased when I sin. Yes! So I can do what I want." And "God is pleased with us *even though* we sin, and out of that good news we try to live out that goodness."

My heavenly father delights in me and rejoices over me (Zephaniah 3:17), and He disciplines me for my good (Hebrews 12:5-11). As His son or daughter I now have His spirit dwelling in my heart (Galatians 4:6). His spirit is now the one who fights against the sin in my life. Nevertheless, my relationship with him can still be disrupted through my sin. I can still sadden the spirit by my sin (Ephesians 4:30). I can temporarily disrupt our relationship, with sins like anger or even Gossip. In such cases I sadden the spirit, but his sadness is for my good. It is really the spirits longing in my life to work to change me, and make me more like Jesus.

In conclusion it may be helpful to make three distinctions between three different questions in our discussion:

- Is God always angry with me?
- Does God delight in my sin?
- Does my sin affect my relationship with god?

The Identity Question—Is God angry with me? God has dealt with my sin—past, present, and future. He has removed my sins as far as the east is from the west, and now I am a new creation. I am in Christ. This is my new identity. Everything that belongs to Jesus is mine. God does not delight in sin, but He does delight in me. Once I was an object of God’s anger; now I am an object of His happiness. I am holy, righteous, accepted, loved, forgiven, and delighted in. This is how I should view myself and other Christians. This is the good news that I need to live by every day. With this understanding, I can admit my sins and failures because I know God is not angry with me.

The ethics question—Does God delight in my sin? God is holy, and takes no delight in Evil. No sin is pleasing to God. So, I also should not delight in sin. I still need to repent of the flesh and its acts. I am still responsible for my sin, and cannot be neutral or ambivalent toward it. Moreover, anything I do that does not come from faith and repentance is unacceptable to God—‘hay, wood, and stubble’—to be burned up in the last day.

The relationship question—Does my sin affect my relationship with God? We affect God by our lives and actions. God’s emotional response to our sin is varied. He is not cold, remote, uninvolved, or emotionless. Jonah reminds us: God is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love (Jonah 4:2). My sin can still grieve the spirit and I can come under my father’s discipline. However, this does not change who I am in Christ, and how I am to view other Christians. With this understanding, I can admit my sins and failures because I know that sin brings distance to my relationship with God and grieves my father.

This will be next weeks discussion Question: **Is God always angry with me when I sin?**

If you agree or disagree let’s talk about that!