

Humor: “Dammit I’m Mad” spelled backwards is “Dammit I’m Mad”

- How many of us got spanked as a child? (We start with a common experience – I am sorry for those who got or gave too many – that is not what this lesson is about.). My parents used this as an immediate consequence for my actions when I was too immature to understand the true consequences in an adult world.
- We all started as children and I believe most of us have raised our own children, or at least participated in raising others (nieces & nephews, taught school, etc.) So, we understand many of the fundamentals of child development.
- Stages of development
  - Self awareness
  - Parents / nurturers
  - Relatives; friends; others
- Different rules of engagement w/family vs. friends, or teachers, or strangers
  - With those rules, there are consequences. We tell children what is expected of them and good outcomes for obedience or consequences for disobedience. And we know the results: sometimes they obey, sometimes they don’t listen, sometimes they test for themselves. And, our response:
    - Reward for obedience
    - Consequences for disobedience
    - Exasperation for repeated disobedience!
- **Two key words for this lesson: Obedience & Consequences**
- “Wrath” is a powerful & fearsome word. Packer: “*Wrath* is an old English word defined in my dictionary as ‘deep, intense anger and indignation.’ *Anger* is defined as ‘stirring of resentful displeasure and strong antagonism, by a sense of injury or insult’; *indignation* as ‘righteous anger aroused by injustice and baseness.’ Such is wrath. And wrath, the Bible tells us is, an attribute of God.”<sup>1</sup>
- My interpretation: God does not/will not create & dispense evil; but, He does get frustrated and upset, and then allows consequences.

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<sup>1</sup> Packer, p. 148.

- My perspective: the Old Testament is about the development of Israel from child-like self-awareness through maturity as an adult nation under the guidance of a parent-like God. And this chapter is about the incidences of God's exasperation for repeated disobedience.

- Word counts (in RSV Bible):

	<u>Old Testament</u>	<u>New Testament</u>
Wrath	179	37
Anger	249	15
Fury	38	6
Love	419	234
Care	16	5

- God's Covenant (not a treaty): I have chosen you to be my people & I will be your God (regardless of what you do). [Like a parent – you don't get to choose who they are. You can close your friends, but parents chose you and they will always be your parents, regardless of what you do.]
- If obedience & discipline are relevant and necessary parts of development, then why do we minimize, or avoid, talking/preaching about them?
  - 1) Packer: first that we think "wrath" is unworthy of God
    - a. It implies loss of self-control, or wounded pride
    - b. But, God does not have human limitations & imperfections: "... God's love, as the Bible views it, never leads Him to foolish, impulsive, immoral actions in a way that its human counterpart too often leads us. And in the same way, God's wrath in the Bible is never the capricious, self-indulgent, irritable, morally ignoble thing that human anger so often is.... God is only angry where anger is called for."<sup>2</sup>
    - c. God's wrath in the Bible is always judicial – a judge administering justice. Read **Romans 2:5-6**
    - d. And **Psalms 62:12**
  - 2) God's wrath is something which people choose for themselves.
    - a. Apostle John wrote that people stand condemned because of their own choices. Read **John 3:18-19**.

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<sup>2</sup> Packer, p. 151.

- b. The essence of God's action in wrath is giving people what they choose. These are the consequences.

From Paul's letter to the church in Rome<sup>3</sup>

1. God's wrath "is the active manifesting of His hatred of irreligion and moral evil."
2. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold down the truth in unrighteousness." "If you want proof... Paul would say you need only look at life around you and see what God has 'given them over to.'"
3. Is there any escape from the wrath of God? Romans 5:9 *"<sup>9</sup> Since, therefore, we are now justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God."*
  - "his blood" = Jesus' blood
  - Romans 3:24-25: *"<sup>24</sup> they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup> whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins;*
  - "justified" = to be forgiven and accepted as righteous (a right relation with God)
  - "expiation" = the act of making amends or reparation for guilt or wrongdoing; atonement
  - Read **1 Thessalonians 1:10**

A.W. Pink: we should meditate on the wrath of God:<sup>4</sup>

1. To be duly impressed with God's hatred of sin.
2. To be in true fear in our souls. Hebrews 12:28-29 *<sup>28</sup> Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe; <sup>29</sup> for our God is a consuming fire.*

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<sup>3</sup> Packer, p.154-156.

<sup>4</sup> *The Wrath of God*: Pink, Attributes of God, p. 77.

3. To truly appreciate that Jesus Christ has delivered us from this wrath of God.

### Summary

“In an every-increasingly secular culture, one that seems more hostile to the Christian worldview every day, Christians need to know what they believe and why they believe it so that we can communicate it to the world.”<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Tim Wildmon, Because These Things Matter, American Family Association, Signature Book Printing, Gathersburg, MD, 2024, p.74.