

Russell Kelfer

Wanted for Murder

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Series: God's Living Legends (Part 1)

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INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

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Hear ye! Hear ye! Hear ye! The court of the king is called to order. May all who hear attend and have quiet spirits as the one true judge hears the case before us. We are gathered in the chamber to witness the case of the kingdom versus the people. The charge is murder in the first degree. It is punishable by death. Will the court be still as we convene in prayer.

“Dear Gracious God, the One true Judge,

Bring about this day we pray the revelation of perfect truth and the execution of perfect justice. But, oh, Righteous One, bathe your justice in an ocean of mercy. We pray in the name of the King Himself.

Amen.”

The judge stands to speak. “The cause for this trial is the accusation that our kingdom of peace and fellowship is being torn asunder by murder. The charge is that men and women who have literally been adopted into the family of the King have been guilty of killing others who have likewise been adopted and become fellow-heirs. The charge is a serious one, to say the least. These murders have seemingly occurred at the slightest provocation. Motives are as petty as missing a parking place, cold mashed potatoes, a “Die-Hard” that died, a missed field goal, a casual, unnecessary, sarcastic remark. These seemingly inconsequential events have led up to a rash of killings. These killings have left behind a shock-wave of unbelief in the kingdom. Will the court clerk please rise and read to us that portion of the law of God which will apply to this case? It is called the sixth commandment, or the second of six pillars that hold up the building of life. Will the court please be silenced as the law of God is read?”

The crowd is hushed as these words are read from Exodus 20,

I am the LORD thy God which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

Thou shalt not kill.

(Exodus 20:2,13)

A muffled murmur breaks out in the courtroom as the relieved defendants whisper to one another, “We are innocent of this charge. There is no blood on our hands.” Frowns of fear give way to self-

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righteous smiles. The attorney for the defense rises. “Your honor, the defendant pleads not guilty.” But the judge’s face seems to drop, “Very well,” he replies, “but I must warn you that your claim to innocence may but compound the very charge against you. May the trial begin.”

The counsel for the defense rises. “Your honor, I would like a definition of the word ‘kill’. If it is, in fact, a crime punishable by death, does not the nation of Israel stand condemned, for they have murdered to inhabit the land? Does not the United States of America stand condemned? Have they not murdered to protect their freedom? Does not,” the counselor pauses and chokes on his words, “even God stand condemned? Is capital punishment a crime? Is war a vehicle that draws countless millions to kill at the hand of the state and thus be guilty? Ought a man refuse to serve his country in order not to kill? What is murder?” This flamboyant attorney now causes his voice to quiver and looking out at the crowd says, “*And what is truth?*”

The audience breaks out in applause. “Order in the court!” the judge responds, “In the name of the king, order in the court!” His voice speaks with such authority that the crowd, in a moment, is hushed and still again.

Now the attorney for the kingdom rises to his feet. There is something quietly awesome about his character. His eyes are like flaming swords, but when He speaks, He speaks with a voice of quiet gentleness. He has about him an aura of authority. Whispers flood the courtroom, “Surely this man speaks like no one else. He speaks as one having authority and not as the counselors we have heard before.”

He begins his statement, “Your honor, if it please the court, I would like to delineate between murder and death under God-ordained authority. Murder is the violation of the sixth law of God and is the taking of any human life by any individual by force or any other means, be it an act of rage or a premeditated, calculated act; it is a sin against God, the Father, who is the author of life and who alone holds the keys to life and death. God calls it murder, and God will not allow it to go unpunished.” Quietly the one who speaks for the kingdom continues, “But do not confuse murder with war or capital punishment.

...The powers that be are ordained of God.

Whosoever therefore resists the power, resists the ordinance

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of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:

For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.” (Romans 13:1-4)

The hushed crowd recognized Romans 13:1-4 and they held their peace. “God has,” the mighty counselor continued, “transferred to those who govern men both the right and the responsibility to take life when necessary both to deter and to punish crime.”

“But your honor,” the counselor for the defense interrupted, “you read yourself, thou shalt not kill.”

“True,” responded the king’s representative, “and where was that found?”

“Exodus 20:13,” the proud lawyer replied.

“True,” the king’s representative answered, “but don’t stop there. Go to the next chapter. There God further defines the laws that apply not in man’s responses to man, but in the nation’s responsibility to govern men. Look at Exodus 21:12,

He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death.

Was not this written by the same God who said ‘thou shalt not kill?’”

Silence overtakes the courtroom. “What about verse 15?

And he that smiteth his father, or mother, shall surely be put to death.

That is capital punishment, but not murder.

He that stealeth a man [kidnaps] a man, and selleth him, or he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.

(Exodus 20:16)

Thou shalt not allow one who practices witchcraft to live, he or she shall be put to death. (Exodus 22:18 paraphrase)

So “*thou shalt not take a life*” is an absolute for man, but God has transferred to those who govern, the solemn responsibility to exercise this authority, when necessary, to restore a measure of

order to a world infected with sin. Likewise, God has transferred to those who govern nationally both the right and the responsibility to defend their borders, their people and the principles of godliness that the nations at enmity with God are seeking to destroy. He is not a God of war, he is the Prince of Peace. But He has allowed war as a tool to bring peace until the Prince of Peace rules on earth in the absence of sin.”

“Meanwhile”, he continues, “Look at Israel, God’s picture book. God called them to war to take and recover the land that was theirs; to protect their borders from enemy intrusion and to drive out from their midst those who raised up altars to Baal and to put down uprisings from within and without. War was never to be the means of the greedy to take what was another’s, but the tool of those who knew freedom to protect their freedom nationally. God hates it when it is misused by evil men, but its abuses do not deny its presence. God does not like war, but one day soon He will intervene again in history and fight Himself against the nations who have come against Israel in the war of wars until they have been brought to their knees in defeat. Don’t sidestep the issue, my friends, or hide behind the Satanic smoke screen. Not to kill is a final commandment where God’s relationship with man is concerned, but the right to take life in order to save life has been granted to those who govern.” The counselor sat down.

The judge looked at the defense attorney, whose eyes were glued to the ground. “Any questions?” the judge asked. “No questions,” the defense attorney answered. “Then we will dismiss for lunch,” the judge replied. The rap of the gavel was a welcome sound indeed.

Now while the court is recessed, let me take this moment to tell you why I have invited you here to the replay of this trial. We have been studying the Living Legend of Moses. We have, of late, been spending time with Moses on top of Mount Sinai, where he participated in what was perhaps the most important event in his life. He was seated in the very presence of God, receiving the ten commandments, the ten foundations for living a godly life. The first three were the foundation stones on which the building rested. The fourth was the foundation itself which rested on the other three. The six pillars which rest on the foundation become that which holds up the building of life. The last lesson looked at pillar number one which was the pillar of respect or the fifth commandment, “Honor thy father and thy mother.” God’s higher law was the esteeming of authority. His ultimate objective was the

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putting away of rebellion and disrespect. To violate this law was an affront to the very character of God, the Father.

The second pillar, “Thou shalt not kill”, has as its higher law to esteem life. Its goal is to: excuse me, here comes the judge again. Court is about to convene. We will take up there another time. The judge is about to speak; let’s listen.

“Ladies and gentlemen, you have heard the law defined and described at least in its foundational form. Would the defense like to change its plea?” The sea of defendants stir again and indignantly motion to their somewhat dazed counselor, “Not guilty, your honor, not guilty,” he answers, “we better understand what it means to kill, your honor, but there is no blood on our hands, sir. And besides, the king’s son has come and set up his kingdom and set aside the law. It doesn’t apply to us anymore. We move that the case be dismissed.”

At that moment, the counsel for the kingdom arose. His eyes still possessed the majesty of royalty, but tears could be seen to those who looked carefully. “Your honor, I would like to present exhibit A for the prosecution.” The Judge ruled, “The motion for dismissal denied. You may continue counselor. What is exhibit A?” The wise, gentle spokesman for the kingdom placed on the table a scroll, “It is the gospel according to Matthew.” He quietly added, “I would like to read from it, if I may, from chapter 5.” He read these words saying,

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets:
I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.

For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and

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whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

(Matthew 5:17-26)

A silent hush again falls on the courtroom. The man read with such authority that it was almost as if...of course it couldn't be...it is almost as if he had written it himself. Now he turns and addresses the courtroom. "These words were spoken by the King's Son, whom he sent to fulfill the law and give it meaning. Do you understand what he said? He said, 'If you break it or teach men that it is not important, then you go to the back of the class of the kingdom'. Now it has deeper meaning. If your righteousness is but an outward show, though you have never killed a man, by God's definition, you have missed it. What the king's son was saying was, "I have come to redefine murder. Murder is death by decree. It is death by degree. The first stage of murder is murder of the mind or heart. It is anger, an internal turmoil that results from the violation of what you wrongfully consider to be your personal rights. It then focuses its venom on another. If you do that, you are guilty of murder. The second stage is where you cry within, 'Raca' which means 'you good-for-nothing, empty-headed fool'. It is anger that results in contempt. Do that, and you are guilty of murder, stage two, and the penalty is even greater. The third stage is where you rail at another, 'Morei' which means 'you worthless fool who has no wisdom'. Here you not only question his intelligence or importance, you question his character and motives. You are guilty of murder, stage three, and the penalty is greatest of all. The fourth stage is physical murder where your anger takes another's life. The physical consequences are greater, but spiritually no greater punishment is listed, for you have already murdered the man in your heart by God's definition."

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“Don’t you see,” the wise counselor added, “on the scales of justice, God sees murder and anger as nothing more than varying degrees of the same sin. Anger is to God murder of the heart. So, as I bring these charges, I call to the stand, some of you who claim to be innocent to testify in your own behalf. Mr. Winner, would you please take the stand?”

Mr. Winner won the “Man of the Year” award last year. Sheepishly, he takes the stand. The counselor asks, “Last week did you not explode in a rage because your socks weren’t clean?” The nervous crowd chuckled a little. “You committed murder over dirty socks? Who gave you the right to clean socks? Did Jesus have clean socks? What about the time you blew up in fury because dinner wasn’t ready on time? Did you know what your wife had been through that day? You murdered over a late casserole? Why did you seethe in anger when your client refused your best offer? Who guaranteed you the right to make that sale? Is your testimony worth no more than an invoice? You may step down, sir.”

“Next I would like to call the Super Saint of Suburbia to the stand, your honor. You, Daisy Do-good, the one who pastes memory verses all over your refrigerator and leads two Bible studies in the neighborhood and has a Jesus Saves bumper sticker on your car. Why are you so spiritual out there in the community and throw such temper tantrums at home? You scream and yell at your children and then go from a sweet, gentle saint to a demon in disguise at the drop of a baseball glove or a muddy footprint or a messy room. You, who wouldn’t talk to your husband for a week because he forgot your birthday. You are a murderer. You are guilty of murder of the heart. That goes for Pastor Pious and Elder Exceptional, too. You strut down the aisle on Sunday morning, then rail or seethe at your enemies on the freeway on Monday. You are guilty of murder of the heart.”

“Next I call Coach Crossfire to the stand. You pray before every game. How spiritual. You witness to your boys about the love of God, then the game starts and you look like a toasted tomato ready to explode. ‘Kill the ref!’ you shout. ‘Bad call! We were robbed!’ you shout. Robbed nothing. Who gave you the right to win? You are a murderer. You are guilty of murder of the heart.”

“I call Tina Teacher to the stand. You prayed for a chance to teach so that you could demonstrate the love of God to little children, then you lose your temper and scream at them. They

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think God is a screamer. It is better to have a millstone about your neck than to cause one of these little ones to stumble, Tina. Don't you see. It is murder. Murder of the heart."

"I call Tommy Timebomb to the stand. You are so efficient. You have everything arranged for a whole week so you set your expectations that everything will go according to your schedule. Then when someone inadvertently throws your schedule off, you get angry over a few minutes. You commit murder of the heart."

"Objection!" the counsel for the defense for Rudy Righteous was on his feet. He threw his briefcase on the table and pounded his fist. He was angry. "But what about Ephesians 4:26?" By now he was red-faced and clearly hostile. He, too, looked like a toasted tomato. "And what about Jesus in the temple? Huh?" "Yeah," the crowd murmured, "Jesus in the temple."

The counsel for the king rose and with the look of quiet composure he answered, "Yes. I am aware of Ephesians 4:26. It says

Be ye angry and sin not.

I know what it means," he said calmly. Again, it was almost as if he had written it himself. "It literally says, 'Do not let your anger result in sin.' There are three Greek words in Scripture for anger. One means a sudden lose of self-control. One means a boiling animosity that eventually reaches the point of explosion. One means a subtle kind of hatred for something which naturally results in anger when it appears. They can each be used for godly indignation or ungodly anger. But, ah, my friend and colleague, all of the illustrations I have given are of ungodly anger. Would you like to know what godly anger is?" he asked.

"Take a look at everything that makes God angry and you have a pattern. Then you reduce it by the number of things that only God has the right or the knowledge to be angry about. If you boil it down, you have the right to be angry at Satan, who he is, what he has done, and what he is doing now. It ought to make you angry. It ought to make you so angry that you will flee every contact with his defiling spirit," the kingdom counselor explained.

He continued, "You have the right to be angry with sin, with what it has done to the world, what it has done to you. You ought to hate sin and your life ought to show it. You ought also to hate hypocrisy, primarily in your own life. It ought to make you angry. That is why God's son was angry at the Pharisees. They were

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sinning in the name of God. That is why He threw out the money changers. They were sinning in the name of God. In other words, you ought to get angry at anyone or anything that seeks to damage the reputation of God. That is why you hate Satan. That is why you hate sin. That is why you hate hypocrisy.”

“It isn’t generally God’s reputation at stake when you get angry,” he challenged, “It is yours. *Your* rights. *Your* reputation. *Your* righteousness. Jesus traded His reputation for the right to be a slave. He gave up His rights to give us His righteousness. When His Father’s reputation was at stake in the temple, Jesus defended it. When His own reputation was at stake on Calvary, when they spit on Him and laughed at Him and mocked Him, He spoke not a word, but committed Himself to Him that judges righteously. Was He angry? No, He prayed, ‘Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.’ This example sort of makes a crowded freeway or burnt toast or a late appointment a little less important, doesn’t it?”

The room was so quiet that you could hear a pin drop. “May I go on?” he asked the judge. “Please do,” the judge replied.

“Have you ever finished Ephesians 4:26? It says,

Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

Neither give place to the devil. (Ephesians 4:26,27)

It is called the sundown principle. It means that God ends each day at sunset so that we will have a regular time to see that everything is right between us and God and us and everyone else. You are never to go to bed angry at your spouse. Never. You make things right at sundown or you become a murderer. You are never to go to bed angry at your children. Never. You can be angry at what they have done, but your spirit towards them must be settled by sundown. You leave your gift at the altar and make it right and return to end the day at peace with God or you become a murderer of the heart,” he explained.

He continued, “Remember verses 30-32,

And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. (Ephesians 4:30)

Here is what we need to do:

Let all bitterness and all wrath and all anger and all clamor and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: (Ephesians 4:31)

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And here is what you do instead:

And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.
(Ephesians 4:31)

It means literally put away, once and for all, the anger stored up in you. It means put it in a locked vault and seal it for destruction. It means to take your anger out of the pantry and put it in the incinerator."

"May I share just a few more bits of God's perspective of murder of the mind?" he goes on. The silence and the tears were his authority to continue. He said, "Do you remember Psalm 37:8 where God says,

Cease from anger: and forsake wrath?

That means that you have the power to stop or it wouldn't be sin. What about Proverbs 19:11

A wise man restrains his anger and overlooks insults. This is to his credit?
(TLB)

What about Ecclesiastes 7:9

Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools?

God says that the angry man is a fool and a murderer. Colossians 3:8 says,

Put away anger. Put away a bad temper. Put away bitterness.
(paraphrase)

That is an order. What about Romans 12:19

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath [Leave the matter of anger up to God. Let God get angry, He knows when to do it.]: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

Boy, does that take a load off of us.

Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

Be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good.
(Romans 12:20,21)

James 1:19 says

Let every man be slow to anger for a man's anger does not promote the righteousness of God.
(paraphrase)

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Rather,” the counselor concluded, “it makes you a murderer. A murderer of the mind. A murderer of the heart,” With that, the wise counsel of the king sat down and said, “I rest my case.”

There was a deafening silence. Then Daisy Do-good, the self-righteous mother stood to her feet and spoke. “Your honor, I change my plea to guilty. I am guilty of murder, murder in the first degree. I have murdered my whole family with anger.”

Then Elder Exceptional stood up in the back row, “Your honor, I’m guilty too. I throw myself on the mercy of the court. I have been angry with so many. I, too, am a murderer of the heart.”

Soon, fathers, teenagers, pastors and men and women of all ages stood to their feet and began to say, “We are guilty of murder of the heart. We are the victims of anger and our victims are many. The waitress who took too long with the coffee, we murdered her with anger. The mechanic who didn’t fix the car right, we killed him with our tongue. The operator on the phone who was rude, She violated our right to be pampered. The doctor who didn’t seem to care. How could we know what he had just been through? The nurse who was curt when I told her my problems, I showed her, I demanded my rights. The whole family when I am tired or discouraged better watch out or the slightest mistake and I will kill them all with anger. We are all guilty, your honor. We plead guilty.”

You say, “How do you know?” It really did happen. I know because I was there. I, too, was guilty.

The judge stood to his feet. “Will the defendants please rise for the sentencing?” Our minds raced back to Matthew 5. Our sentence could be anything from the curse of judgment to imprisonment by the Sanhedrin, to the fires of hell itself. We all knew what we deserved.

“Your honor,” asked the king’s attorney, “Can I please see you alone for a moment?” The kindly counselor and the just judge disappeared together into the judge’s chamber. Could he be insisting on the maximum sentence? Our minds raced with fear. The door to the judge’s chamber opened and there was complete silence. Tears rolled down the face of the old judge. He said, “You are guilty as charged. But I’ve been informed that the King’s Son has pardoned you and that he ever lives to intercede for his adopted family. The price has been settled. You are free to go.”

A sense of awe settled over that courtroom. “How could he ever

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forgive us for what we have done? We are guilty of murder. What a grievous sin,” we cried.” But the kindly counselor rose to his feet one last time and spoke ever so softly, “Murder? Sin? I find no such charge against you. Here, see for yourself. Here is the page with your name on it. Stamped across it is: FORGIVEN, PAID IN FULL! But, oh, beloved, the king’s final word to you is: Go your way and sin no more. Your anger was the result of your assuming rights, rights you didn’t have, rights God’s Son didn’t even have when He walked this earth. You may have assumed the right to possessions, that God owes you a certain income or a guaranteed income, even while the world’s economy is tumbling. You get angry at your boss, angry at God. Yield that right to a holy God and let Him give you back whatever He knows you have need of. You won’t need to get angry again over your possessions.”

“You may have assumed the right to your reputation and when someone said something to damage that reputation, you got angry. Jesus gave up the right to His; what right do you have to yours? Give your reputation back to God and if someone says something about you, it is no longer your problem so why get angry? Commit it to Him that judges righteously and you won’t ever need to get angry again over your reputation.”

“Or is it the right to pleasant circumstances? Good health? A good marriage? Good kids? A good job? God owes it to you, right? Wrong. We live in a world under the curse of sin. It is a world where the rain falls on the just and the unjust alike. To the believer, trouble has meaning and produces character. To the unbeliever, trouble has no meaning and produces bitterness. No one promised you pleasant circumstances so you have no right to get angry when things don’t go your way. You don’t have the right to commit murder of the heart. You don’t have the right to life itself either. It is appointed to each man one time to die. You may think that you deserve a long time on the planet earth. Oh? Longer than God’s? Longer than God gave His own Son? He only lived to be 33. He only had three years in which to minister. When the Cross rose on the horizon of His life, He could have gotten angry and cried, ‘Father, I’ve just begun.’ But He didn’t. He said, ‘Nevertheless, Thy will be done.’ So we have no right to get angry, even over death.”

“Then there is the right to success. The right to respect. The right to friendships. The right to beauty or strength. The right to be heard. The right to take up an offense for another. The right to avoid the consequences of our own sin. The right to be right.”

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“Beloved,” the gentle counselor concluded, “If you will list all of these rights on a piece of paper and then tear it up or burn it, then you can say when Satan challenges you to get angry, ‘Angry? over what? I don’t have that right. I gave it back to God.’ And one last thing,” He added, smiling, “learn to turn your anger into prayer. Whenever something happens that begins to arouse unrighteous anger in your heart and you feel the danger signals and the alarm bells in your spirit saying, ‘Anger is coming!’ Learn to start to pray every time. If you are a man of much anger, you will become a man of much prayer. Pray for the one for whom you feel angry. Ask God to give you the grace to shower that person with extra love. If he is hungry, feed him. If she is thirsty, give her water. Living water will then flow into your life like a refreshing stream and your anger will vanish even as the darkness vanishes into daybreak.”

The King’s counselor smiled as he picked up his scrolls and made this closing statement: “God has set you free from anger and murder of the heart. Now, go your way and sin the sin of anger no more.” As he began to pass through the crowded courtroom, I pushed my way through the throng to try to meet him so I could ask him to thank the King’s Son for what he had done. Finally, I reached his side and said, “Sir.” He turned and reached his hand out and took my hand in his. There was something different about that hand. It was strong, very strong, but more than that, I felt something like a scar. That’s what it was, a scar. It was a scar like the print of a nail. Just for a moment, my eyes met his. The sunlight of His glory surrounded me and all He said was, “Son, I love you.” Even though I had been a murderer, still he loved me. Do you know what? Now I understand real love and I don’t ever want to be an angry man again. Do you?

For Focus and Application

1- Can you explain why God says “thou shalt not kill”, but commanded capital punishment in Israel, and actually led the Israelites into combat situations where they were to kill whole armies of people? Does God ever contradict Himself? If not, how do you explain the difference?

2- Define murder.

3- What kinds of things did God find punishable by death in the Old Testament? See if you can find a thread of similarity between them.

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4- Did Jesus come to do away with the law? How do you know? Prove your answer by Scripture.

5- What did Jesus say about those who would either break one of the commandments or teach others that it was acceptable to break them? Conversely, what blessing did He promise those who both kept and taught the law?

6- What do you think Jesus meant when He said, “Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees....”?

7- When Jesus said, “But I say unto you,” what was He implying? What is the significance of the three stages of anger? What is the relationship between anger and murder? How does God view an angry spirit?

8- Read Ephesians 4:21-32. What is the common thread? What is the key verse? Do you practice the “sundown” principle? What are some practical things you can do to see that the “sun does not go down on your wrath”?

9- Make a list of the things that have made you angry in the last week. How many of them involve your reputation or your rights? How many times was your anger fueled by an attack on the reputation of God?

10- Consider making a “thread” of verses to memorize from those listed on pages 11 and 12 of your lesson.

11- Why is “putting away anger” so important? How is it a barometer of our tenderness and humility? Is it a symptom or a cause?

12- Take a piece of paper and write or print in large letters across the page, “FORGIVEN...PAID IN FULL”. Each time you are tempted to anger, remember that God has forgiven you for each and every violation of His will, even those willful choices to sin. Now apply that same measure of mercy to the one towards whom your anger is directed. Ask God to forgive you. Forgive them. Purpose in your heart that your rights, your reputation, or your pride will not be the springboard for anger anymore.

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