

Malice Eph. 4:31

Introduction:

1. **Malice**, what is it?
2. It is obvious from this text that it is not only to be controlled but “put away from” us.
3. How is that to occur? Is it really possible?

Discussion:

I. The word translated “malice” in this text is the Greek “kakia.”

- A. According to *The Exhaustive Concordance to the Greek New Testament* it occurs 11 times in the N.T.
 1. Once it is translated “trouble” in the NASB (Matt. 6:34).
 2. It is translated “wickedness” twice (Acts 8:22; James 1:21).
 3. Twice it is translated “evil” (1 Cor. 14:20; 1 Pet. 2:16).
 4. Six times it is translated “malice” (Rom. 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:8; Eph. 4:31; Col. 3:8; Titus 3:3; 1 Pet. 2:1).
- B. Vine says it is, “badness in quality.”
- C. Lightfoot, “the vicious character generally.”
- D. It is variously described as
 1. “A vicious disposition.”
 2. “Ill-will.”
 3. “The desire to see another person experience pain, injury, distress, embarrassment.”
 4. “It is mean-spirited and attributes the worst motive.”
 5. “It is the general term for evil that is the root of all vices.”

II. **Malice** is a part of the past of every believer, and a part of the present of every unbeliever (Titus 3:1-3; Rom. 1:28-32).

- A. Those who do not see fit to acknowledge God are given to malice (Rom. 1:29).
 1. If they think they are treated unfairly they think in terms of how they can hurt back the one that hurt them.
 2. It is interesting to me how movies tap into this element within us.
 - a. Action movies often present a scenario where the hero has been terribly wronged, His wife and children brutally raped and murdered by a devilish crowd and the once mild mannered man becomes an animal hunting down the devils with justified malice. In the end we say, “They got what was coming to them.”
 - b. In the “chick flick” it is a little different. Malice shows up with destructive words, lies, gossip, embarrassment and the like. It is the same thing just a different manifestation.
- B. It’s the way of the world (Titus 3:2-3).

III. It is a part of the old nature with which we continue to struggle. This is evident in the fact that so many N.T. passages address Christians and call on us to “put away” malice.

- A. It is to be “put away” or “put aside” (Eph. 4:31; Col. 3:8).
 - 1. It is not to be a part of the Christian walk (Eph. 4:17, 22, 25ff). “Malice marks the evil out of which the five forms have sprung” (Eph. 4:31).
 - 2. We are to consider ourselves dead to malice (Col. 3:3ff).
- B. James 1:21 says we are “putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness (kakia).”
- C. 1 Pet. 2:1—“putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and slander.”
- D. It was evidently a problem in the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 5:8). It was considered as leaven influencing the church.
- E. It is a problem in marriages. Often both spouses are desirous of causing pain, injury, distress and embarrassment to the other.

IV. How can it be controlled?

- A. It begins with the kindness of God (Titus 3:4-8).
- B. By receiving the word of His kindness, by learning Christ, our mind is renewed.
 - 1. James 1:21.
 - 2. Eph. 4:20-24, 31.
 - 3. 1 Pet. 2:1-3.
- C. It involves being raised up with Christ and a mind set on the things above (Col. 3:1-8). Too often we attempt to root out malice by mere human will without tapping the power of God. And no I am not expecting something miraculous. I am talking about the transformation that occurs as a result of our experience of the kindness of God, having heard about it through the word, having experienced a renewed mind, having been raised up with Christ.
- D. It is through this experience that the transformation takes place that leads to our being tender-hearted and forgiving rather than malicious (Note Eph. 4:32, esp. the phrase “just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”).
- F. Instead of being malicious we can leave our hurts and pains at the cross and allow Christ to carry them. No need to cause pain and injury to those who have hurt us. The cross not only carries our sin, but the sin of those who have hurt us.
- G. It is those who refuse to acknowledge God, who refuse to be touched by His kindness that are the ones given over to malice. Those touched by the kindness of God “put away malice” and in its place put on forgiveness.

Conclusion:

- 1. We may be hesitant to let go of our malice. We may even think that we would be letting go of justice if we did. But the cross pays the penalty.
- 2. We might want to nurse our anger a little longer. We might even feel that we are betraying ourselves or someone else if we let go of our malice.
- 3. If you desire to see another person experience pain, injury, distress, suffering, embarrassment . . . remember that Christ experienced all that for them. He has already paid the penalty for their sin.
- 4. He has even paid for your maliciousness.