

## Dear friends:

Sometimes I wonder how people can be so hostile toward one another. I have encountered many of these moments lately and I have thought a lot about the reasons and the emotions behind one's intense anger and enmity in relationships with others. I was also reading the 2<sup>nd</sup> Chapter of Ephesians for my preparation for this past Sunday and discovered the many aspects of hostility in the context of life.



a) Hostility is a form of gratifying the flesh: we become hostile when we think we are not getting what we deserve and what we should have now. Somehow we get angry because we feel as if we are being cheated by not being able to gratify the desires of the flesh. Our heart becomes hostile towards others and our mind is clouded by its own negative thoughts. Somehow the world becomes very dark when we go after the desire of the flesh because we cannot feel anything except the turmoil of our own making.

b) Hostility is a form of denying God's grace and mercy: when we feel hostile toward another person, we actually refuse to understand how God has been dealing with us mercifully and graciously. If we can have enough emotion to build that much hate, we might have robbed ourselves of the opportunity to embrace the love of God fully. Hostility of the heart is a sure way to kill the connection between our heart and the heart of God. Hostility then reveals its true nature as the barrier of one's heart towards God's heart.

c) Hostility is a failure to see others as God's handiwork: if we grant ourselves the freedom and the privilege to undermine the worth of another human being, we are now spitting at the face of God. Hostility can be viewed as contempt in dealing with God's creation. The real struggle we have here is that we are unable to truly appreciate who we are as God's precious work when we demean others. Hostility now has the power to destroy who we are while attempting to destroy others.

d) Hostility is to believe that we have the freedom to boast: nothing can be less attractive than people boasting about whom they are and their success. There is a lack of acknowledgment of God's provision and blessings. Boasting can be seen sometimes as our attempt to deny God's involvement in the world and His power to bring about changes that He sees fit. Boasting creates a sense of loneliness in one's existence and that is what it has in common with hostility. When we want to put ourselves above others, we also put ourselves far away from others.

e) Hostility is a form of slavery: it can be emotional slavery when we let it have control over relationships and interactions with other people. Some people learn how to use that as a facade to hide their own insecurity. When we are hostile, we might reveal our weakness in not knowing how to face ourselves honestly. Hostility can take us on the journey where its destination is loneliness and alienation from oneself and one's loved ones.

I met a man who was so extremely angry because of his life's circumstances and was not able to manage things well. He ended up getting into a fight with everyone at work and even with his housemates. I could feel his hostility when he was asked to see me if he wanted to keep his job. He was not impressed. The first few minutes of our time together was about how he thought it was a waste of time and he needed no help because he would be fine. He went about his "hostility" toward me for roughly 15 minutes then he got tired so he sat down and remained quiet. I then talked to him about how long he would want to remain that "ticked" and end up attacking everyone. I told him that I would be glad to listen to him and to be his venting access if he needs to. He ended acknowledging that he was so tired of his life and tired of not having anyone in his life. "What happened to me? I was not like this a few years ago. Why can't I get over my former wife? I lost everything...now I am about to lose myself?" I did not say much. I knew that he needed to talk and to scream...so I was fine with it. He thanked me for listening and told me he would like to meet again.

## **Ephesians 2**

### **Blessings and Peace...**

© Dat Nguyen – Feb 2011