

THOUGHTS

BY DOUGLAS W. SCHROEDER
SPEAKER ON THE WORD TODAY

THE ATTEMPT TO RETURN IT

J Every day, thousands of items go missing, and good neighbors, and perhaps even good strangers, try to return them. It still happens that a purse or wallet that is found on a premises winds up with the store or lost and found, or if the ID is inside, makes its way back to the owner with the cash still inside.

Children drop things everywhere with little concern about securing their items. As I drove into the church parking lot today, I saw a starter bicycle nearby with training wheels, a cute white one with girl's accents on it, propped up against a street light pole. Someone had left their bicycle, and someone else was trying to return it. Perhaps yesterday was a sad day for a small child, and perhaps today will be a wonderful day if their bicycle is returned!

U Finding the owner of valuable property is gratifying. Recently, while visiting my mother in Florida, I stopped at Walmart to buy her a new water hose for her home. She stayed in the car waiting, as short stops are more work than it's worth for her to enter the store.

When I exited the store and opened the rear hatch of the vehicle, I saw a \$20 bill! Wow, what a great moment! Over the years, Pastor Paul had a running competition between my sister and me over who would find the most money each year. I was not as committed to staring at the ground while walking, so I usually performed more poorly in finding change. Oh, how I could boast about my results if I could tell him about snagging twenty dollars in one moment!

L I got in the driver's seat of the car and was showing mom my treasure when I noticed a woman standing next to a van parked opposite and adjacent to us. She was holding several bills in her hands and looking around at the ground. I knew instinctively that she was looking for the twenty dollars I held in my hand. I knew that if you simply offer money to someone, they may be unscrupulous and act like they lost it. I said through the open window, "Did you lose something?" She was Hispanic and did not speak English well, but managed, "My money..." That confirmed what I had suspected; when she pulled out her money, some fell and blew away. I got out and handed her the twenty-dollar bill, explaining that I had found it just behind our vehicle.

She looked very relieved, as though I had saved her life. I surmised that the money was more critical to her than to me, which is a great blessing! As good as it would feel to find a \$20 bill, it felt better to help someone who seemed to be authentically in distress from losing it. When I was young, the phrase "Losers weepers, finders keepers" was a popular way for children to show a lack of concern over someone's loss. Christians can be tempted not to take the step of reaching out to see if a found item or money belongs to those nearby. It felt good to instinctively know by applied faith how I should approach the situation, and that I could help restore her. I shared the thought with my mom that it's a great feeling to be so well blessed that there is no desire to sneak money away from people.

2025

The Word
Today
Box 77
Greendale, WI
53129



*The Bible is God's Word...Jesus is God's "Word" made flesh...
His death and resurrection, the message needed Today.*

July

2

0

2

5

ANGER SOBRIETY

I was counseling an individual the other day when I described the decision to eliminate angry outbursts as anger sobriety. Owning the problem of angry outbursts, admitting that it needs to change, and dedicating oneself to eliminating them is not unlike an alcoholic's work associated with becoming sober.

The notion of anger sobriety dovetails with marriage counselor Willard Harley's description of uncontrolled rage as temporary insanity. Just as alcohol or drugs alter the mind and behaviors of an individual, unrestrained emotions alter the thinking and behaviors of people. A person may never touch alcohol, but they may be as unrestrained as a drunkard when they express anger!

With an unflinching look at ourselves, we may conclude that the times we have given ourselves permission to yell or belittle others have been sinful and must stop. As an alcoholic reaches the bottom and knows they have had their last drink, the angry person must reach the bottom and realize they have had their last rageful moment. God must remake them, turn their pride and failure to control their emotions aside in favor of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5 (Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control).

What a great moment it is when a person who has outbursts breaks the bonds of sinful reactions, owns their emotions, and commits to anger sobriety! No more losing it, no more having to apologize, "I shouldn't have said..." God's Word urges us to consider ourselves carefully, "For by the grace given to me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith that God has measured to you" (Romans 12:3).

Anger sobriety is independent of what others do to us. At times when he was resistant to our guidance and drinking to excess, which developed into alcoholism, I said angry words to our oldest son. It did not change a thing in his behavior and built a wall between us. Finally, I realized the futility of my anger, and I asked his forgiveness for my foul mood and yelling. I remember the day I told him I would never yell at him again, and though frustrated at times, I kept that promise. That was my anger sobriety day. About two years later, he thanked me for that change, and we agreed we were getting along better. I changed, and he changed, too, as he dried out and began living a sober lifestyle. Perhaps you would benefit, too, from a particular form of sobriety?

Blessings,
Douglas W. Schroeder