

## ~Other Speakers S-Z: Basilea Schlink:

Being annoyed! Can that really be a sin? Or is it merely a slight personality flaw, which anyone could afford to have? Annoyance usually stems from being offended when people say or do things that do not suit us. Scripture tells us what this can lead to. In several places it is written that people "took offence" at Jesus (Matt. 15: 57, also Matt. 15: a2). They began with "mere" annoyance, but what terrible consequences this can have! The people of His home town also took offence. Then they led Him out of the town and tried to put Him to death by pushing Him off a cliff (Luke 4: 29). Such annoyance was the cause of great suffering for Jesus and great guilt for men. Today too, annoyance has similar effects.

So often in everyday life we see the alarming results of this seemingly harmless sin. How often is a relationship of love disturbed, because someone gets annoyed? Then we begin to wrong each other. That can happen in many different ways. For instance, many marriages have gone on the rocks, because one of the marriage partners was always annoyed whenever they had anything to discuss. Peace was disturbed. Every objective discussion was made impossible and they could no longer approach each other in love. Often, for this reason, children have lost their confidence in their parents or teachers, who were always annoyed with them. And we make our colleagues at work feel unhappy when we are continually annoyed. They no longer feel like working. By being annoyed, we can destroy things that we cannot make amends for.

Why do we get annoyed? Because we are not at one with the will of God. That is why everything that does not suit us upsets us. We object to everything. Or demands are made on us which we think are too much. Or someone's request upsets our intentions and we react with annoyance. But we do not realize that all things, large and small, that come from people, are actually placed in our daily lives by God. When we get upset, we rebel against God and grieve Him. And why do we get annoyed at people, at situations and conditions? Because our ego or our self-will is so big. Everything has to go the way we intended, the way we think is right, the way that is easiest for us. Every wish, opinion or mistake that others make meets with our opposition.

This annoyance or irritation is just as dangerous and sinful as anger. Anger seems to be more uncouth. But usually it only comes over us every once in a while. People who tend to be annoyed are almost always annoyed. Indeed, they even get into the habit of talking this way. They have no idea that they have become instruments of Satan, who wants to destroy peace and the fellowship of love. Then he will reach his goal and we will be acting against the very wishes of Jesus; "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13: 35).

Scripture says; "Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for edifying, as fits the occasion, that it may impart grace to those who hear" (Eph. 4: 29). That is, we should speak that which will do others good and serve to bring peace. But annoyance only brings about the opposite, and for this reason we have to become free from it. Otherwise we are a disgrace to Jesus through our words and reactions.

When we are annoyed, our faces are sullen and we reproach others. Annoyance hinders joy and ruins life together. But the Kingdom of Jesus Christ is a kingdom of joy and peace. Annoyance does not fit in. Therefore, it has to be overcome; it cannot have any more room in our lives.

We often try to make excuses for being annoyed. We say it is due to weak nerves or because we are "down". But irritation and annoyance come from our evil hearts and ultimately do not have anything to do with fatigue or weak nerves. Having weak nerves or being overworked just brings out what is really deep down in our hearts. When we get into such situations, we have no reason to excuse ourselves or even to pity ourselves. But we have every reason to repent and to call upon the name of Jesus. In this way we will be set free from these evil things that come from our hearts, are expressed by our tongues and disrupt the peace.

The most important thing is to recognize that annoyance-along with many other sinful ailments that we usually do not count as sin-is really a sin. It must disappear from our lives. Once we recognize this, we will rely upon Jesus' redemption and His blood, which contains healing for every sin. Then we will bring this sin to Him. Then we will become ashamed whenever we become annoyed, because we know that we are making Jesus sad and that we are becoming guilty by destroying some of His kingdom. Then we must follow Jesus' call: "Repent!" Turn away from this path of yours, do not give annoyance any more room!

This has to happen when we become conscious of our first annoyed thought. Then we have to proceed against it immediately and counter it by saying: God has ordained this. This situation, this word, this person, or whatever it may be, was actually sent to me by God. It is part of His plan. Then annoyance loses its power. And

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if it should escape us in a critical situation and explode in our speech, let us ask forgiveness immediately. Hating sin and being sorry for it drive us to settle accounts with God every night and tell Him when we are annoyed. If we call upon Jesus to forgive us, we must also be ready to repent concretely, to ask people whom we have grieved for forgiveness, if we have not already done so. Practising this surrender of our wills to the will of God in everyday situations and fighting the battle of faith by praising the blood of Jesus, which always sets us free, will lead to release from this sin as well.

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