

A Darth Vader Christian

Scripture: Ephesians 4:26 - 32, James 1:20 (print in bulletin), &
Proverbs 29:11 (print in bulletin)

5/1/22

How many of you are 'Star Wars' fans? How many of you have watched 'Star Wars' movies over and over again? The last 'Star Wars' movie set all time \$ and attendance records.

If you are a 'Stars Wars' fan, who is your favorite character?

Do you like Luke Skywalker, the hero of the 'Star Wars' movies?
(Make light saber sound)

Or do you like Hans Solo, the friend of Luke and co-hero with Luke? (Make light saber sound again)

Do you like Princess Lai, the lady with her hair balled up on both sides of her head? (Pick up cinnamon rolls & hold on side of head and say) 'Luke I am your sister

Or maybe your favorite character in 'Star Wars' is Chewbacca, the hairy wolfman like partner of Hans Solo? (Make sound a Wookiee makes)

Do you like the robots - R2D2 or CP3O or BEBE 8? (Make robot sound)

Or maybe you like a minor character like Bobo Fat or whose friends call him Bobo 'slightly over weigh'

Or maybe finally you like the villain in 'Star Wars' - Darth Vader (Make sound of Darth Vader breathing and say) 'Luke, I am your father!'

As Christians, we are called to model Christ's behavior. As believers in Christ, we are to choose our favorite character to be Jesus Christ. But we often are closer to modeling Satan than Jesus Christ. We are often closer to model bad behavior than Christ like behavior. It is like we want to be like Luke Skywalker but we end up being like Darth Vader! We are so often a Darth Vader Christian. We go to the dark side. We take the path to the Dark Side!

Our scripture passage from Ephesians speaks about this kind of behavior. Isn't it interesting that anger and giving the devil a foothold are mentioned in such close context in the Bible. Anger and the devil's foothold is in verse 26 & 27 of today's text. Do you think God is trying to show us something? Do you think the writer of Ephesians is trying to tell us something?

Without a doubt, anger is one well traveled path to the dark side. Without a doubt, anger will take you to the dark side. It is almost like anger is Darth Vader talking to us - (Talk like Darth Vader and say – 'Come my friends to the dark side')

In James 1:20 which is printed in your bulletin, it says *'Therefore rid yourself all sordidness and rank growth of Wickedness and welcome meekness and the implanted word that has power to save your souls.'*

That makes sense and we know that but what leads us down this path to the dark side? What makes us Darth Vader Christians? What leads us to the dark side?

In my experience, anger starts with frustration. Anger starts with expectations that go unmet and we get upset - we get angry, possible even with ourselves! Repeated frustration leads to anger, if we let this go unchecked, our anger will give way to bitterness; and now the dark side looms large in our life. We have gone to the dark side and we become Darth Vader Christians.

Is it possible that we are too easily frustrated? In the tangle of our pride, does the devil see a foothold? In our indignation, can the devil find permission to wreck havoc on our lives? Do we go to the dark side?

I know that I have needed more than one attitude adjustment in my life! I believe that many of you have needed more than one attitude adjustment in your lives!

Thanks be to God that he forgives each of us when we go to the dark side. Thanks be to God that he helps us as we strive to exercise self control and to not go to the dark side. And thanks be to God for Jesus Christ because he is the force of good that we need in our lives. May the force of Christ be with you!

In Proverbs 29:11 which is printed in your bulletin, it says – ‘*A fool gives full vent to anger, but the wise quietly holds it back.*’

We so very often greet someone else’s anger with our own anger. When someone is angry at us, we respond in kind.

A story - At a town meeting a man would not stop yelling. The man was upset and he wanted everyone to know that. For over 5 minutes he yells at the city council members. Some on the council tried to calm him, but their pleas only fueled his anger. Finally one of the council members, a man known for his wisdom & fairness, took the mic and calmly ask the angry man if he would be willing to meet with him the next day to discuss his concerns. The very angry man mumbled a few more words and agreed to the councilman’s proposal, and he finally sat down.

We will all encounter angry people from time to time. How we respond to them is important. We can respond in kind - with anger - or we can follow the example set by Jesus, and show kindness.

I believe many in this church are very good at dealing with anger. Each and every person will listen to your concerns or anger, and they will respond - not in kind - but with the love of Jesus Christ. We are truly blessed to have such a good group of worshippers!

As children of the light and not children of the dark side, we must be children of righteousness. We have the power of God's Holy Spirit working in us to speak wise, loving, and healing words to angry, hurting people.

Thanks be to God that he gives each of us the power to avoid the dark side. Thanks be to God that he helps us as we strive to exercise self control and to not go to the dark side. And thanks be to God for Jesus Christ because he is the force of good that we need in our lives.

This Wednesday is May 4th. It is Star Wars day! I will be sending a message out to many of you wishing saying – 'May the 4th be with you!' What I really will mean is - May the force of love through Jesus Christ be with you! May Jesus Christ be in you!

Let us pray:

Dear Lord, thank you for your life force of light. Thank you for your grace. Forgive us when we hurt others with our angry words. May we never go to the dark side. May the only anger we feel be over things that make you angry. We want to be wise in controlling our anger and we want to respond to anger with love and kindness. We need your help O God. Let us always seek the light of Christ and not the path to the dark side. Amen.