

HANDLING ANGER CONSTRUCTIVELY

Introduction and aim:

There are the good emotions of the heart and there are the difficult negative emotions that so often control us. God made us with emotions. They come from somewhere and do not just happen. Much of the time they are the product of our thinking. It is my aim to give Biblical help in handling anger.

The Holy Spirit desires to control our emotional responses.

THE PROBLEM STATED:

It is said that 80% of the people alive on planet earth have a predisposition to anger, which can be manifested in so many different ways. This means that 80% of us grapple with this problem and probably often lose the battle. How sad. The Word of God has a lot to say about anger in its many forms. It can be manifested in hostility, resentment, attack, revenge, malice, withdrawal, sharpness, ignoring, resistance, and a multitude of other ways. Most of the time we sin in our anger and do not have control over the emotion of anger.

Look up the following references and fill in a statement from each one:

Proverbs 14:16 _____
Proverbs 15:1 _____
Proverbs 15:18 _____
Proverbs 22:24 _____
Proverbs 25:28 _____
Proverbs 28:25 _____
Proverbs 29:22 _____
Ephesians 4:26 _____
Ephesians 4:31 _____
Colossians 3:8 _____
James 21:19,20 _____

All anger is not sin! You will find in a thorough study of anger that God is angry with sin, and yet does not sin in the manifestation of His anger. Christ manifested anger on a number of occasions. We are commanded to be angry with sin and not sin by being angry. We need a right understanding of anger or a Biblical, balanced view of anger. (Eph. 4:26,27)

We get angry because. . . We feel that a perceived personal right was violated. Far too often we do not have a valid right to be angry. Our "right" was based on selfish demands or on perfectionist standards. In all these instances the best thing we can do is to *yield such perceived rights to God*. This type of anger should not be pursued with an offender since there is, in fact, no valid offender. **OR We feel that our wills were thwarted.** Often it is because of our own selfish personal desires that we become angry. We have a personal will and desire about something and someone does not fulfill what we thought was right or what we wanted or how we desired to be treated, so we are angry.

THE PROBLEM FACED:

All of us must face the problem of anger and its many forms. Few things are more devastating to a marriage than anger that spoil family fun, compassion, good-will, biblical love, friendship, communication, family living, and the companionship God planned marriage to

be. We lose our friends, maybe our marriage and destroy relationships because of uncontrolled anger.

Inner anger, expressed or suppressed, will bring all kinds of unnecessary tragedies. We can internalize the anger and let it smolder within until the explosion comes. Uncontrolled anger can cause loss of love, colitis, heart attacks, strokes, impotence, emotional breakdowns and a host of diseases and troubles. If we hold anger within, it will destroy us and those whom we love.

Many times it is easy for us to excuse ourselves and feel that it is better to express anger than to suppress it. Expressing our anger can become a way of life, for it entrenches the habit pattern into the subconscious mind. So then we automatically respond in anger without thinking; and every time we respond in anger, it becomes easier to repeat the next time.

THE PROBLEM CORRECTED:

We want to look at a number of principles from the Word of God which, if applied, will help us to successfully face the problem of anger.

The first thing to do is to verbalize your angry feelings in the right Biblical way.

God's Word teaches us to confront our offender if possible, but in the right way. We must practice "*speaking the truth in love.*" (See Ephesians 4:15.) Matthew 18:15 would teach us to go to the offending person and speak alone with them in order to solve the problem. This must be done in love, admitting that possibly you are totally wrong, and without feelings of vengeance or of getting even. Neither should you imply that you will seek to retaliate in the future. It is go the person (s) in love, meekness, humility, and in a broken attitudes considering you own heart and failures. (Jer. 17:9)

To verbalize is to turn your angry feelings into words. But you must do so in love as you tell the person exactly what you feel. In doing this, you are not to attack him, but confess your own feelings. Emphasize an "I feel" message rather than a "you" accusation or a "why" question. For example, "I felt very hurt and angry when you belittled me in front of all those people." May my attitude and response is wrong, but please allow us to work at changing this. What can we do?

There are few problems we face in life that is more controlling than the difficulty mankind has with anger. In the hundreds of hours of counseling that I have engaged in, anger is involved in almost all of the heartaches, separations, divorces, etc., that takes place. In fact anger is possibly the number one failure in people's lives. I can always expect the following failures in every marriage -- anger, resentments and unforgiveness. While there are many other things that contribute in failed marriages, anger seems to permeate most other problems.

Commit to God all your feelings of getting even. To avenge is God's right and not ours. (See Romans 12:19b.) Sometimes when forgiving someone, especially someone who isn't sorry, it seems as if you are ignoring yourself and your own feelings. The best thing is to turn the matter over to God. He has promised to deal with offenders in the way He sees best. Leave that up to God by cleansing your mind of the thoughts of revenge. Don't play God. Give your "so called" personal rights to God and expect Him to do right.

Totally forgive the offender. By the choice of your own will, forgive; not allowing feelings to rule, choose not to bring up these issues to the offender again. They are dead. You must determine not to allow these things to be a source of gossip either. Nor should you allow

yourself to continue to meditate on what has happened. We are to forgive as God forgives. (See Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:10-14.) Brooding on the past will bring no good. This is all so difficult to do, but God will give the grace and ability.

Face the anger as sin before God. Confess it as sin; you must repent of it. (See Ephesians 4:30-32; Psalm 51.) Engaging an anger because of someone's wrong to you will never help in what you are facing.

Ask God to take away the thought habit or pattern of thoughts as you resist continued meditation on your anger. (See I John 5:14,15.) We have a right to expect victory over the problem as we resist in God's power and grace. (See Ephesians 6:10; II Corinthians 12:9.)

Ask for and expect the filling of the Holy Spirit. Only as we allow the Holy Spirit to control will we have victory over the responses of anger. (See Ephesians 5:18; Galatians 5:22, 23; John 14:26.)

Give thanks for the source of your irritations. Herein lies a secret: to thank God for the source of the problem that God has used to help us face our angry spirit. (See Ephesians 5:19, 20; I Thessalonians 5:18.)

Conclusions:

The Lord would like to transform our lives. We must put off the old man and put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. (See Ephesians 4:22-24.) It all depends upon our renewing our minds by memorizing, meditating on, and applying the Word of God.

Thought patterns become a part of us, and soon we are living as an angry person constantly. This must all be changed. We must apply the principles for victory and walk in the power of God as we reckon ourselves dead to these sinful practices.

Scriptures for Study:

Anger is an underlying cause of many emotional failures. By learning to deal with anger, we can learn to cope with other emotional struggles as well. Look up the following Scriptures and identify some constructive steps to take in resolving anger issues.

Psalm 139:23, 24 -- What kind of insight does the Psalmist desire? _____

Ephesians 4:32 -- What are two keys to forgiveness? _____

Philippians 3:13 -- If forgiveness has been granted and we are still tempted to brood in self-pity over past hurt, what does this verse tell us to do? _____

James 5:16 -- Rather than "stuff" our feelings inside, what are we to do? _____

How did David verbalize his feelings in the following portions? How did he use three methods -- praying, singing, and writing -- to verbalize his feelings?

Psalm 55:12-18 -- _____

Psalm 57:6, 7 -- _____

Psalm 58 -- _____

Psalm 42, 43 -- _____

QUOTABLE QUOTES:

Anger is like an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it's stored than to anything on which it's poured. -- Baptist Beacon

Anyone who angers you conquers you.

Nothing so reduces us to protoplasm that seethes with turmoil than does animosity toward someone else. -- Harold Walker

Folks who fly into a rage always make a bad landing. -- Globe Gazette

Guiding and Application Questions:

1. Can you identify your anger feelings when they exist?
2. When was the last time you had a significant angry feeling? What did you do about it, and how did you react?
3. How would you apply Psalm 19:12-14 to the problem of anger?
4. What was the situation that caused your deepest anger in the last two years? Why did this circumstance, event or person, (whatever it was) affect you so?
5. How would James 5:16 apply to your life and the problem of anger?