

OUR PRACTICE OF MISBELIEFS

INTRODUCTION:

What does it mean to be happy?

We could define it as a continuing sense of well-being, a state of feeling good about life, others and self. We could also define happiness as the absence of mental and emotional discomfort and pain.

The Bible calls happy..."**blessed**"! BLESSED: "happy, fortunate, prosperous and enviable -- is the man who walks and lives not in the counsel of the ungodly ... But his delight and desires are in the law of the Lord, and in His law-- the precepts, the instructions, the teachings of God... he meditates day and night." (see Psa. 1:1)

We do not have to be the victims of circumstances, events, relationships. We do not have to be trapped by persistent painful emotions. But we have so many "misbeliefs" and by them and through them we have been speaking lies to ourselves. As human beings we are not doomed to a cold, emotionless, machine-like existence. We are creatures throbbing with mental, emotional and physical energy. We can replace the irrationalities, the lies from our thoughts and replace them with the TRUTH, we can lead satisfying, rich and fulfilling emotional lives. (Col. 3:15-17)

The irrationalities are not always easy to label. Most of what we tell ourselves is not in word form.. but thoughts are often images and attitudes without words attached to them.

It is not the events past or present which make us feel the way we do, *but our interpretation of those events.* Our feels are not caused by the circumstances of our long-lost childhood, or the circumstances of the present. *Our feelings are caused by what we tell ourselves about our circumstances... whether in words or in attitudes.*

What are misbeliefs?

It is the appropriate label we can give to any lie we tell ourselves. Much of the suffering we experience is due to sustained periods of negative thinking, and emotional turmoil; for misbeliefs are the cause of much of the destructive behavior people persist to engage in...even when they are fully aware of it's harm to themselves.

1. Misbeliefs generally appear as truth to the person repeating them to himself.
2. Misbeliefs usually appear to be truth, because they often contain some shred of truth, and partly because the sufferer has never examined or questioned these erroneous assumptions.
3. Misbeliefs are lies we tell ourselves, and are directly from the pit of hell; they are hand engraved and delivered by the devil himself as the "father of lies"; he is very clever in dishing out misbeliefs. He does not want to be discovered so he always appears as if the lie he is telling us is true. (examine Gen. 3; James 3:13-18)
4. God does not want His children to suffer depression, worry and intractable anger, but we think it has to be that way.
5. One of our misbeliefs can be..."*Others* can be happy, *others* can have victory; *others* can correct and change their misbeliefs and their life; *others* can be free from anxiety, depression and anger, but I can't." (cf. Prov. 23:7)
6. Misbelief in "self-talk" means the words we tell ourselves in our thoughts; it means the words we tell ourselves about people, self, experiences, and life in general. What are the lies and half-truths we repeat to ourselves; what are the misbeliefs that keep us unhappy and upset?

The peaceful person is one who is at peace with himself because he is at peace with the Lord. He knows how to walk in truth. A man who is at war with himself will be at war with others.

Remember, any thoughts that reflect hopelessness, desperation, hate, fear, bitterness, anger, jealousy, or envy are the words and thoughts that may be generated by demonic falsehood. These are words and thoughts that will be changing and destroying our lives.

DEALING WITH MISBELIEF IN ANGER:

I. COMMON MISBELIEFS CONNECTED WITH ANGER:

A. All anger is bad, and if I'm a Christian, I will never get angry. Many Christians try to deal with anger as a single moral problem. "Anger is bad," a sweet lady tells her Sunday School class. "Anger is sin, children, and you must never get angry." "We need to banish anger from our lives!" shouts the moralist. "Get rid of anger in your life and you'll be a happy person."

The problem of anger cannot be dealt with so simply. Like taxes, anger doesn't just go away, even if you decide it ought to. And like your nose or your hair color, your angry feelings are part of you and your human nature. (James 1:19-21; Eph. 4:26)

B Anger always means to yell and throw things or do whatever else it takes to "drain off" the emotion. NO..."ventilation" is not the answer.

C. If I do get angry, it IS always better for me to swallow the anger (suppress it..., act like it is not there) than to express it.

D. I have every right to be angry when another person does not live up to my expectations. I have no choice but to stay angry as long as things don't change.

E. It is outrageous and insufferable when others do things I don't like, or if they fail to treat me as well as I ought to be treated.

These are misbeliefs, they are lies, distortions, and they bring sad results. Constant repeating of such misbeliefs in self-talk is what sustains and perpetuates anger, resentments, bitterness, and malice. Constant repeating that which God gives us in TRUTH in HIS WORD generates peace and health.

II. THE TRUTH ABOUT ANGER:

A. Anger is not always bad! Christ experienced anger! The simple emotion of anger is not always harmful or unloving. It is what you DO when you are angry that has moral significance. (Eph. 4:26) What we do when angry is where the sin comes in. We should not allow ourselves to remain angry by continuing our destructive, resentful, self-talk. He is telling us to deal with the issue promptly.

B. Sometimes it is better to express the anger! Christ expressed anger... but in such a way that He dealt with sin. He was angry with SIN and not in a sinful way. (Some today express their righteous indignation against abortion, pornography, etc., in the right way.) When anger brings right actions, results, and yet not in an angry, vengeful way, etc., that anger can bring good ends. It is HOW we express that anger that makes the difference!

(Matt. 18:15-17 tells us what to do when a brother has offended us... go to them.. not screaming at him, prosecuting him; etc., but when hurt, go to the one that hurt you, and in love tell him.)

C. Anger does not mean yelling, throwing things, or other intemperate behavior. If aggressive behavior is rewarded, or encouraged the aggression will increase. Our emotions are not some kind of gas or fluid that we must expel in order to prevent "popping off" all over the place in a million pieces.

D. Anger is Behavior! Anger is responses of your body and mind to a stimulus. *When the stimulus is withdrawn, or we, by God's grace, willingly receive this thing as God-allowed* then the angry responses will cease, That is, if you do not continue to tell yourself how unfair and unjust the treatment has been, and how miserable you are because of it. It is not essential to our mental health to express anger by shouting, screaming, punching, etc.; God tells us to control it. (James 1:19, 20)

E. I DO NOT have a right to be angry when another person does not live up to my expectation. I do have a choice whether or not I remain angry. There isn't a necessary connection between the behavior of another person and your anger. It does not matter how unfairly, unjustly or thoughtlessly someone has behaved toward you, you are angry because of your own self-talk. You must say, "I made myself angry. No one forced me to be angry or remain in a stew over their behavior, I did this to myself." We tell ourselves in words, images and attitudes the very things that cause us to feel the anger.

F. It is NOT DREADFUL or even especially unusual if others do things I don't like or fail to treat me as well as I treat them. We waste our time, energy, and thought when we brood over the offenses of others.

III. WHEN ANGER IS NORMAL:

When it is a simple brief emotion anger is normal. When it is something that effects us because it is a response against our person; convictions; self-worth, or against someone we love.. brief anger is normal. When the anger explodes into rage, stewing, passive-aggressive reaction, bitterness, desire for revenge, or not dealt with and put away before the "night comes", and we continue to be moved by that emotion--- IT IS SIN, AND HAS BECOME SIN.

If the anger does not bring about positive.. good ends... it will end in further sin, and becomes sin and is sin. (Christ was angry about the hardness of their hearts when He healed on the sabbath day, etc.) None of us can go through life without ever having had the emotion of anger! When we tell children... never be angry... etc., we are telling them an impossible thing! If we do this, when they are angry they will learn to practice self-deception, play like they are not angry, deny it, suppress sit and that will bring untold problems in every way in their lives and the lives of others, etc.

IV. WHEN ANGER IS A PROBLEM:

Anger is a problem when we practice the lie of misbelief as we lie in our self-talk. We say, "I should never get angry." This misbelief leads to the self-deceptive words, "I'm not angry," when one is quite plainly saying and doing hostile, angry things and even hurting others. The internal conflict and destructive behavior then becomes hard to interpret, identify and control. Christians are often prime targets of such deception. Many think they must be perceived as always nice -- always smiling; laughing, saying nice things, while possibly they are furious inside, refusing to confront the truth in their lives. Christians, often hurting, cover it up with religious sounding words, smiles, grins, shrugs, and silence, and play the part of not being angry.

V. THE HEALTHY WAY TO EXPRESS ANGER:

MAYBE YOU KNOW SOMEONE who is chronically angry? They are always nursing a grudge, ready to ignite any minute. These people have one common trait...they are uncommunicative and withdrawn. They are reluctant, shy about expressing their desires truthfully and openly. They are fearful of simply telling someone else what hurts them or how they have been offended.

You need to go to that person, honestly, with openness without accusing or manipulating the person. Prayerful assertive behavior that uses no harsh or hurtful words or action can bring a dramatic change. Much could be said at this point.

VI. WHEN SOMEONE ELSE IS ANGRY AT YOU:

We live in a world where many times we have to face anger in someone else. What should we do? Here are some ways to deal with the anger of others.

A. Don't be angry every time someone is upset with you. You can cope with it effectively, it is not a disaster.

B. Don't shape your behavior just to prevent others' getting up-set with you; they will probably be upset anyway and when they do get upset, it's their problem, not yours; you must still stand for and live for truth, still witness, etc.

C. Be careful not to reward the angry outburst of others. Ignore them when they yell at you, but be very attentive when they speak reasonably.

D. Don't be intimidated, speak up and say.. "Please talk to me reasonably."

E. Be kind and loving. Just because someone is angry does not mean you have to be angry back. Say words like, "I am sorry you are feeling bad, Can I do anything to help you feel less upset?"

F. When there is truth in an accusation directed at you, admit it, don't lie and defend yourself. You don't have to be right all the time. Say words like, "It's true, I wasn't using my mind, etc., please forgive me.."

G. Give others the right to be angry with you sometimes and don't be shocked and offended when it happens. If you insist everyone see and respect you as that "*perfect human being with no faults*", you will be deeply disappointed not to mention that you are the victim of gross misbelief.

H. Sometimes the anger someone has vented at you has nothing to do with you. You may be merely the target, at the moment, of someone's frustrations, and unhappiness. Learn to identify such things, refusing to personally take offense, and accepting the words as if spewed at you.. it is their problem, not yours, don't make it yours.

VII. HOW TO HANDLE ANGER:

(Note the materials in the book on emotional problems) This is a summary of this material! But it would be wise to study the material in the book...."Emotional Problems in Marriage and Home." You will find it on the web site... **watke.org**

A. CONFESS your sinful anger to GOD, receive His forgiveness. (Psa 32)

B. Locate and identify your misbeliefs about anger! What are you telling yourself that is not true?

C. Replace your misbeliefs with TRUTH... START REPEATING TRUTH to yourself.

Truth according to the Word of God.

D. Behave according to truth. Old destructive ways of expressing or repressing anger, for instance, need to be gone now. React according to the Word and will of God. Be honest with yourself, GOD and others.

E. Pray answers instead of talking about problems! Trust the Lord fully, believe the Lord, for nothing is impossible, including the elimination of bitterness and anger from your life. (Phil. 4:13; Mark 11:23, 24; John 15:7; Luke 11:7,8)