

Anger Is a Serious Thing

It has been proven that 80% of the all people have a problem with anger. A pastor of a large church, who had counseled over 2,500 couples, stated that, *“When I found it difficult to arrive at the most pressing problem in a counseling situation, I would start with the problem of anger and found that this was always a chief element of every couple’s marriage problems.”*

Possibly anger, more than any other thing, is the most disruptive problem among church members and causes as much strife, turmoil, and division among church members as any thing humans face.

Anger is manifested in so many ways. Some have said that there are 33 different words in the English language that are used to describe anger and how it is manifested. Anger unsolved will usually produce bitterness, resentments, hostility, depression, and possibly from these will issue forth malice and a desire for revenge.

Anger is an emotion which is not always sinful. It is a “normal reaction” to many things in life, and yet most of the time we sin in our anger. There are many mistaken concepts about anger which help to produce failure and ongoing hurt to many. (See study on *“Self-talk and Anger”* in the book... *Why Do I Feel as I Feel and Do as I DO?* found on the web site!)

WHAT UNRESOLVED ANGER WILL OFTEN PRODUCE:

Church division and strife Often there is an unreconciled state between believers. There may be an ignoring of the truth, that *“we are members one of another.”* (Rom. 12:3-4) No man lives unto himself, *“what hurts others will also hurt me.”* (Rom. 14:7) We are to live at peace with all men!

Anger destroys family communication and relationships! Holy wedlock becomes unholy deadlock. Marriage is to be a lovely duet, not a living duel. God commands that with an *“angry person you shall not go.”* (Prov. 22:24-25) Family members often treat each other like enemies, not as gifts.

Anger causes parents to miss their goals with their children. Anger begets anger and brings ongoing hurt and strife between family members. Anger provokes to wrath, discouragement, frustration, bitterness, etc. (Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21) Parents are to be like a coach, not a staff Sargent. (Prov. 6:20-23; 2:1-11)

Anger even affects the joy and health of individuals. (Neh. 8:10) Doctors say there are over 51 illness attributed to psychosomatic suffering. Unconfessed, unforsaken sins in the life (bitterness, anger, etc.) can cause many kinds of physical ailments such as heart attacks, colitis, ulcers, etc. According to James 5:14-16 we may experience illness’s caused by sin! Confessing sin one to another can bring healing.

Uncontrolled anger is most dangerous because it is so widely excused.

1. “I am just doing what comes naturally.”
2. “Well, you would be angry too, if someone treated you like they did me.”
3. “I have a right to be angry the way my life has been.”
4. “Boy, you sure jacked up his jaws, and laid him in the shade.”

The world has few answers for the problem of anger. They often teach and practice ventilation, projectionism, “*letting it all hang out,*” get it off your chest, etc.

AT TIMES ANGER IS NORMAL AND NOT A SINFUL RESPONSE:

Let us start by looking at anger itself. Anger is an emotional reaction involving energy.

Anger is not bad in itself, but it can become very constructive. The Bible says, “*Be ye angry, and sin not*” (Eph. 4:26). God is saying it is okay to be angry, but do not sin in your anger. That tells us that it is what we DO with our anger that can make it bad. Truly what causes our anger and what we do with it is the real issue.

The God-Head manifests anger at times. God is angry with the wicked every day; God is angry with sin. (Psa. 7:11) Christ manifested anger in various situations. (Mark 3:5) But never did God sin in His anger. Our anger is almost always prompted by our sin natures.

Anger causes us to act. There may be at times we might become indifferent or careless if never moved by anger to change a situation. But then we must be under God’s control, lest we sin in our anger. (Eph. 4:25, 26)

UNDERSTANDING WHAT ANGER IS:

Biblical usage of the word: “orge” -- *meaning passion, energy, to be deeply moved.* “**thumos**” -- *meaning agitated, boiling within.* Anger can be an explosive response or it can be a “slow burn within” in which the person holds on to ill-will, resentments and floating hostilities. Webster’s definition: “**Excessive** emotion or passion aroused by a sense of injury or wrong.”

Good working definition of godly anger: “God-given stimulus (energy) to help me solve problems Biblically.” Some say that anger itself is an emotion that is “neutral.” It is what we do with it that determines whether it becomes a positive or negative force in the life. **Valid anger** is an emotion, which if under control can bring something constructive out of a situation. Perhaps only God has valid anger, while mankind must watch for the taint of sin in all his reactions. **Invalid anger** -- when a perceived personal right is really a selfish or perfectionistic demand -- usually has negative results and therefore should not be pursued but yielded to God. Our difficulty is that we most generally are moved to anger because of our wicked sin nature, meaning that possibly anger is never neutral for us because it is engendered by sin within, or a life controlled by self.

Examples of right use of anger, (but only God knows the heart):

1. II Sam. 12 -- Nathan and David
2. John 2:13-18 -- Christ in the temple, His anger always without sin.
3. Gal. 2:11 -- Paul withstood Peter to the face.
4. Eph. 4:15, 25 -- Speaking truth (both ways) with love to face facts and bring change and growth.

WHEN ANGER BECOMES SINFUL, Damaging and Hurtful:

When it is selfishly, sinfully motivated -- “I have my rights.” “No one is going to push me around.” “I’m not going to take that....”

There are times when we feel angry, yet a perceived personal right that was violated was not a valid right at all. Our “**right**” was based on selfish demands. In these instances, the best thing to 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.

For an example: A father is reading his newspaper when his small son jumps into his lap and tugs at the bottom of the paper, wanting his father’s attention. The father feels a surge of anger within. **Why?** He, at first, perceives that its his right to read the paper without being disturbed is violated. On second thought (if he is a good father) he realizes that this is not a valid right in light of the circumstances. It originates in self-motivation, in selfishness! Of course his son is more important than reading the paper, so he yields his “rights “ to God, enters into responsibility obediently and ministers to his son. Herein we see a normal failure. ***Explosive parents are never good disciplinarians -- their goal is wrong, for it is selfishly motivated!***

When God’s goal in the matter is distorted: There are only three things that impact our lives: events, circumstances, and people. It is in these three areas of life that we get “*bent out of shape, angry, and God’s will is not fulfilled.*”

1. Rom. 8:28-29 -- We must yield to God’s providential, sovereign will,
2. Rom. 8:28-29 -- We are to be conformed to the image of His son,
3. I Cor. 10:31 -- That we might bring glory and honor to God,
4. Phil. 4:6-8 -- That we might have His peace that passes understanding.

When anger is allowed to linger: (Consider Eph. 4:26,27) We make a choice to hold on to our feelings and then we will build resentments, hostilities, bitterness, etc. It can become suppressed rage, held within, which turned inward will bring about depression, and many other problems. It can cause a desire for revenge. Be alert for vengeance. It is not our responsibility or right to punish our offenders. In so doing we are not allowing God to be the agent in revenge if such is to take place.

When in anger we attack the person and not the problem. (Eph. 4:15,29)
When rip up the person and we bypass the real issue.

We must desire to have victory over anger, and allow the Holy Spirit to so convict us that we are determined to walk in the victory that has been purchased by the power of our resurrected Savior.