

Anger Mismanagement: Only Grace Transforms the Heart

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I. Introduction: Anger is a problem both in the world and in the church.

II. Understanding anger:

A. What is anger?

1. Anger is an emotion. – *Anger is our whole-personed active response of negative moral judgment against perceived evil.* (Robert Jones)
2. All anger seems righteous Js. 1:20 Rom. 12:17-21
3. Anger has a physical component. Gen. 4:5 Ex. 32:19 Ps. 4:4
4. Anger is active. Ex. 32:19-20 Gen. 39:19-20

B. Anger is not necessarily sinful.

1. God gets angry. Ex. 4:14 15:8 Num. 25:4 Ps. 7:11 18:7-8 2:4-5,12 Dt. 29:27-28 John 3:36 Rom. 1:18
2. Jesus was angry. Mark 3:5 10:14 Mt. 21:12 John 2:13-17
3. Righteous anger is rare! Eph. 4:26f Acts 17:16

C. Anger is very deceptive. Jer. 17:9-10 Eph. 4:25

1. We typically try to justify our anger.
2. Some deny their anger or try to justify themselves by calling it something else.
3. Many blame their anger on something outside of themselves. Mark 7:14-23
4. Some try to blame genetics (nature) or their upbringing (nurture).

D. Anger is dangerous. Eph. 4:26-27 Ecc. 7:9

1. Anger is usually murderous by nature. Mt. 5:21f 1 Sam. 20:30-33 1 Jo. 3:15 Prov. 11:9 **Gen. 4:6-7 Acts 7:54ff**
2. Anger gives the devil an opportunity. Eph. 4:26-27 John 8:44 Js. 1:14-15
3. Those who give in to anger are at risk of losing control. Pr. 25:28 29:8,11 14:17
4. Anger is destructive and leads to many other sins. Eph. 4:31 1 Sam. 18:8-9 Luke 15:28-30 Col. 3:19 Prov. 29:22 14:17 Num. 20:6-12 Ps. 106:32-33
5. Anger is contagious. Pr. 22:24-25 15:1,18

III. What causes out-of-control anger?

A. Explanations of secular psychology – nature and nurture.

B. Scripture deals with most anger as a sin issue. Mt. 5:21-22 Js. 1:19-20 4:1ff Eph. 4:26-27 Col. 3:8 Pr. 14:29 15:18 19:19 22:24 29:22 2 Co. 7:10-11

C. Scripture teaches that anger begins in the heart. Mark 7:21 Mt. 12:34

- D. We become angry because we want something (too much). James 4:1-4 Isa. 55:1-2
 1. What do I seek and treasure more than Christ? Isa. 55:1-2 Js. 4:4
 2. A legitimate desire when it becomes a controlling desire (or demand) becomes a sinfully idolatrous desire.
 3. Angry people have false beliefs that they possess certain rights including the right to express their anger (judgment/revenge) when their rights are violated,
 4. Angry people often succeed in getting what they want by manipulating others.
 5. In the end angry people experience loss (including the loss of their idols).

IV. What are some unbiblical means people use to deal with anger? Eph. 4:26-27 Pr. 22:24

- A. Secular psychology promotes anger management – expressing, suppressing, calming.
- B. Secular strategies try to keep anger at bay – relaxation, cognitive restructuring, problem solving, communication, humor, changing environment, counseling.
- C. The secular methodologies do not address the heart of anger.
- D. There are many sinful ways in which people deal with anger. Pr. 29:22 Ecc. 7:9
 1. Ventilation. Pr. 12:18 29:11 25:28 Eph. 4:29,31 Js. 1:19 4:11-12 Gal. 5:15 Rom. 12:19-21 1 Pet. 3:8-9 Num. 20:6-12
 2. Displacement. Mt. 5:21-22
 3. Internalizing. Lev. 19:17-18 1 Ki. 21:4 Eph. 4:31
 4. Excusing. James 1:13-15,19-20 1 Co. 10:13

V. You can overcome anger by God's grace - address your heart with gospel truth.

- A. The key is what you are saying in your own heart. Phil. 4:8-9 Pr. 4:23 Mark 7:21-23
- B. Five things to tell yourself when you are getting angry.
 1. I want something too much – idolatry. Js. 4:1-4 Isa. 55:1-2 Rom. 1:25
 2. I am not God – Judge. Js. 1:19-20 4:19-20 Gen. 50:19 1 Pe. 2:23 Mt. 7:1ff 1 Co. 4:5 Ro. 12:17-21
 3. God has been very gracious to me – in Christ. Ex. 34:6 Ps. 103:8 Eph. 4:31-32 Col. 3:13 Mt. 18:22-35 1 Tim. 1:15-16 Ro. 5:10 3:21-26 Pr. 19:11 1 Pet. 4:8
 4. God is in control – He is doing good and will not give me more than I can bear. 1 Co. 10:13 **Ge. 50:20 Ro. 8:28 Acts 2:23 Ps. 103:19 Js. 1:2ff 1 Pe. 1:6-7 Pr. 21:1**
 5. Remember who I am– a new creature in Christ. Ro. 6:11 2 Cor. 5:17 1 Pet. 4:1-6 1 Co. 10:13 Gal. 5:13-16,19-23 **Titus 3:3**
- C. Five more things to remember as you are calming down.
 1. God's grace helps me to exercise self-control, patience and gentleness. 1 Co. 13:4-5 Js. 1:19 Titus 1:7 Pr. 12:16 14:29 16:32 19:11 29:8,11 14:17 Col. 3:19
 2. God's grace enables me to speak with gentleness and grace. Pr. 15:1 Eph. 4:29
 3. God's grace enables me to lovingly do good to those who wronged me. Ro. 12:20 Mt. 5:43ff Gen. 50:21 45:7-11 Luke 6:27-28 Eph. 5:1-2
 4. God's grace enables me to receive correction, even from those who hurt me. Prov. 9:8 13:10 2 Sam. 16:5-13 Mt. 7:1ff

5. God's grace helps me to pursue the restoration of those who hurt me. Gal. 6:1-2
 - a. Their sin is primarily against God (it is not about me!). Ps. 51:4
 - b. My objective is to restore (not to vent or to judge) my brother/sister. Mt. 4:21
 - c. If I am to help, I must be "spiritual" and gentle. Gal. 5:13-23
- D. Five more practical principles.
1. Don't be quarrelsome. Pr. 17:14 29:3 26:20 1 Pet. 3:7
 2. Deal with your anger and conflict quickly. Eph. 4:26-27 Mt. 5:23-24 7:1ff
 3. Prepare for temptation. Pr. 21:5
 4. Seek God's help through prayer. Heb. 4:16
 5. Your anger can motivate you to pursue a biblical solution to problems.

VI. Common questions about anger:

- A. When is anger righteous? (From Robert Jones, Uprooting Anger) Mark 3:1-6
1. A real sin has taken place. 1 Sam. 11:1-6 Mark 10:13-16 Acts 17:16 1 Jo. 3:4
 2. My concern is for God's kingdom, not my own. John 2:13-17 Ps. 119:52-54
103-104,127-128 139:22
 3. Anger is righteously expressed. Ps. 106:33 Rom. 12:17-21 Gal. 6:1-2
- B. How can you be angry and yet not sin? Eph. 4:26 Js. 1:19
- C. Is it ever permissible to be angry with God? Dan. 4:34-35 Job 1:22 2:9 Rom. 9:20
Js. 1:13 Ps. 73:2-3 Jonah 3:10-3:10 1 Chron. 13:11-13 Gen. 4:6-7 Dt. 29:29
Hab. 1:1-4 1:12-2:1 Psalm 13:1ff 62:8 115:3
- D. What if you are angry with yourself?
1. Sometimes we are angry at ourselves because of pride. Jer. 17:9
 2. The only verdict which matters is that of God Who has declared you righteous for Christ's sake. Phil. 3:9 1 Tim. 1:15-16 1 Co. 6:9-11

VII. Counseling an angry person:

- A. Data gathering/interpretation.
 - 1. What does this person want so badly? Js. 4:1ff (see attachment)
 - 2. Is physical abuse taking place? Is anyone in danger?

- B. Homework for those who give in to anger.
 - 1. Repent of anger. Abandon your rights. Phil. 2:3-8 Mark 10:42-45 John 13:1-17
 - 2. Create note cards for what you need to tell yourself when you are angry.
 - 3. Make a plan for dealing with anger. Pr. 27:12
 - 4. Keep an anger journal (see attachment).
 - 5. Meditate upon and memorize key texts.
 - 6. Reading.
 - a. "What to Do When Anger Gets the Upper hand", Jay Adams (pamphlet).
 - b. Anger: Escaping the Maze, David Powlison (booklet: CCEF/RFCL).
 - c. Angry at God: Bring Him Your Doubts and Questions, Robert D. Jones (**booklet: CCEF/RFCL**).
 - d. War of Words, Paul Tripp.
 - e. Uprooting Anger, Robert D. Jones.
 - f. Anger and Stress Management God's Way, Wayne Mack.
 - g. The Heart of Anger, Lou Priolo (primarily for angry kids).
 - h. Getting a Grip, Lou Priolo (for teens).
 - i. Help! Someone I Love has been Abused, Jim Newheiser.
 - j. When Sinners Say "I Do", Dave Harvey.
 - 7. Audio
 - a. "War of Words", Paul Tripp.
 - b. "Counseling Angry People", Wayne Mack.
 - c. "Who is a Murderer? Matt. 5:21-26", Jim Newheiser.
 - 8. Workbook: Homework Manual for Biblical Living: Volume 1, Mack, "Anger Homework"

VIII. Conclusion – propitiation.

Anger Journal

(fill out for each incident – 2-3 sentences for each question)

Incident Date _____ time _____

1. What were the circumstances when I became angry?
2. What did I say to my own heart – What did I want? James. 4:1-2
3. What did I did I say/do when I felt provoked?
4. What is a biblical evaluation of what I said and did?
5. What should I have said to myself when I felt angry?
6. What should I have said and done when I felt provoked?
7. What do I need to do now to make things right?

What provokes me to anger?

I must...(James 4:1-2)

Be respected and appreciated
Be comfortable
Be successful
Be treated fairly
Be free from problems and pressures
Be physically fit
Have a life which is free from difficulty
Have children
Have successful children
Have a spouse who is affectionate
Have a spouse who is not late
Have people who do what I want them to do
Have children who make me look good
Have a position of leadership in church
Have what I want to eat
Get my own way
Have others conform to my schedule

Be happy
Be pain free
Be safe
Be thought of as intelligent and witty
Be sexually fulfilled
Not have others waste my time
Have a spouse
Have godly children
Have a well-paying satisfying job
Have family members who keep the house tidy
Have plenty of money
Have children who are respectful and obedient
Have the privacy I desire
Have fun
Exercise when I want to
Get to go on vacation/travel where I want to go
Not be cut off in traffic.