

How to Deal with Anger? (2)

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Anger is a 'very common theme' in the Bible

- B. Anger is a normal and useful emotional reaction our Creator has designed
 - 1. Consider the 'biology' of anger

 - 2. If expressed within the Biblical principles anger is proper and useful
 - a. consider the *negative* and *positive* example in Scripture

I. WHEN EXACTLY IS MY ANGER 'RIGHTEOUS OR SINFUL?'

A. The two angers contrasted (David Powlison)

Righteous Anger	Sinful Anger
1. When God doesn't get what He wants	1. When I don't get what I want
2. Motivated by a sincere love for God	2. Motivated by a love of some idol
3. God's will is violated	3. My will is violated
4. Christ is the Lord of my life	4. I am the lord of my life

II. HOW RIGHTEOUS OF GOOD ANGER CAN BECOME SINFUL?

- A. By not 'covering the multitude of sin with love'
Prov. 10:12; 19:11 and 1 Peter 4:8

B. By disobeying God's direction in Eph. 4:26-27
God calls us to deal with anger on a daily basis

C. By handling the anger-energy in a destructive way: Eph. 4:15, 25, 29-30

1. by ventilating' anger or blowing up

a. who or what is the aim?

b. God condemns ventilating anger *Prov. 29:11; 25:28; 29:20;*
James 1:19-20

2. by internalizing' anger or clamming up

a. in 'clamming up' the anger is aimed and fired at yourself

Prov. 14:30; 15:13; 17:22; 18:14

3. similarity in both approaches: *person rather than problem focussed*

III. HOW DO WE HANDLE ANGER SO IT WON'T BECOME SINFUL?

A. This no quick solution yet there is real hope

B. Mostly through a 're-tooling of your thinking' patterns: *ask yourself the hard questions!*

1. Probe **yourself** with questions (if you have anger-management problem) (Prov. 13:10)
 - a. Am I getting angry because of my 'rights' is denied me?
 - b. Am I getting upset because God's honour is violated?
 - c. Am I concerned about God's Kingdom or my kingdom here?
 - d. Am I angry because my pride is hurt? My comfort zone is invaded? I am losing control of this situation? My agenda is in danger?

2. Remember that you mostly *can but also must control* your anger (James 1:19-20)

3. Filter your thoughts through Spirit's filter: Phil. 4:8
 - a. consider each aspect

 - b. recognize the power of self-talk which Satan plays well
 - I deserve much more than I am getting
 - If they only would listen to me and consider my needs
 - I am going to be late and what will they think of me
 - She is so selfish for not honouring what I have requested
 - After all what I have done, this what I get
 - no matter what I do, it is never good enough
 - no one pays attention to me or recognizes me
 - I have given so much and am always the one who has to give in

4. Challenge yourself to answer: *What controls me right now?*
 - a. What do I want that I'm not getting or what am I getting that I don't want?
 - b. What compelling desires of mine are driving me, ruling me, demanding to be fulfilled?
 - c. Is loving God and serving my neighbour motivating me?
 - d. What desires have become demands?

5. Identify what you tempted to do at this moment?
 - a. I am tempted to lash out – yell – withdraw to pout and sulk – run away and quit
 - b. I am tempted to be irritable and let them all know that I am annoyed
 - c. I feel like indulging myself
 - d. I am not going to bow and surrender and change
 - e. I feel like taking revenge and get even or at least giving them an ear full

6. Evaluate and compare: *How do my thoughts and feelings and intentions line up with God's will? (James 3:27-28)*

7. The final choice to face: *What shall I choose to do at this time? Will I obey God's will?*
 1. We don't need to respond in an angry, destructive and sinful manner

 2. Isn't there an Almighty Saviour Who stands ready to help in times of trouble? Ps. 50:15

Conclusion:

A. Begin to prepare now for the unavoidable!

B. What is this preparation?

1. awareness of your sin and need for forgiveness
2. specific and instant prayer throughout the day
3. organize the 'conference table' procedure
 - a. agree on 'honouring the conference table request'
 - b. agree on pre-arranged 'take control' signal
 - c. identify and communicate the problem(s) ahead of time and commit to problem –resolution
 - d. set the 'time' when you will discuss the 'problem' and the park all discussion
 - e. begin/end such session with prayer for the Holy Spirit's power and presence
 - f. aim for a 'win-win- solution'

Follow up

1. Below is a listing of the most common causes of anger. Do two things with this list. First, tick those which would describe the common ways for your times of anger. Secondly, tick those which apply to your spouse or child/ren.

- a. A biological (chemical) cause (very rare)
- b. Injustice
- c. Frustration
- d. Faulty perception
- e. Threat or hurt
- f. Faulty learning

2. Evaluate your last failure in ‘anger management.’ This could be a private moment in which you ‘lost it’ or a family situation where anger wasn’t handled well. Ask yourself the hard question and answer them for yourself, or together with your spouse and/or children on paper.

- a. What happened that provoked my anger reaction?
- b. What did I say or do when I became angry? Was that helpful or constructive? What sins did I commit?
- c. How should I have reacted? How would that have changed the outcome?

3. Anger can be ‘hidden’ behind other destructive actions. Which of the following could be related to anger?

- a. gossip
- b. disrespect
- c. covetousness
- d. insecurity (needing approval)
- e. shame

4. Ten guidelines in honest confrontation¹

1. Express anger to the other in private
2. Talk in terms of hurt feelings and not the other person's fault. In this way the person is less likely to get angry or defensive and the angry person will get a hearing
3. Keep discussion to the central issue in question. Do not bring up old grievances. If they exist, they may have to be dealt with at another time.
4. Try to communicate and understand each other better and give up notions of winning arguments. Confrontation doesn't have to end in the other's person apology.
5. Share critical comments about the other person gently. See Eph. 4:29. Practice ahead of time.
6. Do not exaggerate the issue or make any threats: this stirs up anger in the other and impedes communication.
7. Allow the other person a chance to respond. Do not interrupt (Be swift to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger)
8. When talking paraphrase the other person's words. Make sure you understand the person and make sure that the person has understood you.
9. If the other person becomes angry, try to be even more calm. Speak quietly and slowly. Give the person some time to get over the angry reaction.
10. Concentrate on the solution of the problem:
 - try to fix responsibility rather than pinpoint the blame
 - seek together ways to solve conflict causing situations
 - let all rebuke be gently and love-activated

¹ Adopted from *Counseling for Anger* by Mark P. Cosgrove