

The Joy of Cultivating Kindness

The Hindrance of Anger

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Introduction

“A wise man fears the Lord and shuns evil, but a fool is hotheaded and reckless. A quick-tempered man does foolish things, and a crafty man is hated.” Proverbs 14:16-17

[19] Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; [20] for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness that God requires. [21] Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

[22] But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

James 1:19-22 (ESV)

I. Anger defined:

Strong emotional reaction of displeasure, often leading to plans for revenge or punishment. (The Bible Dictionary)

“An angry man stirs up dissension, and a hot-tempered one commits many sins.”

Proverbs 29:22

“Be angry and do not sin; Do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity for the devil.”

Eph. 4:26-27 (ESV)

Another translation states it this way:

“Don’t sin by letting anger gain control over you. Don’t let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil.”

Eph. 4:26-27 (NLT)

II. Understanding Anger

“You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.

Matt. 5:21-24

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

(vs.30) And DO NOT GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (vs.31) Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger,

brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. (vs.32) Be Kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”

Eph. 4:29-32

- Bitterness is unattended anger
- Rage is uncontrolled anger
- Brawling is quarreling, arguing
- Slander is maliciously putting one in a “bad light” or lowering a person’s reputation.
- Malice –ill will, or anger towards others.

III. How do we recognize anger in our own lives?

"The emotional Richter scale can range from mild irritability to blind rage. You don't need to rant and rave to have a problem with sinful anger. Grumpiness, the cutting remark, sulky self pity, and the critical attitude all qualify. Curiously, some of the most frightening forms of anger seem almost beyond emotion. They are icy rather than hot."
 (David Powlison, *Anger Part 1: Understanding Anger*)

A. Obvious, recognizable manifestations of anger

- Murder
- Physical harm
- Intimidation, i.e. hitting a table or wall
- Abusive words
- Yelling and screaming

For a man’s anger does not achieve the righteousness of God.” (James 1:20)

B. Subtle, easily overlooked or seemingly justifiable fruits of anger

Impatient words and tone – comments like “WHAT is taking you so long?”
 “What’s your problem?” “How many times do I have to tell you this?”

"Impatience is an addiction to comfort, ease, and our own will. Anger is born when we store impatience over time. The 'birth mother' of impatience is unfulfilled desires." (Gary Thomas, *The Glorious Pursuit*)

- Impatient mannerisms like sighing, rolling the eyes, shaking the head, etc.
- Ignoring someone and withdrawing affection,
- Selfish feelings of "irritation" (anger) when desires are violated
- Selfish feelings of being "annoyed" (angered) by others' mannerisms and things that aren't our personal preference
- Unbelief or "frustration" (anger) when things don't run or change according to our desires and time-table
- Being "bossy" and demanding and easily provoked when others don't follow our immediate orders (drill-sergeant "mode")
- Lack of joy in our daily lives and responsibilities
- Dissatisfaction - anger at God for making life the way it is
- Scolding - directing our anger toward our children

“Anger is allowing the enemy to have residence in your home 24 hours a day, it is fundamentally a lack of self control and this always gives the enemy his greatest opportunity in our lives.” - Kenneth Moresco

C. What is the source of our anger?

“What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask.” James 4:1-2

"Anger is an attitude of the heart that is rooted in pride." (*Women Helping Women*)

IV. Cultivating a conviction for and mortifying the sin of anger

Thomas Watson – *The Doctrine of Repentance* -

“Christ is never loved until sin be loathed,
Heaven is never longed for until sin be loathed,
Sound repentance begins in the love of God
And ends in the hatred of sin.”

A. Recognize that outbursts of anger are part of the deeds of the flesh.

“The acts of the sinful nature are obvious; sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like, I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.” Galatians 5:19-21

B. Anger is idolatrous

It is a moral ACT that shows who or what we are worshipping. Circumstances do not cause anger – People do not cause us to sin in anger. How we respond will determine what’s in our heart.

"I want my way and not God's, and because I can't have my way, I rage."
David Powlison, *Anger Part 1*

C. Anger begins in the heart.

“For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” Matt. 12:34b

"The tongue is just a muscle that does what it is told to do by the heart. The tongue cannot be brought under control by a heart that is out of control."

Lou Priolo

V. What is our Biblical response?

DO something!

1. Recognize the problem

There is HOPE in Christ.

“So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit (desires) what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.” Gal. 5:16

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.” Gal. 5:22-24

2. Repent and ask for God’s help

3. Renew your mind by studying and memorizing the scriptures on anger

“But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.” Col. 3:8 (NIV)

“Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.” Ephesians 4:31(NIV)

“My dear brother, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man’s anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.” James 1:19-20

“Do not say, “I will repay evil.” Wait for the Lord, and He will deliver you.” Proverbs 20:22 (ESV)

4. "Put on" acts of love.

“ . . . I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle: be patient, bearing with one another in love.” Eph. 4:1-2

- Kind speech
- Gentle words
- Patience
- Pray for those who sin against you

5. Forgive others

We have all, at one time or another, been sinned against by someone else's sinful anger. It is important for us to pray for them but to also forgive them.

Matt. 6:14-15—"For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sin, your Father will not forgive your sins."

6. Accountability

See others as a "means of grace" in your life for accountability (husbands, friends, even older children).

CONCLUSION:

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. I Corinthians 10: 13

APPLICATION

A. Ask yourself qualifying questions like these:

1. What does what I am doing (anger) say about what I believe about God and myself?
Do I believe in God's sovereignty?
Why is this happening to me?
What could be the worse possible thing that could happen in this situation?
What am I craving?
We don't get upset when we get what we want!
2. What am I wanting (desires) that causes me to be against this person ... and God's will at this moment?

"We have angry conflicts with one another because our pleasures (desires which are not necessarily sinful in and of themselves) have become so intense that they are at war within our members. The term to "wage war" is a word that has at its root the idea of being "encamped." When our desires (as good as they may be) become so strong that they "camp out" in our hearts, those desires (as good as they may be) become sinful, idolatrous desires; not because they are sinful desires in themselves, but because they are desired inordinately. Our hearts covet them so intensely that we are willing to sin (war and fight) either in order to obtain them or because we are not able to obtain them." (Lou Priolo)

- B. Turn from your sin (repentance) and place all of your faith in what Christ has done for you on the cross (His FINISHED work)

Acknowledgements

The Heart of Anger by Lou Priolo

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Anger Part I and II by David Powlison, taken from *The Journal of Biblical Counseling*,
Fall '95 and Winter '96

A Biblical Look at Anger Part I – Kenneth Maresco, Covenant Life Church

A Biblical Look at Anger Part II – Kenneth Maresco, Covenant Life Church