



## **Introduction:**

### **Anger is universal**

The Bible does not condemn anger; it recognizes the validity of anger, but it admonishes us not to sin in our anger.

**Eph. 4:26**

*“...’be angry but do not sin, do not let the sun go down on your anger’*

Anger needs to be dealt with in such a way that it does not give the enemy a foothold in our lives.

This article on anger is a springboard for a series that will look at the causes and sources of rejection, but first we need to look at anger as one of the major consequences of rejection.

## **What is anger?**

Anger is an emotional response or a reaction to pain, to injustice and rejection. While some people carry their anger silently (internalizing it), others will express it with various degrees of intensity. Anger is a powerful emotion; it releases energy in us that will propel us into some form of suppression or outward action.

We can harness that energy and channel it for a constructive purpose, or we can allow it to wreak havoc in our lives or the lives of others. Anger that is not properly harnessed can become explosive and destructive.

Our anger can also trigger a reaction in others, or conversely, the anger of others can cause us to react in anger or fear. The fear of anger can cause us to draw away or to ignore the problem at hand. We may use our fear to avoid confrontation and as a form of self protection. To

admit that we are afraid of other people's anger or even our own anger can be the beginning of healing. If we live with the belief that it is best not to express it or be the cause of someone else's anger, we can retain a major block to healing. The problem, if left unaddressed, does not go away. We must be taught how to be angry and not sin.

By ignoring the issue at hand, we hope that it will go away, only to find out later that the anger which we thought was buried has resurfaced more powerfully than before. When an incident causes a reaction that is out of proportion to the event, we may have triggered an unhealed historic episode, releasing unresolved anger that acts like a spark setting off a stick of dynamite.

If we use our anger to deal with an issue in an ungodly way, we have fallen into sin and rebellion

## **What causes anger?**

Anger can be learned through watching how the significant people in our lives dealt with their problems. We tend to emulate those we look up to as children, so if anger was their way of dealing with difficult or painful situations, it will probably be the way we also deal with difficulty or pain.

Another way we will experience anger is in our most intimate relationships. When we are vulnerable to others we are also more prone to get hurt, and rejected.

It seems that families have a special ability to provoke anger through real or perceived rejection. It is not difficult to arouse our children to anger; many of us have personally experienced this in our childhood, or done it to our own children. If not properly dealt with it is easy for unresolved anger to develop into resentment – bitterness – rebellion.

### **Heb. 12:15**

*'...that no root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble and through it many become defiled'*

We must be careful that our anger does not to provoke others to sin. This is particularly significant in our closest relationships.

### **Ephesians 6:4**

*Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

Anger can also be experienced when we face any form of injustice. Because we are created with the God given desire for righteousness we will react to injustice in anger.

We need to understand that anger is a necessary, important part of life. It is not to be denied. It must be recognized, understood, accepted and dealt with righteously.

When anger is expressed in a Godly way, it is a powerful tool for justice and healing and a powerful weapon against the enemy.

## **Who experiences it?**

### **Facts about anger:**

- Everyone will experience anger, but the way they express will be uniquely their own.
- The degree to which we react in or to anger depends on our level of healing.
- Anger can be used as a motivator for healing, as a means of protection, or as a means to control, or as a vehicle for retaliation.
- Anger can be used to resolve conflicts or as a means to shift blame or to distance ourselves from others.
- It points the way to areas in our lives that may need healing
- It can be used as a tool for change or as an instrument of harm.

## **Types of anger**

**Godly anger** – When our emotions are under Godly control we will **respond** to the pain, injustice or rejection as a means of growth, by looking for the truth and a Godly solution to the problem.

**Ungodly anger** – When we **react**, our emotions take control; we no longer search for a Godly solution, but look for payback or a way to retaliate, as a result bringing more harm than healing into the situation.

## Consequences of anger

There are always consequences with our anger, because it motivates us to some form of action.

Anger that is submitted to God for diffusion is constructive, and usually results in positive adjustments in a relationship. It is also a great motivator to help us confront injustice. When we react rather than respond to a painful situation, the result is often harmful and damaging to relationships. Our angry reaction will not necessarily eliminate the problem, but will more likely drive it underground or escalate it.

Anger that is not controlled can have very negative and painful consequences for all involved. An ungodly reaction in anger can easily result in some form of alienation and rebellion.

### Rebellion

If anger is not dealt with properly it can easily lead to bitterness and rebellion.

Rebellion manifests itself as opposition, defiance or continued disobedience to God or someone who is in a position of rightful authority.

Please note:

**1 Samuel 15:23.**

*"For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king."*

We have the ability to control our anger, but we must not do it by repression or by masking it; it needs to be addressed in a Godly way.

We need to acknowledge it, "I am hurt and I am angry!!"

We need to release the bitterness to God, "Lord, this makes me so angry I could...", followed by "Lord, take the poison out of my anger so that I may address this issue in a way that will bring resolution and life to all involved and glory to you."

## Forms of anger

There are a number of ways in which anger can be expressed; we want to look at two ways that are quite different, but equally sinful.

One way is through *repressed anger*; this will create its own set of problems, as it will often manifest as a manner of depression or some form of illness. Repressed anger is usually learned early in life. Our parents may not have tolerated expressions of anger, so we become afraid to express it, bottling it up until it blows. Or the anger was the domain of one parent and everyone else had to walk carefully not to set it off. Even in churches we are told it is wrong to be angry, so we suppress it and deny it, believing it is sinful. But bottled up anger is simply anger waiting for an opportunity to explode. We may postpone the outburst for weeks or months; sometimes we suppress it for years until the day it erupts.

You may have learned that:

'My feelings of anger are awful; therefore I will hide them beneath an acceptable, pleasant, religious mask and hope that they disappear.'

You will not be displeasing to God if you acknowledge your anger and release it to Him; He knows about it anyway.

We must be taught how to be angry and not sin.

*Expressed anger* is another ungodly form of anger, it operates from an attitude of, 'My anger is a legitimate part of me, and I will express it when and how I want to,' manifesting itself through verbal outbursts, sarcasm, hostile behavior or violence towards others or even self. Our expression of anger can become ungodly either through passivity or aggression, but it won't finally take the pain away. Facing up to the issue is the answer. The ungodly expression of anger often keeps us from facing the real problem; it redirects the focus off our own pain, shifting the blame without personal responsibility, creating barriers that push people away. All of this feeds our rejection and also pushes it onto others.

## **How do you handle anger?**

How then do you handle your anger?

Feelings are God given and therefore normal and allowable, but wrong attitudes need to be dealt with. Our attitude in approaching any unpleasant situation will to a large extent determine whether the outcome is good or bad. A Godly response in our anger will help us resolve the problem, but with an ungodly reaction the situation can easily become worse. When we react, the issue often ceases being the focus; it often expands to include unrelated events. Ungodly anger is not a solution to frustration, but a reaction to frustration. The destructive power of anger is expressed in the scriptures, when Jesus compared it to murder.

**Matthew 5: 21-22**

*"You have heard that the ancients were told, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.'*

**22** *"But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.*

## Things to Consider

A good question to ask when we have expressed our anger is:

“Has my anger improved my relationships, and has it created a positive change?” “Was it Godly?”

Or, “Has it created alienation through confusion and fear?” “Was it ungodly?”

Do you react or do you respond when you experience pain?

Do you acknowledge your anger to God or others in a way that is life giving and healthy for all involved?

Do you think that your anger is acceptable to God?

What type of anger do you experience?

How do those close to you feel about your anger?

Someone has said that reacting in anger is like a throwing a cactus at someone with bare hands; he may get hurt, but so will you!

## Prayer

*“Father, I acknowledge that I have let the sun go down on my anger and have thereby given the enemy a foothold.*

*I confess that I have used my anger to control others through fear and that I have allowed others to control me through my fear of their anger.*

*I confess this as sin, and I ask you to forgive me and release me from this sin that has destroyed peace in my life and the life of others.*

*Heal me from the need to control others through anger, or allowing others to control me through their anger.*

*Teach me to be angry without sinning.*

*Teach me to use anger as a motivator to confront injustice and strengthen relationships. Amen”*