

Anger Management, Part III

How do I know if I have a problem with anger? People will tell you. The Bible says, “...*In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established*” (II Corinthians 13:1). If you keep hearing from others that you have a temper problem, don’t go into denial. Facing the problem is a big part of solving the problem. Have you ever gotten hot and bothered about something and when it is over, you are exhausted? This is a sign you need anger management. Another problem with someone who is not controlling anger is that it is never over. Just thinking about what made you angry or sometimes thinking about certain people upsets you. Uncontrolled anger turns into hatred and bitterness. I have heard it said, “Bitterness is the only chemical that destroys the container that holds it.” Let me share with you the words of Dr. S.I. McMillan from his book, None of These Diseases: “The moment I start hating a man, I become his slave. I can’t enjoy my work any more because he even controls my thoughts. My resentments produce too many stress hormones in my body and I become fatigued after only a few hours’ work. The work I formerly enjoyed is now drudgery. Even vacations cease to give me pleasure ... the man I hate hounds me wherever I go. I can’t escape his tyrannical grasp on my mind. When the waiter serves me porterhouse steak with French fries, asparagus, crisp salad, and strawberry shortcake smothered with ice cream, it might as well be stale bread and water. My teeth chew the food and I swallow it, but the man I hate will not permit me to enjoy it ... the man I hate may be many miles from my bedroom, but more cruel than any slave-driver, he whips my thoughts into such a frenzy that my innerspring mattress becomes rack of torture.”

God doesn’t want anger controlling you; He wants you controlling anger. The Bible says in Ephesians 4:31,32, “*Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*” How can we manage anger?

I. Make up your mind; you do not have to be angry.

Behind every command of God He places omnipotence (all power). God never gives us a command that He does not supply the accompanying ability to perform. God commands us to stop being angry. He says in Psalm 37:8, “*Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.*”

II. Do not feed anger.

Two things contribute to the intensification of anger, (1) vitriolic and venomous words intended to hurt and (2) becoming involved with other’s people’s business. First of all, be done with attempts to hurt people by your comments. In all interchanges keep in mind Proverbs 15:1: “*A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.*” Hurtful words will linger on in people’s mind long after physical wounds have healed. When tempted to use poisonous words to hurt someone, it would be good to pray: “*Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer*” (Psalm 19:14). “*Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips*” (Psalm 141:3).

Secondly, we should never try to own something that is not ours. Our so-called insightful observations and entering into a fray which is not ours is intrusive and almost always will never be appreciated. The Bible is strong on this: Proverbs 20:3 says, “*It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling.*” If you are anxious to be bit by a dog, go up to an already irritated dog and yank his ears. However, be prepared to run: Proverbs 26:17 says, “*He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears.*” God

warns the young widows to make the most of their time and it is of no service to anyone to add our “two cents” worth into business that doesn’t belong to us. God scathingly denounces this when He says: “...wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not” (I Timothy 5:13).

III. Do not esteem anger.

High honor is given to the person who conquers self! Proverbs 16:32:

“He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.” To congratulate someone on his or her outburst or subtle anger is unbiblical. God does not give any praise to a person out of control. He rebukes it and congratulates the one who controls his temper.

Let us have a goal to conquer first ourselves. You are more esteemed by God than a Kahn, Napoleon or a Caesar.

IV. Give no response to offense.

Offence does not have to be addressed. Proverbs 19:11 says, *“The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.”* Be at peace with God and yourself enough to get over inflicted hurts and do not internalize them. The Bible says, *“Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them”* (Psalm 119:165).

God categorizes those who do not control their responses as fools: Proverbs 29:20 says, *“Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him.”* *“A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterward”* Proverbs 29:11. *“A fool’s mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul”* Proverbs 18:7.

V. Kindness done with no ulterior motive turns away anger.

We are not referring to random acts of kindness, but rather done on purpose. *“A gift in secret pacifieth anger: and a reward in the bosom strong wrath”* Proverbs 21:14. When we do something kind for someone who doesn’t deserve it - who has done wrong to us - the love that was expressed on Calvary is in the air. Kindness with no hope of requital totally disarms a potential enemy. Jesus said in Matthew 5:44: *“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.”*

In conclusion:

(a) Don’t justify your anger by saying you are just angry with yourself:

Genesis 45:5: *“Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life”*

(b) Anger is hard to live with.

Proverbs 21:19: *“It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman.”*

(c) Anger is contagious.

Proverbs 22:24: *“Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go:”*

(d) Anger Anger suppressed is still anger.

Luke 15:28: “*And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him.*” This is the attitude of the oldest brother who was silently seething in covert anger while his younger brother was more overt in his actions. Both types of anger are wrong.

(e) Anger can be expressed or suppressed but healing comes when confessed.

James 5:16: “*Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*”

- Pastor Pope -

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