

Overcoming The Problem Of Anger

Introduction:

1. Of all of our emotions, anger is perhaps the strongest and most potentially destructive. It is many times referred to as “*wrath*” in the Bible.
2. Proverbs 27:4 teaches us that anger can be cruel and outrageous.
3. Unbridled anger is the source for outward acts of violence and inward roots of bitterness.
4. Though we will struggle with the feeling of anger as long as we live, it is how we deal with it that determines its effect on us.
5. No matter how subtle or severe our anger may be, we can take biblical steps to overcome it and experience God’s peace.

First, let’s examine three types of anger, exemplified in the life of King Saul.

1. Righteous indignation – 1 Samuel 11:1-13
 - This type of anger is not sinful (Ephesians 4:26). It is the anger we feel when we witness certain forms of injustice and wicked acts. **Example:** Jesus (Mark 11:15-18)
 - This type of anger should motivate us to become involved in opposing evil. Our motivation should be love for God and regard for His honor.
 - **Warning:** Be careful, because Satan can sabotage our good intentions. Some Christians can drive themselves crazy because they are always trying to right all the wrongs of society and solve all the social injustices of the world. God has not called us to do that. Our mission is to spread the gospel and win souls to Christ.
 - Righteous indignation is a type of anger that is constructive, not destructive.
2. Resentment – 1 Samuel 18:8-9
 - This is anger turned inward (it seethes and boils). It can be a response toward someone who has wronged you, or an unjust situation that hurt you or a loved one.
 - This type of anger can be very destructive because it brings with it emotional and mental suffering. There are people who have never outwardly lost their temper, yet they are very angry people.
 - It can also be very dangerous. Anger turned inward is like a time bomb waiting to explode. **Illustration:** Keep blowing into a balloon, and eventually it is going to pop. Resentment can keep growing and growing until a person snaps.
3. Rage – 1 Samuel 18:10-11
 - Nobody exhibits rage without first harboring resentment. Saul did not just all of a sudden say, “I think I’ll throw a javelin at David.” He was very angry before this, but the anger came out in the form of rage.
 - Rage is explosive and vicious anger that seeks to hurt others verbally or physically.

- It is very dangerous and stands as the most harmful form of anger. It is open war on your circumstances, or on the person you feel extreme anger toward.
- For the remainder of this lesson, when we refer to anger we will be discussing the destructive forms of anger (resentment and rage).

Second, the Bible associates anger with:

1. Pride – 1 Samuel 18:6-8
 - This is where it all started for Saul. cf. Proverbs 21:24
2. The tongue – 1 Samuel 18:8, 19:1, 20:30; cf. Ephesians 4:31
3. Lack of control – 1 Samuel 18:10-11; cf. Proverbs 16:32, 25:28
4. Foolishness – 1 Samuel 26:1-21; cf. Ecclesiastes 7:9

Third, what are some of the other consequences for the angry person?

1. Fear – 1 Samuel 18:12
 - Fear of what you might do. Fear of who you might alienate. Fear of others seeing you and seeing your anger. An angry person is not at peace.
2. Vengeance – 1 Samuel 18:25
 - Saul began plotting how he could get revenge. There are people like this right now.
3. Bondage – 1 Samuel 18:29, 23:14
 - Saul was possessed by his anger towards David. He was in total bondage.
 - Saul couldn't function a day without thinking about it. He was a slave to his anger.
 - It is very common for angry people to experience physical and emotional ailments.
 - The most common companion of anger is depression. Depression is often anger turned inward.
4. Strife – 1 Samuel 20:30-33
 - Anger destroys relationships like a bulldozer. It creates strife, contention, and division.

Fourth, how do we benefit when we learn to control our anger?

1. Prevent a snare – Proverbs 22:24-25
 - Anger is a snare; it entraps you and brings you into bondage.
2. Progress in understanding – Proverbs 14:29, 29:8
3. Pray more effectively – 1 Timothy 2:8
4. Promote better relationships – Proverbs 29:21-22

Fifth, here are four vital principles that we must implement if we are to overcome the problem of anger:

1. Principle #1 – Acknowledge your anger to yourself and God (Psalm 51:3).

- We can't hide it from God anyway. Talk openly about it with God – be transparent and honest. We sometimes hide our anger under a layer of superficial Christianity.
 - Maybe we have deep-seated anger and simply don't realize it or admit it.
 - Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any anger in your heart. Psalm 26:2
 - Then be honest with God about it. "I have been angry at _____."
2. Principle #2 – Deal with the seeds of resentment immediately. Ephesians 4:26
- Remember, resentment is a form of anger. Don't allow those seeds of resentment to take root and grow into rage.
 - Go to the person you are angry at and seek reconciliation (after you cool down). If this isn't possible, make a choice to forgive and leave it with God.
 - When you harbor resentment, you are ultimately hurting yourself.
3. Principle #3 – Meditate upon and memorize Scriptures that deal specifically with anger. Colossians 3:5-16
- This is so vital. No victory can come over any sin without God's Word. Psalm 119:11
4. Principle #4 – Choose to respond to anger through the Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:16-23; Ephesians 5:18
- No one can **make** you angry. Nobody can make you lose your temper. You make yourself angry. This is a crucial principle to realize. We can control our emotions because we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit.
 - Lay aside excuses (that's just the way I am, my parents were this way, you provoke me to wrath, I wouldn't get angry IF...). There is no excuse for destructive anger when God Almighty lives inside of you. You possess all the power of Jesus Christ.
 - Now that you are a Christian, a transformation has occurred. Galatians 2:20; 2 Corinthians 5:17
 - We are no longer enslaved by sin. Christ has set us free from the dominion of sin. Romans 6:6-8
 - Anger is a part of the old man before you were saved. We are commanded to put off the old man. Ephesians 4:22-24
 - According to the Bible, who is at work in you to produce the godly attitudes in Galatians 5:22-23? It is the Holy Spirit.
 - If we will yield to the Holy Spirit and ask Him to fill us, will He help us with our anger?
 - The ultimate decision we must make is this: Will we respond to adverse circumstances in the old man (the flesh), or respond through the power of the Holy Spirit?