

The Proper Place for Anger

Everyone knows you can sin by being angry. Anger is a very strong emotion that can lead to some horrible consequences. Consider Cain whose anger resulted in the very first murder. Scripture tells us that being quick tempered is not only foolish, but it can give Satan a place in your life. He feeds on unrighteous anger.

Much of human anger comes from pride and selfishness. Daniel Webster said, "Keep cool. Anger is not an argument." Someone with a short fuse is not only unpleasant to be around, but the stress his anger produces can backfire. It can make him ill.

Not all anger is sin. Some anger is justifiable. Jesus, God in the flesh, had occasions when He was angry and yet He never sinned. Righteous anger is never rooted in selfishness or revenge. It is directed at a real injustice that dishonors God.

You've probably heard that you should stay away from a bear cub if you see one, for the mother bear would not be far off and would attack if she believes her young one is threatened. The protection instincts in a human are somewhat similar. Imagine how you would feel if someone threatened to torture your child. That spontaneous anger might give you the strength to fight the attacker.

Unlike wild animals, however, we have the resources to control our anger. We are capable of making a judgment between true injustice and our selfish desires. God knows anger that produces sin is an emotion that is dwelt on, so He led the apostle Paul to say, "*Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger and do not give the devil an opportunity*" (Ephesians 4:26-27).

Although God is slow to anger and has abundant love for His people, His holiness cannot overlook sin. We shouldn't either.

There were many times God was justifiably angry with His chosen people. They provoked Him time and time again. Their abominations, idols, rebellion, unbelief and evil deeds made Him so angry that He was ready to destroy the offenders. He, however, heard the prayers of men like Moses and Nehemiah and stayed His hand of judgment.

In an unexplainable act of love for those of us who disappoint Him, God presented the only solution possible. He sent His Son Jesus to bear our sin. *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life* (Romans 5:8-10 NAS).

Since Jesus saved us from the wrath of God's judgment, it would be good for us to know what made Him angry while He was on earth and avoid those things.

Defending the Holiness of God's House (John 2:14-16)

Every gospel records Jesus' purging the temple of the moneychangers. In John's gospel, he helps us form a vivid picture of just how angry Jesus was. He made a scourge of cords with which to drive out the merchants and He used it.

Twisting God's commandments (Mark 3:4-5)

When Jesus saw a man with a withered hand and healed Him on the Sabbath, the Pharisees' lack of compassion made Him angry. The Pharisees had so twisted the law that practically any thing done on the Sabbath was considered a sin.

Jesus' anger at the Pharisees was evident many times as He called them by their real names: hypocrites.

Keeping Others from Coming to Him (Mark 10:14)

Jesus became angry with His own disciples when they tried to keep the children from coming to Him. Jesus came for all. No one is denied access to Him.

Unbelief (Mark 9:19)

Satan has always attempted to blind the eyes of people so they don't see Jesus for who He really is. The most remarkable instances are the people who lived when Jesus did. They saw His miracles with their very own eyes and heard His words with their very own ears. Many of them still did not believe. Jesus was grieved and angry with that unbelieving generation.

Our Response

Jesus always loved the sinner, but hated the sin. He demonstrated his love for sinners by dying for them. He bore the hideousness of hateful sin on His cross.

Many people are angry with God. Help them to direct their anger toward Satan who deceives them. Satan is the one who wants to make God's house unholy, the one who fills it with hypocrites, the one who tries to keep people from Jesus and he is the one who wants to prevent every one he can from believing in Jesus.

Jesus' followers should conform to His image and be holy as He is holy. Challenge Satan's influence in the church. Rebuke hypocrisy. Work to make sure everyone has access to Jesus. Unbelievers are still everywhere, but when God gives you opportunity, share the Truth. Defend the defenseless.

Be angry with Satan. He deserves it.