

Men's Bible Study On Anger

Introduction

How did you see your mom and dad handle their anger as a child growing up?

Describe an incident from your childhood where you blew your top.

Describe an incident from your childhood where you were wounded by someone else's anger.

A. What is Anger and What is Its Origin?

Fundamentally, anger is a response to pain. It is a secondary emotion, always a reaction to some form of pain. In fact, you could say that anger is deflected pain. Pain comes in and our self-protective instincts put up a shield of armor and that pain is reflected back out as anger.



This response to pain that we call anger is usually an emotion of hostility towards others. It is true that Jesus got angry, God gets angry, and at times Christians ought to get a lot more angry. But most of the time our anger is selfish anger that directs feelings of hostility, even if only momentary, towards others.

Read Mark 3:1-6. Notice that Jesus was angry. What do you think was the cause of his pain and why do you think that was painful to him?

Read Genesis 4:1-8. Why did Cain murder Abel? Describe the pain that was the origin of Cain's anger.

Many forms of pain generate anger, but three forms of pain seem to stand out: 1) the pain of frustration, being blocked in reaching our goal, 2) the pain of injustice, having our rights violated, and 3) the pain of having our self-esteem attacked. Our masculine make up is such that we regularly endure these three types of pain, so it should not surprise us that men struggle with anger. Let's look more closely at these three.

1. **Anger resulting from frustration in reaching a goal.** Define the word, "*frustration.*" Give an example of frustration generated anger from your own life (your anger or a family member's anger)

Do you see anything in men's nature that would make him prone to frustration driven anger?

2. **Anger resulting from having our rights violated.** Do you think Christians ought to get more angry about the way unborn children are slaughtered through abortion?

Describe an instance from your life in which you got mad because you were unfairly treated.

Think about the kind of things we men lose our temper over at home. Which of these seem to be related to what we think are our rights?

3. **Anger resulting from a wound to our self-esteem.** How do you feel inside when you are made to feel stupid? How do you think husbands injure their wife's self esteem, provoking anger. How do you think wives cause their husbands to feel rejected, provoking anger.

B. The Destructive Paths Anger Can Take

"In your anger do not sin. Do no let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold." Eph. 4:26-27

1. **Venting it.** Most of the time anger is expressed through hostility towards another. Read Matt. 5:21-22. Note: The contrast Jesus sets up is not between the OT and his teaching. He has just established the validity of the OT Law. Rather, it is between the narrow interpretation of the rabbinic tradition, and the correct, broad interpretation of the moral law. According to Jesus, how is anger related to the 7th commandment, "You shall not murder"?

In this verse, how does anger wound others?

What do you think of the children's saying, "*Sticks and stones can break my bones but words can never hurt me?*"

"Raca" could be translated, "empty headed." What are some things we say to our wives or children that wound them by making them feel stupid.

"Fool" in the Jewish culture was more an attack on one's character than on one's intelligence. How do we subtly or not so subtly attack the character of others with our words?

2. **Ignoring it.** This can be a deadly response because suppressed anger still floats around in our soul until it is dealt with. It can lead to bitterness, revenge, future explosions of pent up anger, the hardening of the heart towards a mate. Read Eph. 4:26-27. What strikes you about this verse?

In what ways does sleeping on our anger give the devil a foothold?

The ABC's of Overcoming Anger

1. **Acknowledge** that your inner temperature is rising.
Read Proverbs 4:23. This command is translated both "guard" your heart and "watch over" your heart. How do you *guard* your heart? How can *watching over your heart* help you with managing your anger?

2. **Backtrack to the pain.** Anger is a secondary emotion. If you try to deal just with the anger, you are dealing with symptoms, not the root of the behavior. Look for the primary cause of anger--pain.
3. **Christ. Take the pain to Christ.** God never wastes pain. He always has a purpose for it.

Read Rom. 8:28-29. What is God's goal for those he has predestined?

When we realize in verse 29 that God's plan is to shape us into Christ-like character, how does that shed light on verse 28?

Each man share an example of anger from his own life. As a group, try to identify the pain. Then ask, "How would the Lord respond to his pain. What would He say?"

4. **Damage. Repair the damage done by your anger.**

Read Matt 5:21-24 (21-22 is a review.) After commanding us not to let our anger cause us to verbally assault others, Jesus tells us what to do if we have. In your own words what is Jesus saying to do?

What damage do you think is done to the relationship between a man and his wife if he wounds her with words but never seeks her forgiveness.

What damage do you think is done to a son or daughter if a father wounds them with his words but never seeks their forgiveness?

5. **Express your pain to your brother.**

Read I Corinth. 12:26. What is Paul saying about the kind of relationships God wants us to have with other Christians.

Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12. Verse 11 may seem strange but mountain climbers and soldiers understand this principle. Though their body is exposed to the hostile elements of cold and wind on three sides, the side turned toward their brother is protected from these raw elements, receiving, instead, the life-giving warmth they need. Every man needs this kind of safe place—a band of brothers who love him, with whom he can process the painful, harsh experiences of life. Do you have that kind of brother?

Verse 12 talks about two men being able to defend themselves. When it comes to your spiritual battles, do you have a friend standing beside you in his prayer for your battles, and watching your back? Do you have a friend who even knows what your spiritual battles really are?

This Bible study is provided for you by Forging Bonds of Brotherhood. Check out our materials to help your group become a true band of brothers to each other at <http://www.ForgingBonds.org/resources>.