

Dealing with anger

Taken from *Leaving Yesterday Behind* by William L. Hines, p. 105 – 108

The wrong way to deal with anger

There are several unrighteous ways people have tried to express their anger. I will look briefly at four.

1. *Venting our anger.* Anger is released towards others **or** a situation with little control. Some hit walls or pillows or other people or go into a screaming tantrum. Proverbs warns against such an inappropriate response.

A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control (Prov. 29:11).

2. *Anger is turned inward.* Clamming up and internalizing anger may result in a person becoming bitter and resentful and perhaps depressed. Often people are so afraid of getting a response they don't want they would rather remain quiet than confront the situation.

3. *Anger is directed at a substitute.* A man may be angry at his employer but rather than direct his anger at the problem he goes home and expresses anger towards his wife and children. Scripture is clear, however, that we are to speak the proper word to the proper person.

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen (Eph. 4:29).

4. *Denial.* Anger is suppressed and the problem is not recognized. Scripture tells us not to deny our sin but to recognize it truthfully and deal with it righteously, 'in your anger do not sin...' (Eph. 4:26).

The right way to deal with anger

To resolve anger righteously we must keep several things in focus.

1. *Face it honestly.* When we are angry we must call it anger without disguise. Some people live years with continuous problems because they are unwilling to admit their anger.

2. *Own the anger.* When anger is discovered we must take responsibility for dealing with it.

3. *Determine to resolve it God's way.* This involves thinking it through to determine whether or not it is righteous or unrighteous anger. Honesty is a must. Remember that the important thing is not who is at fault but whether God is honored by the resolution of it.

In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent. **Selah** (Psalm 4:4).

Honest introspection is a good thing if it is for the purpose of pleasing God. We stand in grace. We need not fear finding out something is our fault. God's forgiveness is sure for those who confess their sin (1 John 1:9). The focus must be on resolving the anger God's way.

4. Determine to catch it at the kindling point.

My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry (James 1:19).

Starting a **quarrel** is like breaching a dam; so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out (**Prov.** 17:14).

Catch it **early and** it is much easier to deal with. It's like debt. If we deal with our debt when there is a little of it, it is not so overwhelming. If we wait too long the burden is heavy and we are tempted to run away from it. Keep short accounts of anger.

5. Be quick to forgive.

Be kind and **compassionate** to one another, forgiving each other, just as in **Christ** God forgave you (**Eph.** 4:32).

Withholding forgiveness hurts everyone.

6. Love one another as Christ loves us.

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers **a multitude** of sins (1 Peter 4:8).

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs (1 (13:4-5).

Love does cover a multitude of sins. If you are caught **in** the anger cycle, ask God to give you a heart **of compassion** towards those with whom you are angry. If the person **you** are most angry with is yourself, ask God for a heart of compassion to deal with yourself as well. If your anger has been present for some time and it has become resentment, you must deal with the resentment first.