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What Are We So Angry About?

Ephesians 4:26-27: (NASB) ²⁶Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷and do not give the devil an opportunity.

Anger and rage - these are two emotions that are all too familiar in our present day. How often do we hear of random acts of violence? Think about what that means - it is something done that causes hurt to others who just happen to be in the way. Where does all of this anger come from? How can we better control our anger? Can anger ever be a good thing?

Let's start by looking at the way anger is described in the Old Testament...what do the following verses all have in common?

Genesis 2:7: (KJV) And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his **nostrils <639>** the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Proverbs 11:22: (KJV) As a jewel of gold in a swine's **snout <639>**, so is a fair woman, which is without discretion.

1 Samuel 24:8: (KJV) David also arose afterward, and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king. And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his **face <639>** to the earth, and bowed himself.

Psalms 10:4: (KJV) The wicked, through the pride of his **countenance <639>**, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.

Job 4:9: (KJV) By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his **nostrils <639>** are they consumed.

We are starting to see a common theme of a "face," specifically the nose.

Exodus 4:14: (KJV) And the **anger <639>** of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart.

Psalms 106:39-40: (KJV) ³⁹Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions. ⁴⁰Therefore was the **wrath <639>** of the Lord kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance.

Anger: Strongs #639 properly, the nose or nostril; hence, the face, and occasionally a person; also (from the rapid breathing in passion) ire

AV-anger 172, wrath 42, face 22, nostrils 13, nose 12, angry 4, longsuffering 4, countenance 1, forbearing 1, forehead 1, snout 1, worthy 1

The same word translated *wrath* or *anger* in the Old Testament is also translated *face*, *nostrils*, *nose* and *countenance*. Chemical responses create the physical responses - the outward appearance of anger - which in turn is the reason the Old Testament uses a word describing the face for anger - you can "read" anger in someone's face!

The word used here is primarily related to God's anger: **Psalms 85:5:** (KJV) Wilt thou be **angry <599>** with us forever? Wilt thou draw out thine **anger <639>** to all generations?

Angry: Strongs #599 'anaph (aw-naf'); to breathe hard, i.e. be enraged
AV-angry 13, displeased 1

What did Jesus teach us about our use of anger?

Psalm 85:4-7: (NASB) ⁴Restore us, O God of our salvation, and cause Your indignation toward us to cease. ⁵Will You be **angry <599>** with us forever? Will You prolong Your **anger <639>** to all generations? ⁶Will You not Yourself revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You? ⁷Show us Your loving-kindness, O LORD, and grant us Your salvation.

New Testament portrayal of anger:

Anger: Strongs #3710 orgizo (or-gid'-zo); to provoke or enrage
i.e. (passively) become exasperated
AV-be angry 5, be wrath 3

Jesus in **Matthew 5** set groundwork for his higher teachings by referring back to the Old Testament Law or some interpretation of it. When he says, *you have heard it said*, he is



preparing to elevate the standard from what was to his new standard of Christ-likeness. In other words, "Think about what you have always been taught; now hear what I say to you in order to live a higher way."

Jesus deals with anger in this context: Matthew 5:21-22: To murder was a cause to stand trial - same as today.

Jesus would then elevate this standard: ²²*But I say to you that anyone who is **angry <3710>** with his brother must stand his trial...*

In other words, you should be put in check much sooner because anger leads down a devious road. For the followers of Jesus, being angry is a cause to stand trial. Back in biblical times there were judges, a court of seven (some say 23) men empowered to judge certain classes of crimes.

Anger is an internal sin (unless it is obviously shown on your face!) in which you have not necessarily done anything against your brother except within your own heart.

Jesus meant that if you are "living angry," you are not truly following his example.

What about righteous indignation? Jesus DID get angry several times.

²²*...anyone who contemptuously calls his brother a fool must face the supreme court...*

Of the council - The High Council of Sanhedrin made up of 71 men; the highest court of the Jews reserved to judge the gravest offenses.

...and anyone who looks down on his brother as a lost soul is himself heading straight for the fire of destruction.

Jesus really caused them (and us!) to stop and consider. We need to stop and ask forgiveness when we start heading down that wrong path of thought to make our hearts right. Easier said than done, but that is the exercise he is teaching us.

The root word for *anger* expressed above:

Anger: Strong's #3709 *orge* (or-gay'); properly, desire (as a reaching forth or excitement of the mind), i.e. (by analogy) violent passion (ire, or [justifiable] abhorrence);
by implication punishment AV-wrath 31, anger 3, vengeance 1, indignation 1

Jesus applies this anger in his own actions, but nowhere gives us the right to do the same:
Mark 3:5: (KJV) *And when he had looked round about on them with **anger <3709>**, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.*

Jesus was not afraid to cause controversy, because he stood for something pure and right.

Being grieved - like Jesus, we should not sympathize with that which is out of harmony with God. This is the key to "correct" anger - being in harmony with God. More on this to follow.

This next audio clip is a six-year old lecturing her mom about improving the relationship of her divorced parents.

The Golden Rule is one of the most simple and profound sayings ever uttered at any time anywhere: Matthew 7:12

FEAR (and one can argue a feeling of injustice was present as well): Acts 6:9-11: They got mad because they could not make their point. They induced others to start speaking lies about Stephen, because if they could not get him through debate, they would get him through false accusations. Look at what anger from not getting our way can bring us to!

Notice how they recruit the masses to their group: Acts 6:12-15: The frenzy led these "religious men" to act in very unreligious ways. That is what can happen with anger. Just because we call ourselves "Christians" does not mean we are above that or that all of our anger is "righteous anger." We are emotional creatures and anger can be a very destructive emotion unless used merely as a tool.

Stephen spoke observational truth fearlessly - he tells them how it is! They become disgusted with him: Acts 7:52-58: When adopted by the masses, disgust becomes an uncontrollable force of destruction and ruin.



Imagine the thoughts of justification that must have overwhelmed those who just committed murder. They would have said things like, "This had to be done." "We had no choice." "He was delusional." "The glory of God was at stake." This was all because anger was allowed to take hold and explode! We can justify overreaction. This is one of the tools used all too effectively by Satan.

Mark 12:29-31: These two things take away all reason for unjustifiable anger: Love God, love your neighbor. Anger is a justifiable response in so many hearts and minds and it gets us into trouble. Romans 12:17-19

What did Jesus teach? What did Jesus do? First his words: Matthew 5:43-48: Jesus introduced a higher standard, telling us that it is not a preference but a RESPONSIBILITY for us to love those who would see us hurt or embarrassed, for God allows blessings to them as well.

ANGER MANAGEMENT HINT: WE OFTEN TELL OUR CHILDREN TO "USE YOUR WORDS" WHEN THEY ARE ANGRY. WE AS CHRISTIAN ADULTS SHOULD LEARN TO "USE HIS WORDS" WHEN WE ARE ANGRY!

What made Jesus angry? John 2:12-17

Observations:

- Jesus did not seek to do harm; he simply sought to stop the extortion because they were stealing from the people.
- Jesus drove out the animals that were easily recovered.
- Jesus did not set loose the doves because they would not have been easily recovered - they would have flown away.

His anger was not an out of control rage. It was with a purpose to stop the extortion. He was not trying to make himself feel better; he was stopping an injustice against his Father.

ANGER MANAGEMENT HINT: WHEN ACTION IS NECESSARY TO RESTORE ORDER, BE SURE TO ONLY RESTORE THE ORDER THAT NEEDS RESTORING - ANYTHING BEYOND THAT IS NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS!

What did Jesus do? He was used and abused by many. He rose above it and gave his life for them. As a Christian, our responsibility is to TRY to place ourselves in a position where we can say we have seen the injustice, we have talked about it and they do not want to change. I will let it be a part of my past, not part of my present and certainly not let it ruin my future.

James 4:1-4: Why do we have all of the quarrels and conflicts? Because of our flesh! When we do not get what we want, we get mad! Negative anger comes out of our sinful human minds. The devil smiles at this because he takes us off of our focus of being Christ-like and working together to serve God and each other. Who are you going to serve? Satan is served by feeding our emotions and reacting out of anger. God is served by rising above, rising higher, being different from everything around you.

Galatians 5:13-24: The application to us now is that **love must override anger** as the chosen response of a Christian life! Anger might not totally go away, but we need to put love in front of it. Every time Jesus got angry, it was for the betterment of those he was angry against.

That small decision to choose your response leads to dramatically different end results!

Look: ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. ¹⁹Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, ²¹envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

ANGER MANAGEMENT HINT: TO CHOOSE WE MUST THINK AND TO THINK WE MUST KNOW WHAT TO THINK ABOUT



Our emotions will try to tell us what to think about but we must replace the reaction from the anger trigger with something positive like loving one another and provoking one another to good works.

Another example (excerpt only) of Jesus showing positive anger: Matthew 23:13-15: What made Jesus angry? His love for God, his love for righteousness and his love for those who were hurting themselves in their own hypocrisy and unrighteousness. He was angry at them because they were hurting themselves. But remember, this anger came out only after trying to communicate with the Pharisees for three and a half years! He used anger as a last resort for their benefit. (Also note he did not publicly call out any individual, but he did call out the entire Pharisee class.

ANGER MANAGEMENT HINT: RIGHTEOUS ANGER IS ALWAYS FOCUSED ON HELPING AND NEVER ON VENTING!

If our anger is focused on venting our frustrations - our feelings - then our anger is not directed to others. Vent it out another way. Run. Swim. Get on the treadmill. Righteous anger is not to make "me" feel better.

That is a great way to subvert the emotion - replace it with something higher!

How can we better recognize the birth of anger, so as to better avoid and replace it?

James 1:19-20: (KJV) ¹⁹Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to **wrath <3709>**: ²⁰For the **wrath <3709>** of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

BETWEEN THE STIMULUS AND THE RESPONSE THERE IS SPACE. IN THIS SPACE LIES OUR DESTINY, FOR IN THIS SPACE IS WHERE THE MIND OF CHRIST CAN BE INVITED TO TAKE UP A PERMANENT RESIDENCE.

It really does work! If you allow the mind of Christ to live in the space between what happened and how you respond, it becomes the filter through which your response will come. That is the way to subvert the natural emotion of anger. Oftentimes the Psalms end with the word *Selah*. This means stop, pause and consider what you have just read. We need to think, *Selah*! What would the Lord have me to say? How would the Lord have me react? This helps us understand that space really does exist between the stimulus and our response.

Ephesians 4:25-27: It is okay to be angry but it is NOT okay for that anger to be damaging. Do I speak truth or exaggeration? Exaggeration feeds anger. Is my anger positive to build up or devilish and full of ego? Ephesians 4:28-32: Am I personally responsible for me? Do my words reflect Jesus or satanic thinking? We have a choice. Whom do we choose to serve in that space between the stimulus and the response? Only by the grace of God were we forgiven for our sins when we did not deserve it. That is one way to deal with our anger. Forgive one another as God has forgiven you. This does not mean people should be released from consequences. It means they should be released from the consequence of our anger. Otherwise it will weigh us down with frustration and anxiety.

Can we think of a good example of someone changing their life from anger-based to God-based? **Paul before King Agrippa recounting his conversion: Acts 26:9-25 Paul as a Pharisee was NOT slow to anger - his reaction FED and PROVOKED his response!** *Get up and stand on your feet - although this was a literal request, it could also have meant to stop groveling to your base emotions. "Get up, get grounded. I have a mission for you!"*

And here is Paul's new response: ¹⁹So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision, ²⁰but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance. What a difference in attitude! Notice, there is no anger needed to feed the fire of his passion - only love and the mind of Christ! The Apostle Paul was humble enough to make the change.

ANGER MANAGEMENT HINT: FIND THE DEPTH OF YOUR PASSION IN ONLY THAT WHICH IS GODLY!

**So, what are we so angry about?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!**