

Anger Management, Part II

Continuing our study from last week, we now delve into the wicked ramifications of anger. We remind our readers again of the uncompromising stand of God against man's anger: "*For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God*" (James 1:20). If unchecked, anger can cause great harm. Today we are not talking about righteous indignation; we are talking about anger without a cause. Jesus said, "*But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment...*" (Matthew 5:22). Last week we started with this point: 1. Righteous indignation is when we take sides with God and express from His viewpoint the offense and why it should cease and desist. Let us move on to the discussion of man's unrighteous anger:

2. Anger causes lifetime and sometimes eternal consequences.

The oldest brother, Reuben lost his inheritance due to his wickedness and the next two in line for the inheritance of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, forfeited their right because of an uncontrolled anger. The Bible says, "*Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel*" (Genesis 49:5-7). Their sister had been treated wrongfully and these brothers decided to take matters into their own hands. The Bible says, "*...avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord*" (Romans 12:19). In Genesis 34, Simon and Levi parlayed with Hamor, the father of Shechem, who defiled their sister, but who now was willing to marry her. They tricked him into receiving circumcision as part of the deal to secure Dinah to wife and when they were incapacitated, they slew the son, the father and all the men of the city and stole all their livestock. Jacob called them cruel, cursed their anger and said they would be scattered throughout the tribes of Israel.

In Numbers 20, Moses angrily struck the rock God commanded him to speak to and for this final unbelieving outburst, he was forfeited the prize of the Promised Land. He could not enter. How many times in a moment's rage, good jobs have been lost, marriages have gone on the rocks, friendships have been severed and people have been hurt with irrevocable consequences?

Woody Hayes is undoubtedly one of the greatest college football coaches of all time. He will be ranked in the category of Knute Rockne and Paul "Bear" Bryant. However, very sadly that won't be the long-term memory that lingers in the minds of even those who admired him. December 29, 1978, Woody Hayes made the worst mistake of his legendary career: the 65-year-old Ohio State coach slugged an opposing player. Losing by two points with a little more than two minutes left in the Gator Bowl in Jacksonville, Ohio State was driving, and had moved the ball into field-goal range at Clemson's 24-yard line. But then noseguard Charlie Bauman intercepted freshman quarterback Art Schlichter's short pass over the middle on the 18. Bauman was knocked out of bounds on the Buckeyes' sideline. An irate Hayes went over and threw a punch at Bauman before he was restrained by several of his players. The morning after the 17-15 defeat, Hayes was fired. He never coached again.

In April of 1994, a man went into the far left lane on a Chicago freeway. Another man in a van, also in the left lane, not wanting to be tailgated, slammed on his brakes. The man in a hurry, swerved. For a couple of minutes ...gesturing and carrying on ensued. The man in the van had his family with him. The other man, now out-of-control with anger, pulled a gun and shot into the van. A bullet went through the left ear of the little girl. She lived, but for the rest of her life she is deaf in one ear and partially blind in one eye. One man went to jail, but both men are in prison. Anger is bondage.

3. See the irrationality of anger.

God had to send a great fish to get Jonah's attention to obey Him in being a missionary to Nineveh. Finally after his three-day stay in the belly of this great fish, he went to Nineveh to preach. The Ninevites repented thoroughly and the Bible says, "*But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. Then said the LORD, Doest thou well to be angry?*" (Jonah 4:1, 4). There is no logic here. We are always pleased when we see people convert under the preaching of the Word of God. But not Jonah; he is beside himself with anger. He expressed that he would have rather died than to have seen this (Jonah 4:2,3)! Then this story goes from a prophet out of character to a man operating in insanity. God grew up a gourd (yes, that's correct - the vegetable family that also includes the marrows, squashes, pumpkins, melons, and cucumbers.) So God gave him shade to help his "hot and bothered" attitude. Then as an object lesson to reveal how out of line and irrational Jonah had become, God directed a worm to destroy and wither the gourd. When Jonah woke up the next morning and discovered the death of his gourd, combined with a climate change that God orchestrated to cause the miss of the gourd to accelerate, our wayward prophet came "out of his gourd" (slang for losing one's mind and becoming wild). And as is the pattern of someone who becomes exceedingly angry, they lose their reasoning ability – and so did Jonah. He wished himself dead! This is inconceivable; he tells God it would be well if he were dead since he cannot have his gourd. This is an example of the total irrationality of anger. Hear God's response: "*Then said the LORD, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons (120,000 children) that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?*" (Jonah 4:10,11). The Bible is full of stories that teach a moral. The book of Jonah is a prime example of how tempers unchecked lead to insane and sinful action.

4. Anger is a catalyst for other sins.

The Bible says, "*An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression*" (Proverbs 29:22). We have just seen in the lives of Jonah, a famous football coach who threw his career down the drain, the father of a little girl that suffers permanent damage and a stranger, illustrations of people who did not control their tempers. We cannot escape this conclusion: anger is never a sin that stands alone. It always brings other trash with it.

My dad had a sermon that stands out in my memory. It was entitled, *Please Pass the Salt*. The gist of the message was when we are sitting at the table, one of the most oft used phrases that we say is "please pass the salt." Dad took a salt and peppershaker to the pulpit. As visual aid, he lifted the saltshaker and said, "When we ask for the salt..." then he lifted the pepper shaker and finished, "...we also pass the pepper with it." His point was well made - we ask for one sin and another sin follows on its heels. Sins accompany other sins. This is always the case, but it is illustrated vividly in the sin of anger.

God gives great commendation to those who control their temper, "*He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.*" (Proverbs 16:32). We have talked about anger and its evil effects; next week let's get into the management. Won't you join me?

- Pastor Pope -

[Back to Pastor's Word](http://christchurchbaptist.org/Pastors%20Word/Anger%20Management%20Part%20II.htm)