

Anger is spewing out all over America these days. We see it in road rage, in domestic violence, in workplace hostilities, in music, and much more. Nearly everywhere you turn, someone is mad about something.

Each year in America, an average of 14 men are killed by soft-drink vending machines. After not receiving a drink or their change, these men shook the machines until they tipped the machines over upon themselves and were crushed to death. Each man became the victim of his own anger.

In May of 2000, the American Heart Association released the results of a very large study on anger. The University of North Carolina monitored 13,000 adults for six years and found that those with a tendency toward anger were nearly three times more likely to have a heart attack than those not given as easily to anger. This ratio was maintained even after researchers took into account other major risk factors such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking and obesity. Anger can affect your physical health, your emotional health, your relationships and more. For this reason, and the potential to sin in our anger, we need to learn to deal well with anger.

### **Anger is a natural reaction to a negative experience.**

Anger is an emotion, a feeling. We do not often choose to feel emotions. Rather, we experience something that triggers an emotion in us. Some experiences trigger pleasant emotions, like joy. Some experiences trigger negative emotions, like anger. Let's consider some of the experiences that trigger anger.

**Anger can be triggered by another negative emotion, like fear.** When you experience fear, it may trigger anger in you. Let's say you are driving along the road and suddenly a car cuts you off, almost causing an accident. The danger of the moment triggers fear in you, and then just as suddenly turns to anger.

Or maybe you have intentionally scared someone and they yell with fright and then turn on you in anger that you scared them. Anger is a common reaction to fear or danger.

### **Anger is a common reaction to loss or grief.** (2 Samuel 6:8)

Anger is one of several emotions most people experience upon the death of a loved one. And it is not a logical anger at all. This anger might be directed at the doctor, the hospital, a friend, at God, or even at the dead person. This anger is not rational. It is not thought out. It just comes over you.

### **Anger can be triggered by the mistreatment of someone else or an injustice.** (1 Samuel 20:34; 2 Samuel 12:5; Mark 3:5)

For example, Jesus was angered over the lack of compassion the religious leaders felt towards the common Israelite.

In 1 Samuel 20 Jonathan is angry at his father for his mistreatment of David.

### **Anger can be triggered by experiencing a lack of respect for God or a very important person.** (Numbers 25:1-8; Matthew 21:12-13; John 18:22)

There are several examples in the Bible, listed in your outline.

**Two of the most common sources of our anger are unfulfilled expectations or endangered desires.** (2 Cor. 12:20; 1 Sam. 20:30)

Have you ever had one of the following kinds of thoughts?

"I am sick and tired of being sick and tired."

"My life wasn't supposed to be like this."

"I deserved that promotion!"

"I just want some respect."

We all have desires and expectations for how our lives should go. We desire comfort, peace, prosperity, health, a job, a place to live. We want respect, love, control, influence, safety, and much more. When these desires are not realized, we may feel angry. And in that anger, we may sin.

These kinds of expectations and desires, when not realized, may develop frustration that can result in anger and sinful behavior.

**James 4:1-2 (NIV) What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight.**

I never thought I had a problem with anger until I became a parent. And then I learned I did have an anger problem. I often experienced anger in parenting because I had certain expectations about how MY children would behave. I had certain expectations about how my children would treat me. When I did not see the expected results, anger would flare up in me. And I would sometimes commit sin in my anger.

**Other anger triggers include being attacked, insulted, embarrassed, chastised or rejected.** (Gen. 4:5-6)

Cain experienced anger when God rejected his offering. Most of us get angry when someone attacks us. Maybe you have gotten angry at being embarrassed by someone.

Jesus is our model here. Jesus never reacted with anger to such treatment of Himself. He shows anger in the Bible, but never when He Himself was attacked.

We must learn to handle anger correctly. And you may have done so in the past. Let me explain.

Have you ever been in an argument with someone and gotten angry? You are yelling and maybe worse? And then the phone rings. And you quickly manage your anger by answering the phone in a calm voice? We have more control over our anger than we sometimes want to admit. We make a choice to remain angry and even sin in our anger. So it is possible not to behave badly when we get angry.

Whatever your issues with anger, the good news today is that God can help you tame the anger monster in you.

**Anger is a natural reaction to a negative experience. The initial anger is not a sin. Our response may be.**

You can choose to sin in response to your anger. We all do this. We all sin in our anger. God commands us not to.

**Ephesians 4:26 (NIV) In your anger do not sin.**

The ancient philosopher Aristotle rightly said, ***“Anyone can become angry. That is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose and in the right way—that is not easy.”***

We know this. If you have tried to control how you respond in anger, you know it is hard to do it correctly. We all sin in our anger. You may not yell in your anger. You may not become violent in your anger. You may just stew silently, turning your anger into resentment against someone. This is sin too.

"In your anger, do not sin." We must learn to deal correctly with our anger and not sin.

**How do we not sin in our anger?**

**Genesis 4:5-6 (NIV) but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast?"**

This was not a rhetorical or self-answering question. God expected Cain to stop and think about why he was so angry. He did not and it led to sin. If we will be angry and not sin, we must learn to answer some questions about our anger. The more information you have, the better decisions you can make involving your anger.

**Identify what triggers your anger.** (Ecclesiastes 7:9)

- Who makes you angry? What is it they do?
- What experiences trigger your anger? (Think about what issues trigger your anger in various situations or conversations.)
- What other emotions are you experiencing when you are angry? (anxiety, jealousy, frustration, resentment, fear)
- Identify what expectations and desires lie underneath your anger? (Are you expecting something you have no right to expect? Do you expect respect without earning it? Are your expectations unrealistic? We should not expect to have everything we want or are tempted to have.)
- Ask God to reveal to you these things.

**Identify how you usually express your anger.** (Proverbs 12:16)

- Do you yell, cuss, strike out physically, strike out verbally?
- Do you stew quietly, plot revenge, become bitter?
- Why do you react as you do? (Are you copying a parent, mentor, coach, etc.?)
- Do you enjoy reacting this way?
- Can you control your anger in some situations, but fail in others? Why?
- Ask God to reveal to you these things.

**Review to yourself the negative consequences of your anger reactions.** (Proverbs 29:22)

- Have you broken things?
- Did someone take something away, a privilege, the car, a toy?
- Was there a further penalty like job lost or paid a fine?
- Can you identify relationships that were harmed by your anger?
- Did your anger expressed do any good or just cause more problems?

**Ask, “Is Jesus Angry Over This?” (Mark 3:5)**

Would He be angry if He was the one experiencing this? One big reason we react sinfully in our anger is that we react to things Jesus wasn't bothered by. His priorities were different than our priorities. And the more we get to know Jesus, the more we become like Him, the more we will react to what He reacted to and ignore what He ignored.

**Ask, “If Jesus IS angry over this, what would He do?”**

A pro golfer was using a new putter. A reporter asked him why he had switched to a new putter. His answer was that his old putter didn't float.

Jesus never sinned in His anger. Jesus never flew off the handle. He was always in control of Himself. Even when He was angry and expressed that anger publicly, He behaved correctly in righteous anger. There is such a thing as righteous anger, rightly expressed. We just aren't very good at knowing when or how to do it.

One little boy asked the other if he knew what righteous anger was. The other said, “I'm not sure. I think it means to be very angry, but not to cuss.”

Righteous anger isn't explosive, rage-filled, or selfish. It isn't an excuse to hate someone but, rather, it is a caring, unselfish anger. When Jesus was angered over the lack of compassion of the religious leaders, at the same time He felt sorry for them.

**Ephesians 4:26 (NIV) In your anger do not sin.**

**God never commands us to do something impossible. He empowers us by the Holy Spirit.**

He has placed the Holy Spirit in you, Christian, to bring about the change He commands.

**Believe it. Pray it. Invite it. Live it.**

The first command of God to all of us is to believe in His Son, Jesus. We are to believe that Jesus is the savior we all need, the savior God sent, who died for our sins and was raised from the dead. If you are ready to believe in Jesus, let Him know with the prayer at the end of the sermon outline.

And you, Christian, are you sinning in your anger? Let's commit ourselves this morning to turning that around.