

Anger
FAIRVIEW TEXAS CHURCH OF GOD
May 1, 2010

What is anger?

- Anger is an emotional state that varies in intensity, from mild irritation to intense fury and rage.
- When individuals get angry, their heart rate and blood pressure go up, as well as their energy level and level of adrenaline.
- Anger is a reaction to a particular situation that may involve:
 - Disappointment
 - Fear
 - Powerlessness (frustration)
 - Loss

The American Heritage Dictionary:

- Anger is a feeling of extreme displeasure, hostility, indignation, or exasperation toward someone or something
- Synonyms include:
 - Rage
 - Wrath
 - Ire

Dr. Murphy is a psychologist specializing in adolescent and child anger management. In 2001, he wrote:

- Anger is a powerful response, triggered by a negative emotion that results in an attack of variable intensity that is not always appropriate.
- Anger is not a pure emotion, but a broad emotion triggered by:
 - Frustration
 - Boredom
 - Fear
 - Rejection
 - Depression
 - Humiliation
 - Loneliness

J. Chandler Underwood, author of *Women in Business*, wrote in 1998:

“There is a common misconception that anger is a negative emotion. First, you need to change your basic beliefs about anger. Anger is not bad. It is a natural part of you. You need your anger. Accept your anger as being vital to your well-being. After you accept your anger, you can learn to deal with it in more productive and rational ways. You can learn to express your anger in many ways and the choice is always yours!”

Genesis 4:

- 1 Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the LORD."
- 2 Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

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- 3 And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD.
- 4 Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering,
- 5 but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.
- 6 So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?"
- 7 "If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."
- 8 Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.
 - Cain's choice in dealing with his anger was much similar to the world today
 - Wars, divorce, hate crimes are some of the ways people deal with anger
 - It is the individual's choice as Ms. Underwood wrote – and we seem to be bent on making the wrong choices.

Genesis 27:

- Jacob, at his mother's direction, has fooled Isaac by pretending to be his brother, Esau – and has received the blessing that was meant for his brother
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- 41 So Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him, and Esau said in his heart, "The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then I will kill my brother Jacob."
- 42 And the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah. So she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said to him, "Surely your brother Esau comforts himself concerning you by intending to kill you."

The actions of this world today are not new. They have been repeated since time began. Anger is a major part of what makes up a carnal person.

What makes you angry? Quite often, it is the mistakes made by others. After all, we all make mistakes, but we seem to view the mistakes of others much differently than those we make.

I recall being cut off in traffic one day many years ago. The other driver proceeded to drive quite slowly and I was irritated. When I had the chance to pass, I did so quickly. As I passed by, I could see the driver and he reminded me of my grandfather. My attitude changed. It seems that I was more forgiving of a person that I felt like I might know.

We often attribute intent to the actions of others – as mean spirited, evil, or deliberate. Seldom do we try to understand the actions from their point of view. We just know that we would never act mean spirited, evil or deliberate. Once we have attributed wrong motives, it is too late. We get angry.

Mankind seems to have at least 4 ways to express themselves:

1. self determination – "I" will decide

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2. self aggrandizement – “I” am the main person – “I” will have my way
3. self maintenance – “I” am right and don’t need to change
4. self preservation – “I” need to protect myself

You may have heard me in the past refer to this as an “I” problem.

Let’s look at some more scriptures about anger.

Psalms 4:

- 1 Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have relieved me in my distress; Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer.
- 2 How long, O you sons of men, Will you turn my glory to shame? How long will you love worthlessness And seek falsehood? Selah
- 3 But know that the LORD has set apart for Himself him who is godly; The LORD will hear when I call to Him.
- **4 Be angry, and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still.**
 - **Philippians 4:**
 - 8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things.
 - Ms. Underwood’s words again – it is our choice as to how we deal with our anger
- 5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, And put your trust in the LORD.
- 6 There are many who say, "Who will show us any good?" LORD, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us.
- 7 You have put gladness in my heart, More than in the season that their grain and wine increased.
- 8 I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; For You alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.

Psalms 37:

- 1 Do not fret because of evildoers, Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity.
- 2 For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, And wither as the green herb.
- 3 Trust in the LORD, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.
- 4 Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.
- 5 Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass.
- 6 He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, And your justice as the noonday.
- 7 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass.
- 8 **Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret-it only causes harm.**
- 9 For evildoers shall be cut off; But those who wait on the LORD, They shall inherit the earth.

Proverbs:

- 15:1 A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.
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- 15:18 A wrathful man stirs up strife, But he who is slow to anger allays contention.
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- 16:32 He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.
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- 19:11 The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, And his glory is to overlook a transgression.
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- 21:19 Better to dwell in the wilderness, Than with a contentious and angry woman.
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- 22:24 Make no friendship with an angry man, And with a furious man do not go,
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- 29:22 An angry man stirs up strife, And a furious man abounds in transgression.

Ecclesiastes 7:

- 9 Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, For anger rests in the bosom of fools.
- 10 Do not say, "Why were the former days better than these?" For you do not inquire wisely concerning this.

Okay, so we get angry. And we have a choice to make as to how we deal with it. But how do we do that?

It is important to identify the actual cause of our anger. Many times we feel angry and we can't completely explain why we are angry. It's not always easy to control our thoughts. Frustration comes from unmet expectations. A worker doesn't complete a job to our satisfaction. A mate or child doesn't live up to our expectations.

One web site I found described five stages of anger:

1. Realization
 - a. We need to identify the "triggers" and how to prevent them
 - i. My "triggers" include the questioning of my honesty and integrity
 - ii. Another of my "triggers" is yelling
 - iii. I have learned that I have to walk away
 - b. The trigger may just be a perception
 - i. "Johnny looked at me funny"
 - ii. "My parents think I fail at everything"
 - c. The triggers are always learned behaviors – we are not born with them, so we need to find the source to understand them
 - d. The trigger may first cause fear or pain
 - e. Unfortunately, many people never get past this stage
 - i. The tendency is to simply put the blame on others
 - ii. Another tendency is to deny the problem even exists
 - f. Not controlling anger is a problem we need not live with
 - g. Controlling anger needs to be a requirement – not an option

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2. Discovery
 - a. Sometimes it takes extra effort to determine which of our triggers set us into an angry state of mind this time
 - b. It may not always be clear
3. Action
 - a. This is the step Ms. Underwood addressed when she wrote that we have a choice
 - b. We need to determine our best way to deal with this situation – and all that follow in the same manner
4. Implementation
 - a. We need to put a solution into place
 - b. This may require some trial and error – the solution (or action) that we have determined will most likely need some fine-tuning
5. Maintenance
 - a. Lastly, we need to create a positive reaction as a way of life
 - b. Instead of dealing with a 1st line telephone representative, maybe we can solve our anger by talking with a supervisor who can make a decision
 - c. Maybe we need to change where we shop, what we buy, what travel route we take – whatever is making us angry, we need to consciously figure out if we can do something differently.

Matthew 5:

- 21 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.'
- 22 "But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire.
 - Our reaction to anger needs to be positive rather than negative
- 23 "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you,
- 24 "leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.
 - Your apology may or may not be accepted
 - But it is our responsibility to take positive action to try for reconciliation

Ephesians 4:

- 17 This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind,
- 18 having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;
- 19 who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.
- 20 But you have not so learned Christ,
- 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus:

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- 22 that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,
- 23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,
- 24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.
- 25 Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another.
- 26 "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath,
- 27 nor give place to the devil.
 - Again – it is our choice
 - Paul recognized that anger is a natural part of our being
 - He also recognized that we have a choice regarding how we react to it
- 28 Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.
- 29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.
- 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.
- 31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.
- 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.
 - The positive reaction to anger is easier when we have a loving attitude toward one another

Colossians 3:

- 8 But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.
 - Paul now describes “how” a Christian will act in daily life
 - He calls the Christian “a new man”
 - Of course the “new man” might be a woman!
- 9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,
- 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,
- 11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.
- 12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;
- 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.
- 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.
- 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

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- 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.
- 17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

I have found some additional material from Dr. Murphy that I will post on our web site.

Remember – whatever angers you, controls you!
Get control of your anger so it cannot control you!