

Anger

A Mental Attitude Sin

- Introduction
 - Everyone gets angry.
 - We all have sin natures that vary in areas of strength and weakness.
 - However, in one way or another, we all have problems with anger.
 - Anger takes on differing forms in different people.
 - Anger can be a quiet resentment at some offense, small or large, real or imagined.
 - Anger can also explode into a rage that can result in violence, retaliation, or even murder.
 - When we get angry, we inevitably hurt people – usually those who are closest to us.
 - We also hurt ourselves – an angry person is his own worst enemy.
 - But we can have victory over anger!
 - In this study, we will look at what the Bible says about anger and answer questions like these...
 - What is the difference between anger and righteous indignation?
 - Does God get angry?
 - What triggers my anger and what can I do about it?
 - How can I have victory over anger?
- Definition
 - In most instances found in the Bible, anger is a sin – a mental attitude sin.
 - As a sin, anger expresses itself in antagonism, exasperation, indignation, resentment, or outrage.
 - Anger will often produce an emotional feeling.
 - It is important to understand that this emotional feeling is not the anger.
 - The thought process that produced the emotional feeling is the sinful anger.
 - Even after anger has been confessed and forgiven, the feeling may linger.
 - There are two Greek words for anger - ὀργή (orgē) and θυμός (thumos).
 - ὀργή (orgē) refers to mental anger.
 - θυμός (thumos) refers to anger expressed.
 - In Eph 4:31, both words are associated with bitterness.
 - Sinful anger promotes sins against other people, such as gossip, self-righteous judging, maligning, or complaining.
 - The Bible also speaks of a type of anger that is not sinful.
 - This is known as righteous indignation.

- Both anger and righteous indignation are mental reactions/responses to events or circumstances.
 - If unjustifiable, it becomes an emotional reaction that can lead to irrationality.
 - If justifiable, it will never be irrational (example: a response to heresy).
- Righteous Indignation
 - Righteous indignation is not sinful anger.
 - It is a clear understanding (from the Bible) of what God thinks about a bad event or circumstance.
 - If we are walking by means of the Spirit, we will respond rather than react.
 - If we respond in the Spirit, we will be likeminded with God which results in righteous indignation.
 - If we react in the flesh, we will become angry and sin, even if the thing we are angry about is displeasing to God.
 - Examples of righteous indignation...
 - In Mark 10:14, Jesus opposed the disciples who had forbidden the children from coming to Him.
 - This was not sinful anger.
 - This was an understanding of a wrong.
 - Jesus expressed righteous indignation to the scribes and Pharisees [Mt 23:23-33].
 - Jesus did not sin in anger when He rebuked Peter [Mark 8:33].
 - God has righteous indignation regarding our sins [1 Kings 15:29-20].
 - Consider the Christian's response toward criminal activity.
 - We can pursue, prosecute, and sentence a criminal without compromising the biblical principles of grace, forgiveness and ἀγάπη love.
 - In doing so, we are aware that the criminal activity is wrong and must be stopped.
 - In this, there is no hatred for the criminal.
 - Nor is there an emotional meltdown which would be the result of sinful anger.
 - This is righteous indignation [Eph 2:26a].
 - Note that even righteous indignation, which is not sinful, should not be allowed to continue unabated [Eph 2:26b].
 - The devil looks for opportunities to intensify our legitimate righteous indignation until it becomes sinful anger [Eph 2:27].
- Characteristics of Sinful Anger
 - Anger is sin wrought from the flesh (sin nature) [Gal 5:19-21].
 - Anger is related to foolishness [Job 5:2; Prov 12:16; Ecc 7:9].
 - A fool lacks divine wisdom.
 - This person may be a genius, but thinks from human viewpoint.

- Anger is associated with grieving the Holy Spirit [Eph 4:30-32].
- Anger is a violation of the Christian's code of conduct [Col 3:8-10].
- Anger is a hindrance to effective prayer [1 Tim 2:8].
- Anger can result from the inability to perceive lies [Gen 39:19; Jer 37:15].
- Anger can stem from a stubborn heart, rebelling against God's will [Jonah 4:1].
- Anger is always accompanied by other sins [Psalm 37:8; Prov 29:22].
- Anger is stored up by those who are godless in heart [Job 36:13].
- Unfettered anger results in bitterness [Heb 12:15].
- An angry person brings misery upon himself [Prov 22:8].
- Anger causes misery for loved ones [Prov 21:19].
- Anger can destroy a nation [Amos 1:11].
- Associating with an angry person can cause you to become an angry person [Prov 22:24-25].
- The Anger of the Lord
 - In a number of places in the Bible, the Lord is said to have anger or be angry.
 - The word anger is used in these verses as an anthropopathism – a word or phrase that ascribes human characteristics or feelings to God.
 - God is never surprised, shocked, or outraged.
 - God never reacts emotionally.
 - However, God does have an attitude of wrath (or anger) against some things.
 - The anger of the Lord is mentioned in the following O.T. passages: [Num 25:4; 32:14; Deut 29:20; Jdgs 2:14; 2:20-22; 3:8; 10:7; 2 Kgs 24:20; 2 Chr 28:11; Ezra 10:14; Jer 4:8; 30:24; 51:45; Zeph 2:2-3; Psalm 2:5-6; 78:31].
 - The wrath of God is mentioned in the following N.T. passages: [John 3:36; Rom 1:18; Eph 5:6; Col 3:6; Rev 14:19; 15:1, 7; 16:1; 19:15].
- Victory over the Sin of Anger
 - To avoid the sin of anger, believers must yield to God [Jas 4:7] and walk by means of the Holy Spirit [Gal 5:16].
 - It is also important to focus on the Lord rather than the details of life that can trigger the sin of anger [Heb 12:1-3].
 - However, if some detail of life causes us concern, we need to cast our burdens upon the Lord [Ps 55:22; Phil 4:6-7].
 - We also must continually examine ourselves [1 Cor 11:28] so that we will recognize the sin of anger in ourselves.
 - Once recognized, we must confess and forsake the sin of anger, just like any other sin [1 John 1:9; Pr 28:13; Ps 32:5].
 - In doing this the believer will be restored to fellowship with God [1 John 1:3] and once again will be filled with (under the influence of) the Holy Spirit [Eph 5:18].

- As we grow and become grounded in the faith, we learn to rely upon God to provide for godliness [2 Pet 1:2-10].
- Increasing in the grace and knowledge of Christ protects us from drifting away from that grounding [2 Pet 3:17-18].