

Angry Sin

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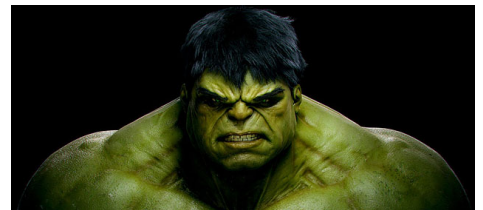
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Anger & Sin

In discussing the differences between the Christian and the worldling, Paul writes, “Be ye angry, and sin not...” ([Ephesians 4:26](#)). This is a quotation from [Psalm 4:4](#) where both the King James and the American Standard Versions read “Stand in awe, and sin not...” Moreover, the American Standard Version mentions in a footnote that “Stand in awe” may also be translated, “Be ye angry.” In this Psalm, David (like Paul) contrasts the “sons of men” (vs.2) and the “godly” (vs.3). He says that it is characteristic of the godly to “Be ye angry, and sin not.” Thus we ought not to sin as the world does when they become angry, but sin not.

It is not necessarily a sin to be angry. Certainly God does not expect us to rejoice when people do wrong. We must be angry at sin. “God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day” ([Psalm 7:11](#)). Paul writes of the indignation that the Corinthian brethren had concerning the sin in which they had formerly been ([2 Corinthians 7:11](#)). Jesus also was angry when he overturned the moneychangers’ tables as he cleansed the temple ([Mark 11:15-17](#)). However, when we are angry, we want to make sure that our anger does not venture into sin. So, let us look at a few Bible principles that will help us control our “righteous indignation.”



Controlling anger is an important part of Christianity.

First, we should not be quick to anger. Many sins committed in the wake of anger are like a hot water geyser. They build up and spew out without any control. This is the kind of anger that leads to “crimes of passion.” It is the anger that causes us to say things that later we wish we had not said. This kind of anger strikes out at others and does not help anyone. Anger of this caliber is sinful anger. “A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife” ([Proverbs 15:18](#)).

Second, when provoked, think before you become angry. Ask yourself a few simple questions. Is this a situation over which it is worth becoming angry? Are there any dire consequences to the catalyst of my impending anger? Am I angry because of this situation, or am I angry because something bad in another part of my life is affecting my judgment? (In other words, am I “kicking the cat”?) Is my getting angry going to affect people in a negative way to hinder good relationships? These are questions that we should

ask ourselves when provoked to anger. Life can be frustrating (and often is). However, it just becomes more frustrating for more people when we unnecessarily become angry. James arranges it this way. “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” ([James 1:19](#)).

Third, when we do get angry, we must control ourselves. No problems have ever been solved by losing control. Loss of control builds problems. Although it is sometimes very difficult, we should bring our anger into subjection and deal with it in a rational manner. When we become angry, step away from the situation, cool down, and come back and confront the problem in an adult-like fashion. Throwing a tantrum is childish and will only gain disrespect from those in front of whom the tantrum is thrown. Another thing we might do is think of a person we know who often “blows his stack.” It may be that in thinking of the way this person acts, we ourselves will see how ridiculous that behavior is, and avoid loss of control. Too, sometimes we must confront someone with whom we are angry. When we do, speak calmly and rationally. Keep body movements (especially arms) to a minimum. Further, it is likely that this person with whom we are angry will become angry himself. When both parties are angry things are less productive and more time consuming. Regulation, however, conserves time and increases productivity. Controlling our actions is the key. If our actions are not in control then, our thoughts are not in control. God demands that we bring “. . . into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” ([2 Corinthians 10:5](#)).

Finally, we must resolve our anger within the same day it is provoked. A sore left untreated will fester and fester until it becomes infected; it can then cause major complications with serious consequences. The smallest cut left untreated can end up as gangrene; many people have lost limbs and lives because of such. Anger is much the same way. If we allow it to continue it will grow and fester and our anger will become bitterness. Soon it is not simply a small mistake we made which irritates us, but the whole world. Our bitterness then becomes cynicism and we begin to see deceit and dishonesty in every situation. We question peoples motives without reason. Soon we even give up on ourselves as our cynicism becomes despair. The ultimate fruit of festering fury is the destruction of our faith in God. Such a small beginning can have such drastic consequences if we do not confront and resolve our anger. The second half of [Ephesians 4:26](#) says, “...let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” We only hurt ourselves when we let anger foster within us.

Anger is one of the most intense emotions God has given to us. However, we can use anger for a good purpose. Let us resolve: (1) not to become angry hastily, (2) to think before we become angry, (3) to control our anger should we become angry, and (4) to resolve our anger before the end of the day. I certainly have not mastered anger. Nevertheless, I still want to learn God’s principles on the subject for on any subject he has “...given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue” ([2 Peter 1:3](#)). “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” ([Ephesians 4:31, 32](#)).

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