

“A HEART FOR GOD” LESSON 9

MEEKNESS, NOT WEAKENESS: RESPONDING TO OUR OWN ANGER.

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MODERN CULTURE OFFERS COUNTLESS BOOKS ON COPING WITH ANGER, CONTROLLING ANGER, RESPONDING TO ANGER FROM OTHERS. LET'S EXAMINE WHAT THE BIBLICAL STORY OF DAVID HAS TO TEACH US ABOUT ANGER. BEGIN BY DOING SOME SELF-REFLECTION ON THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- **WHAT MAKES YOU ANGRY?**
- **DID YOU JUST GET ANGRY THINKING ABOUT THE THINGS THAT MAKE YOU ANGRY? ;-)**
- **IS IT DIFFICULT TO ADMIT TO YOURSELF WHEN YOU ARE ANGRY?**
- **WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO OWN YOUR ANGER?**
- **HOW CAN YOU KNOW IF YOUR ANGER IS SINFUL OR RIGHTEOUSLY MOTIVATED?**
- **EVEN IF YOUR ANGER IS RIGHTEOUS, DO YOU KNOW WHAT KIND OF RESPONSE GOD EXPECTS FROM YOU?**
- **WHAT CAN YOU DO TO GAIN PERSPECTIVE ON YOUR ANGER?**
- **WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH US ABOUT REVENGE?**
- **DID YOU JUST THINK: "REVENGE IS MINE, THUS SAYETH THE LORD"? ;-)**
- **DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE POWER OF MEEKNESS?**

WHY IS ANGER CALLED A DEADLY SIN?

ANGER BURNS US WITHIN

- **ENTITLEMENT LEADS TO ANGER, AND THE MESSAGE OF ENTITLEMENT IS PERHAPS MORE PREVALENT IN MODERN CULTURE THAN EVER.**
- **PERCEIVED INSULT OR INJURY LEADS TO ANGER. IT FOSTERS THE INSTINCT TO PUNISH THE PERSON WHOM WE PERCEIVED TO HAVE HARMED OR INSULTED US.**
- **DAVID WRESTLED WITH ANGER, AS WE READ IN PSALMS SUCH AS PSALM 39.**
- **WHAT ARE WE ANGRY AT? OURSELVES? OTHERS? THE WORLD?**
- **WHY ARE WE ANGRY? BECAUSE OF MATERIAL DESIRES? BECAUSE OF DESIRE THAT OTHERS SHOULD THINK, FEEL, AND ACT LIKE US? LOW SELF-ESTEEM? HIGH SELF-ESTEEM? INSECURITY? FRUSTRATION? EXHAUSTION? STRESS? ILLNESS? IS GOD NOT SNAPPING TO ANSWERING YOUR DEMANDS QUICKLY ENOUGH? FEELING ABANDONED? HOPELESS?**

WHY IS ANGER CALLED A DEADLY SIN?

ANGER BURNS OUTWARDLY FROM US

- **AS WE HAVE SEEN IN THE STORY OF KING SAUL, ANGER TAKES ON A LIFE OF ITS OWN, IT CAN BECOME AN OBSESSION THAT ALIENATES US FROM OUR FAMILY, OUR FRIENDS, AND TRAPS US IN ITS DESTRUCTIVE GRIP UNTIL WE LOSE OUR PERSPECTIVE, OUR RATIONALE, OUR MORALITY, AND OUR SOULS.**
- **WE ALSO SEE IN OUR WORLD TODAY THE DESTRUCTIVE RESULTS OF THE ANGER WITHIN AN INDIVIDUAL BURNING TO CONSUME INNOCENT PEOPLE. IT MANIFESTS IN CRIMES OF VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULTS, CHILD ABUSE, ELDER ABUSE, SCHOOL SHOOTINGS, RIOTS, WAR, AND ACTS OF TERRORISM.**
- **ANGER WORKS AGAINST OUR SELF-INTEREST AND IT WORKS AGAINST GOD'S INTERESTS.**

DAVID, NABAL, AND ABIGAIL 1 SAMUEL 25

WHILE HIDING FROM SAUL, DAVID AND HIS MEN ENDED UP IN THE DESERT OF PARAN. WHILE THERE, THEY ACTED AS DEFENDERS OF THE LAND AND ITS PEOPLE. AMONG THOSE PEOPLE WAS A VERY WEALTHY AND ILL-TEMPERED MAN NAMED NABAL (HIS NAME MEANS “FOOL”, WHICH GIVES YOU A GOOD IDEA WHERE THIS STORY IS HEADED).

“WHILE DAVID WAS IN THE WILDERNESS, HE HEARD THAT NABAL WAS SHEARING SHEEP. ⁵SO HE SENT TEN YOUNG MEN AND SAID TO THEM, “GO UP TO NABAL AT CARMEL AND GREET HIM IN MY NAME. ⁶SAY TO HIM: ‘LONG LIFE TO YOU! GOOD HEALTH TO YOU AND YOUR HOUSEHOLD! AND GOOD HEALTH TO ALL THAT IS YOURS!

⁷“NOW I HEAR THAT IT IS SHEEP-SHEARING TIME. WHEN YOUR SHEPHERDS WERE WITH US, WE DID NOT MISTREAT THEM, AND THE WHOLE TIME THEY WERE AT CARMEL NOTHING OF THEIRS WAS MISSING. ⁸ASK YOUR OWN SERVANTS AND THEY WILL TELL YOU. THEREFORE BE FAVORABLE TOWARD MY MEN, SINCE WE COME AT A FESTIVE TIME. PLEASE GIVE YOUR SERVANTS AND YOUR SON DAVID WHATEVER YOU CAN FIND FOR THEM.”

⁹WHEN DAVID’S MEN ARRIVED, THEY GAVE NABAL THIS MESSAGE IN DAVID’S NAME. THEN THEY WAITED.

¹⁰NABAL ANSWERED DAVID’S SERVANTS, “WHO IS THIS DAVID? WHO IS THIS SON OF JESSE? MANY SERVANTS ARE BREAKING AWAY FROM THEIR MASTERS THESE DAYS. ¹¹WHY SHOULD I TAKE MY BREAD AND WATER, AND THE MEAT I HAVE SLAUGHTERED FOR MY SHEARERS, AND GIVE IT TO MEN COMING FROM WHO KNOWS WHERE?”

¹²DAVID’S MEN TURNED AROUND AND WENT BACK. WHEN THEY ARRIVED, THEY REPORTED EVERY WORD. ¹³DAVID SAID TO HIS MEN, “EACH OF YOU STRAP ON YOUR SWORD!” SO THEY DID, AND DAVID STRAPPED HIS ON AS WELL. ABOUT FOUR HUNDRED MEN WENT UP WITH DAVID, WHILE TWO HUNDRED STAYED WITH THE SUPPLIES.” (1 SAMUEL 25:4-13)

TWO PEOPLE OPERATING FROM PRIDE

NABAL

- IN FAIRNESS, HE HADN'T ASKED FOR DAVID'S PROTECTION AND TECHNICALLY WAS NOT OBLIGED TO DAVID. WE NEED TO REMEMBER THAT OUR ACTS OF KINDNESS TO OTHERS COME FROM A HEART LIKE GOD'S---BUT THEY DO NOT OBLIGATE THE RECIPIENT TO REPAY US (NOR SHOULD THEY).
- NABAL'S REFUSAL CAME FROM A PLACE OF SELF-CENTEREDNESS, PRIDE, AND THE PERSPECTIVE OF DAVID BEING A NOBODY. THIS IS APPARENT FROM THE WAY HIS FAMILY AND FRIEND'S SPEAK OF HIM. HE WAS DISMISSING DAVID TO JUSTIFY HIS OWN GREED. A HEART LIKE GOD'S GIVES FAIR CONSIDERATION WHEN SOMEONE COMES TO US IN NEED AS DAVID DID WITH NABAL: *SHOULD I HELP? AM I REASONABLY ABLE TO HELP? HAS GOD SENT THIS PERSON TO ME INTENDING THAT I HELP? HOW CAN I HELP WITHIN MY MEANS? IS GOD PERHAPS COMPELLING ME TO HELP SACRIFICIALLY FOR HIS GREATER PURPOSES?*

DAVID

- DAVID'S REACTION TO NABAL'S INSULTS CAME FROM A PLACE OF PRIDE, WHICH BROUGHT OUT DAVID'S HARSH, EVEN IRRATIONAL, ANGER. IT IS OUT-OF-CHARACTER WITH DAVID'S PATIENCE FOR THE INSULTS AND ATTACKS HE SUFFERED FROM KING SAUL. THIS IS PERHAPS BECAUSE DAVID'S PERCEPTION OF SAUL REMAINED THAT THE KING WAS GOD'S ANOINTED ONE, WHEREAS HE PERCEIVED NABAL AS UNGRATEFUL AND HIMSELF AS DESERVING OF WHAT HE'D ASKED. DAVID WAS PREPARED AT THAT POINT TO KILL INNOCENT PEOPLE IN NABAL'S HOUSEHOLD AND INNOCENT SERVANTS OUT OF INJURED PRIDE.

AM I TRUSTING GOD WITH THE OUTCOME?

IF IT IS POSSIBLE ON YOUR PART, LIVE AT PEACE WITH EVERYONE. DO NOT AVENGE YOURSELVES, BELOVED, BUT LEAVE ROOM FOR GOD'S WRATH. FOR IT IS WRITTEN: "VENGEANCE IS MINE; I WILL REPAY, SAYS THE LORD".

ON THE CONTRARY, "IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM; IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK. FOR IN SO DOING, YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD." – ROMANS 12:18-20

- DAVID'S HARSH REACTION TO TAKE UP ARMS AGAINST NABAL IS ALSO OUT-OF-CHARACTER BECAUSE SUCH REVENGE DEMONSTRATES LACK OF TRUST IN GOD.
- WE NEED TO REMEMBER THAT IT IS GOD'S PLACE TO JUDGE, IT IS GOD'S PLACE TO AVENGE INSULTS TO HIS SERVANTS—AND THAT INCLUDES EVERY BELIEVER.
- GOD HAS **NOT** GIVEN US THAT RULE TO PROTECT THE GUILTY FROM PUNISHMENT. HE **WILL** JUDGE THE WICKED IN HIS GOOD TIME. HE GIVES US THAT RULE TO PROTECT **US**, THOSE WHOM HE HAS DECLARED INNOCENT AND RIGHTEOUS, FROM FALLING INTO WICKEDNESS BY ACTING OUT OUR ANGER AND BRINGING GUILT UPON OURSELVES. IT IS THE ENEMY WHO WHISPERS INTO OUR HEART TO AVENGE OURSELVES, OUR PRIDE, OUR REPUTATION, BECAUSE IT DRIVES A WEDGE INTO OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

WRONG ANGER...AND RIGHT ANGER

WE SHOULD BE OUTRAGED AT THE PRESENCE OF EVIL ACTS. WE DO NEED TO FIGHT AGAINST CERTAIN INJUSTICES TO PROTECT THE INNOCENT OR THE VICTIMIZED AND WHEN WE USE THE CORRECT APPROACH TO BRINGING JUSTICE. JESUS WAS UPSET ENOUGH AT THE MONEY CHANGERS TO CHASE THEM AWAY AND OVERTURN THEIR TABLES, BUT HIS ANGER OWED TO THEIR DESECRATION OF GOD'S HOLY TEMPLE AND THOSE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF GOD'S FAITHFUL. HE ACTED IN DEFENSE OF WHAT WAS RIGHT AND HOLY, NOT REVENGE AGAINST PERSONAL INSULT OR INJURY AND NOT TO HARM THOSE WHO OFFENDED HIM.

YES, WE ARE ALLOWED TO FEEL ANGER. SO, WHEN DOES ANGER BECOME WRONG? GOD EXAMINES OUR HEARTS AND SO SHOULD WE, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES TO OUR ANGER AND URGE FOR REVENGE.

- **ANGER WITH THE WRONG MOTIVATION. ENTITLEMENT, WOUNDED PRIDE, HUMILIATION, EMBARRASSMENT...THESE ARE NOT RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION (AS SOME CALL IT).**
- **ANGER THAT OVERREACTS, A RESPONSE OUT OF PROPORTION WITH THE OFFENSE.**
- **ARE WE JUSTIFYING OUR REACTION WITH SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS? ARE WE SCRAMBLING TO MORALIZE WHAT WE WANT TO DO? THEN IT'S PROBABLY NOT COMING FROM A PLACE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.**
- **ARE WE INTENTIONALLY SEEKING TO HARM SOMEONE OR HARM AN INNOCENT PERSON TO HURT THE GUILTY PERSON? IS THAT NOT A GLARING SIGN THAT WE ARE ON THE WRONG PATH? ALSO, THINK ABOUT THE COURTS—HOW MUCH HARSHER IS THE CHARGE WHEN THE CRIME IS PRE-MEDITATED? WHEN THE ASSAILANT STALKS A PERSON OR LAYS IN WAIT?**
- **AGAIN, SEEKING REVENGE IS ASSUMING THAT GOD NEEDS OUR HELP TO HANDLE THE MATTER. HE DOESN'T. IT ASSUMED GOD IS INDIFFERENT OR OBLIVIOUS TO WHAT JUST HAPPENED. HE ISN'T.**

ABIGAIL: BIBLICAL MEEKNESS IN ACTION

¹⁴ ONE OF THE SERVANTS TOLD ABIGAIL, NABAL'S WIFE, "DAVID SENT MESSENGERS FROM THE WILDERNESS TO GIVE OUR MASTER HIS GREETINGS, BUT HE HURLED INSULTS AT THEM. ¹⁵ YET THESE MEN WERE VERY GOOD TO US. THEY DID NOT MISTREAT US, AND THE WHOLE TIME WE WERE OUT IN THE FIELDS NEAR THEM NOTHING WAS MISSING. ¹⁶ NIGHT AND DAY THEY WERE A WALL AROUND US THE WHOLE TIME WE WERE HERDING OUR SHEEP NEAR THEM. ¹⁷ NOW THINK IT OVER AND SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO, BECAUSE DISASTER IS HANGING OVER OUR MASTER AND HIS WHOLE HOUSEHOLD. HE IS SUCH A WICKED MAN THAT NO ONE CAN TALK TO HIM."

¹⁸ ABIGAIL ACTED QUICKLY. SHE TOOK TWO HUNDRED LOAVES OF BREAD, TWO SKINS OF WINE, FIVE DRESSED SHEEP, FIVE SEAHS^[B] OF ROASTED GRAIN, A HUNDRED CAKES OF RAISINS AND TWO HUNDRED CAKES OF PRESSED FIGS, AND LOADED THEM ON DONKEYS. ¹⁹ THEN SHE TOLD HER SERVANTS, "GO ON AHEAD; I'LL FOLLOW YOU." BUT SHE DID NOT TELL HER HUSBAND NABAL.

²⁰ AS SHE CAME RIDING HER DONKEY INTO A MOUNTAIN RAVINE, THERE WERE DAVID AND HIS MEN DESCENDING TOWARD HER, AND SHE MET THEM. ²¹ DAVID HAD JUST SAID, "IT'S BEEN USELESS—ALL MY WATCHING OVER THIS FELLOW'S PROPERTY IN THE WILDERNESS SO THAT NOTHING OF HIS WAS MISSING. HE HAS PAID ME BACK EVIL FOR GOOD. ²² MAY GOD DEAL WITH DAVID,^[C] BE IT EVER SO SEVERELY, IF BY MORNING I LEAVE ALIVE ONE MALE OF ALL WHO BELONG TO HIM!"

ABIGAIL: BIBLICAL MEEKNESS IN ACTION

²³ WHEN ABIGAIL SAW DAVID, SHE QUICKLY GOT OFF HER DONKEY AND BOWED DOWN BEFORE DAVID WITH HER FACE TO THE GROUND. ²⁴ SHE FELL AT HIS FEET AND SAID: “PARDON YOUR SERVANT, MY LORD, AND LET ME SPEAK TO YOU; HEAR WHAT YOUR SERVANT HAS TO SAY. ²⁵ PLEASE PAY NO ATTENTION, MY LORD, TO THAT WICKED MAN NABAL. HE IS JUST LIKE HIS NAME—HIS NAME MEANS FOOL, AND FOLLY GOES WITH HIM. AND AS FOR ME, YOUR SERVANT, I DID NOT SEE THE MEN MY LORD SENT. ²⁶ AND NOW, MY LORD, AS SURELY AS THE LORD YOUR GOD LIVES AND AS YOU LIVE, SINCE THE LORD HAS KEPT YOU FROM BLOODSHED AND FROM AVENGING YOURSELF WITH YOUR OWN HANDS, MAY YOUR ENEMIES AND ALL WHO ARE INTENT ON HARMING MY LORD BE LIKE NABAL. ²⁷ AND LET THIS GIFT, WHICH YOUR SERVANT HAS BROUGHT TO MY LORD, BE GIVEN TO THE MEN WHO FOLLOW YOU.

²⁸ “PLEASE FORGIVE YOUR SERVANT’S PRESUMPTION. THE LORD YOUR GOD WILL CERTAINLY MAKE A LASTING DYNASTY FOR MY LORD, BECAUSE YOU FIGHT THE LORD’S BATTLES, AND NO WRONGDOING WILL BE FOUND IN YOU AS LONG AS YOU LIVE. ²⁹ EVEN THOUGH SOMEONE IS PURSUING YOU TO TAKE YOUR LIFE, THE LIFE OF MY LORD WILL BE BOUND SECURELY IN THE BUNDLE OF THE LIVING BY THE LORD YOUR GOD, BUT THE LIVES OF YOUR ENEMIES HE WILL HURL AWAY AS FROM THE POCKET OF A SLING. ³⁰ WHEN THE LORD HAS FULFILLED FOR MY LORD EVERY GOOD THING HE PROMISED CONCERNING HIM AND HAS APPOINTED HIM RULER OVER ISRAEL, ³¹ MY LORD WILL NOT HAVE ON HIS CONSCIENCE THE STAGGERING BURDEN OF NEEDLESS BLOODSHED OR OF HAVING AVENGED HIMSELF. AND WHEN THE LORD YOUR GOD HAS BROUGHT MY LORD SUCCESS, REMEMBER YOUR SERVANT.”

³² DAVID SAID TO ABIGAIL, “PRAISE BE TO THE LORD, THE GOD OF ISRAEL, WHO HAS SENT YOU TODAY TO MEET ME. ³³ MAY YOU BE BLESSED FOR YOUR GOOD JUDGMENT AND FOR KEEPING ME FROM BLOODSHED THIS DAY AND FROM AVENGING MYSELF WITH MY OWN HANDS. ³⁴ OTHERWISE, AS SURELY AS THE LORD, THE GOD OF ISRAEL, LIVES, WHO HAS KEPT ME FROM HARMING YOU, IF YOU HAD NOT COME QUICKLY TO MEET ME, NOT ONE MALE BELONGING TO NABAL WOULD HAVE BEEN LEFT ALIVE BY DAYBREAK.” - 1 SAMUEL 25: 18-34

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE BIBLICALLY “MEEK”?

**JESUS BLESSED THE MEEK, SAYING THEY
WOULD INHERIT THE EARTH. YET, OUR
MODERN CULTURE HAS A TAINTED
PERCEPTION THAT EQUATES MEEKNESS WITH
WEAKNESS. JESUS DOES NOT SEE IT THIS
WAY, AND NEITHER SHOULD WE.**

- **MEEKNESS IS GREAT STRENGTH TEMPERED WITH GREAT RESTRAINT. SUCH RESTRAINT COMES FROM A PLACE OF WISDOM, ENLIGHTENMENT, AND A HEART RIGHT WITH GOD.**
- **MEEKNESS SEEKS PEACE RATHER THAN HARM; IT SEEKS THE CONSTRUCTIVE RATHER THAN THE DESTRUCTIVE.**
- **RESTRAINT OPENS OUR MIND TO THE INFLUENCE OF GOD, WHO GIVES US THE PERCEPTIVE TO KNOW OUR OWN HEARTS AS WELL AS THE HEARTS OF THOSE AGAINST US.**
- **IF YOU DOUBT THIS, RE-READ THE STORY OF ABIGAIL. SHE STOPPED AN ARMY OF FOUR HUNDRED MEN BY DISCARDING HER PRIVILEGED STATUS, BY OPEN CONFESSION OF NABAL'S WICKEDNESS, BY ADDRESSING DAVID FROM A HOLY, SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE THAT SAW GOD'S GREATER PLANS FOR HIM, AND MOST OF ALL THROUGH HUMILITY AND MEEKNESS. IN DOING SO, ABIGAIL SAVED COUNTLESS LIVES---AND SHE SAVED DAVID FROM BECOMING A MURDERER.**

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE BIBLICALLY “MEEK”?

ABIGAIL WAS NOT THE ONLY BIBLICAL FIGURE WHO DEMONSTRATED THE STRENGTH IN MEEKNESS. WE CAN ALSO LOOK TO JESUS HIMSELF AS A MODEL, PARTICULARLY IN HIS TRIAL BEFORE PILATE (MARK 14:55-61).

⁵⁵THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND THE WHOLE SANHEDRIN WERE LOOKING FOR EVIDENCE AGAINST JESUS SO THAT THEY COULD PUT HIM TO DEATH, BUT THEY DID NOT FIND ANY. ⁵⁶MANY TESTIFIED FALSELY AGAINST HIM, BUT THEIR STATEMENTS DID NOT AGREE.

⁵⁷THEN SOME STOOD UP AND GAVE THIS FALSE TESTIMONY AGAINST HIM: ⁵⁸“WE HEARD HIM SAY, ‘I WILL DESTROY THIS TEMPLE MADE WITH HUMAN HANDS AND IN THREE DAYS WILL BUILD ANOTHER, NOT MADE WITH HANDS.’” ⁵⁹YET EVEN THEN THEIR TESTIMONY DID NOT AGREE.

⁶⁰THEN THE HIGH PRIEST STOOD UP BEFORE THEM AND ASKED JESUS, “ARE YOU NOT GOING TO ANSWER? WHAT IS THIS TESTIMONY THAT THESE MEN ARE BRINGING AGAINST YOU?” ⁶¹BUT JESUS REMAINED SILENT AND GAVE NO ANSWER”

JESUS DID NOT LASH OUT IN ANGER BUT REMAINED SILENT IN THE FACE OF THE WORST OF ABUSES, IN THE MIDST OF SLANDER BY FALSE WITNESSES. HE KNEW THAT GOD WOULD BE HIS ADVOCATE, HIS VICTORY, HIS VINDICATION, AND THAT THE OUTCOME OF ALL EVENTS WERE FULLY AND RIGHTLY UNDER GOD’S CONTROL. LET US LOOK TO HIS EXAMPLE WHEN WE ARE MISTREATED, MALIGNED, SLANDERED, OR SUFFER OTHER WOUNDS TO OUR PRIDE OR SENSE OF MORAL OUTRAGE. JESUS WAS FIGHTING A BATTLE...JUST NOT ON THE TERMS OF THIS WORLD OR BY THE MEANS OF SINFUL MAN.

AND REMEMBER, “AN EYE FOR AN EYE” IS OFTEN QUOTED, BUT JESUS OVERRODE REVENGE BY COMMANDING US TO TURN THE OTHER CHEEK. THE BATTLE BELONGS TO THE LORD, WHO IS OUR VINDICATOR AND ADVOCATE.

I'M ANGRY. WHAT DO I DO ABOUT IT?

REMEMBER SAUL AND JONATHAN'S AWKWARD DINNER IN 1 SAMUEL 20? SAUL BECAME SO ANGRY HE THREW A SPEAR AT HIS OWN SON. THAT'S WICKED ANGER IN ACTION. JONATHAN WAS ALSO ANGRY. HE HELD HIS TONGUE AND LEFT THE TABLE. THAT IS ANGER RESTRAINED AND RIGHTEOUS. THAT IS BIBLICAL MEEKNESS...NOT WEAKNESS.

- **SELF-KNOWLEDGE:** ADMIT TO YOURSELF THAT YOU ARE ANGRY. IT'S OKAY TO ADMIT IT. YOU CAN'T GET PROPER PERSPECTIVE UNTIL YOU DO.
- ASK YOURSELF THE TOUGH QUESTION: **WHY AM I ANGRY?** AM I AFRAID? AM I PHYSICALLY THREATENED? AM I FEELING HELPLESS? INFERIOR? HUMILIATED? AM I ANGRY BECAUSE I HAVE SOME KIND OF INNER GUILT THAT I'M NOT ACKNOWLEDGING? IS MY CURRENT SITUATION REMINDING ME OF SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED IN MY PAST? DO I HAVE UNRESOLVED EMOTIONAL BAGGAGE THAT'S COLORING MY JUDGEMENT? AM I BEING TOO SENSITIVE?
- **FIND A CONSTRUCTIVE OUTLET.** EXERCISE. TALK TO A FRIEND OR SPIRITUAL MENTOR. TAKE SOME TIME. SLEEP ON IT...EVEN BETTER, PRAY ON IT AGAIN AND AGAIN. REALIZE THAT ANGER PRODUCES RESTLESS ENERGY THAT HAS TO GO SOMEWHERE. THAT'S WHY WE FEEL COMPELLED TO DO SOMETHING. DIRECT THE BLAST SOMEWHERE THAT IT DOESN'T HIT ANOTHER PERSON, OTHERWISE YOU'LL BE THE ONE WHO TRULY SUFFERS THE WOUND.

I'M ANGRY. WHAT DO I DO ABOUT IT?

- **CONSIDER THE SOURCE.** YES, IT'S A CLICHÉ, BUT IT'S TRUE. WHO IS THE PERSON PROVOKING OUR ANGER? IF IT'S SOMEONE WE ADMIRE, WE NEED TO CONSIDER THEIR WORDS WITHOUT THE DISTORTION OF PRIDE. IF IT'S A PERSON LIKE NABAL, ARE THEY REALLY WORTH BRINGING SIN UPON OURSELVES BY ACTING ON OUR ANGER? BY EVEN ALLOWING THEIR WORDS TO WOUND US?
- **WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO CORRECT THE PROBLEM?** ARE WE CONVICTING THEM OR CONDEMNING THEM? WHEN GOD CORRECTS US, HE DOES SO OUT OF LOVE...HE IS BUILDING US UP. WHEN THE ENEMY POINTS OUT OUR FLAWS AND SHORT-COMINGS, HE'S ACTING FROM HATE, INTENDING TO PRODUCE DESPAIR, ANGER, AND SELF-LOATHING...TO DESTROY US. WHICH VOICE IS WHISPERING TO YOU WHEN YOU ARE ANGRY?
- **DON'T EVER FORGET THAT GOD IS STILL YOUR ADVOCATE.** GOD WILL DEFEND OUR REPUTATION, CONFIRM OUR TRUSTWORTHINESS, AND CAST LIGHT ON OUR ACCUSERS (HUMAN OR DEMONIC). DO NOT LET ANGER SIDE-TRACK YOU FROM THE PATH GOD HAS SET FOR YOU. LOOK TO THE FUTURE PROMISED IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.
- **THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE.** YOU'RE ANGRY. ADMIT IT. YOU CAN'T HIDE IT FROM GOD ANYWAY, SO WHY WASTE TIME TRYING TO COVER YOUR BACKSIDE? THERE IS STRENGTH IN KNOWING WE'RE ANGRY AND HUMBLY CHOOSING NOT TO ACT UPON IT. DAVID DID SO BECAUSE HE HAD A **TEACHABLE SPIRIT** AND A HEART THAT RECOGNIZED GOD HAD SENT ABIGAIL TO SAVE HIM FROM HIS OWN SINFULNESS.
- **GODLINESS TAKES PRACTICE.** RESPONDING IN MEEKNESS, ALLOWING GOD TO BE THE ONE TO BRING JUSTICE, IS A CHOICE WE MAKE AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN.

REFERENCES:

- **“A HEART FOR GOD”; REBECCA MANLEY PIPPERT, IVP BOOKS 1996.**