

ANGER CAN DESTROY YOUR LIFE!

A few days ago I was pushing a grocery cart down an aisle at Wal-Mart. I was looking at something to my left, and as I turned back I noticed that I had cut off a cart being pushed by a young man, maybe 35 years old or so. I said, "Oh, excuse me!" He didn't respond but glared at me with such intense anger and hatred that it shocked me. I haven't been able to get him out of my mind. He is the kind of man you read about in the paper who has killed someone in a case of road rage, or who goes into a school or work place and starts shooting people. Possibly someone who reads this is living with a person like that, or you were raised in a home with a father or mother like that and it scarred your life.

As I started one of the sessions in a prison a couple of weeks ago, I asked the question, "How many of you guys are in prison because of anger?" Over half of the men raised their hands. Later, I was talking with one of the men. He was about 40 years old, good-looking, obviously very intelligent. He told me he had been a Colonel in the army, and that he was going to spend the rest of his life in prison.....for murdering his wife! He did not offer any details, but he did say that, yes, anger had been involved, but it had not really been his fault, that he could not help himself. I wondered if his wife had been unfaithful while he had been overseas. Whatever it was, he saw himself as the innocent victim, and he was not accepting any responsibility. He apparently felt that the situation, and his justifiable anger, explained everything. So there he sits for the next 30 or 40 years. Many of the men in that prison, and in every prison, are likewise locked away from family, from children, from careers, from freedom, directly or indirectly because they never learned to control their anger.

Proverbs 14:17 says, "A quick-tempered man acts foolishly..." Pr. 22:24 – "Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man do not go." Pr. 29:22 – "An angry man stirs up strife, and a furious man abounds in transgression." Jesus said in Mt. 5:21-22: "You have heard it said...'You shall not murder....but I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother...shall be in danger of the judgment...whoever says, 'You idiot!' or 'You fool!' is in danger of hell fire." Eph. 4:26 says, "Go ahead and be angry. You do well to be angry – but don't use your anger as fuel for revenge. And don't stay angry. Don't go to bed angry. Don't give the Devil that kind of foothold in your life." (The Message)

On the bathroom mirror of every hotel and motel room in Los Angeles there is a list of instructions in case of earthquake. You can look out the window and see buildings, freeways, traffic. A foreigner might wonder about such a strange warning in a setting of such peace and normalcy. But every Californian knows that deep beneath the tranquil surface there are fault lines between the tectonic plates; that history has demonstrated that these moving plates create enormous, hidden tension; and that when the tension gets too great things slip and earthquakes happen, sometimes causing terrifying destruction. Many people present a nice, friendly face to the world, but beneath the surface there are fault lines, and when tension and pressure build up in their life, there can be a sudden,

irrational explosion. James 5:16 (KJV) says, “Confess your faults to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed.”

When you visit a new physician or apply for hospitalization or life insurance, a family medical history is required since they know that heart problems, diabetes, cancer, etc., in your family predisposes you to the same sicknesses. Experience shows that, likewise, a family history of anger, violence, alcoholism, drugs, divorce, occultism, etc., predisposes you to the same problems. The Bible identifies this condition as generational sin or generation curses, and it is one of the hidden fault lines in many lives. If we recognize that anger has been a problem in our life, the question is, will we continue to live with it and hope that it does not eventually wreck everything, or will we do the hard work necessary to overcome it?

Anger can keep you from the Promised Land! Moses was one of the greatest men in history. He was a Christ-figure who was used by God lead three million Hebrews from slavery to their Promised Land. He was used to afflict Egypt with ten plagues, to miraculously open the Red Sea, to receive the Ten Commandments, to lead his people during 40 years in the wilderness. But after all of this, he was not allowed to lead them into the Promised Land. Why? Because he allowed his anger to get out of control and cause him to disobey God. Early in Moses’ life he demonstrated his anger when he killed an Egyptian (Exod. 2:11-14). He had to flee for his life from Pharaoh, and God humbled him by having him live for the next 40 years on the back side of the wilderness. Then in Exodus 17:6, when the Hebrews needed water, God instructed him as follows: “Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will flow out of it that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.”

Many years later, the Hebrews needed water once again, but this time God’s instructions were different: “Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Take the rod.....speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water...’”(but Moses said to the people), “‘Hear now, you rebels’.....then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod, and water came out abundantly. Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, ‘Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.’” Not only did Moses demonstrate anger and rebellion against God by disobeying Him, but he unwittingly marred the symbolism that God intended. Christ would be the Rock that would be struck (crucified), and water (salvation, healing, deliverance), would flow from His side to all who would receive Him by faith. He would only be struck (crucified) once. Thereafter, His people would only need to speak to Him, to call out to Him, and water would flow from His side in a never-ending river. The point of this story, of course, is that anger and rebellion can also prevent us from entering into our Promised Land.

Pastor Larry Huch, in his book, 10 Curses That Can Block the Blessing, tells how the Lord saved him from drugs. Larry became such a successful drug dealer that he moved to his own mansion in Columbia to oversee his business. But he started using his

product, and his addiction grew worse and worse until his athletic, 210 lb. body shrunk to a gaunt 135 lbs. Then one day he tried to shoot heroin into his veins, but in his stupor he accidentally gave himself three shots instead of one, and the drug went straight to his heart. His heart seized up, he fell on the floor, dying, and called out to God who rescued him. He quit his drug business, moved to Arizona, and one day he went into a mission, heard the Gospel, and was gloriously saved.

In time he and his wife started a successful church, but the anger that had always tormented him was not healed. On one occasion when his wife was 8 months pregnant he went into a rage and knocked her down. He asked for forgiveness and tried again and again to conquer his anger. The culminating event happened when their son Luke was 3 or 4 years old and Larry went into a rage and bounced his little boy off the wall. Tears flowed down his face as the memory flashed into his mind of his going through the same experience when he was 3 or 4 years old, and he said, hopelessly, "I am just like my dad!"

Larry realized that there was a fault line deep inside himself, he cried out to God, and in time God completely broke that generational curse over him and his children. He sought forgiveness from his wife, and Larry has been led to a worldwide ministry of inner healing and deliverance. He says that the best news is that all three of his children have also been set free from the curse of anger. Each of them has a loving marriage and is involved in the ministry.

Reflection

If anger has been an ongoing problem in your life, today is the day to start confronting it and seeking healing and victory:

- Forgive anyone who poured out anger on you in the past: father, mother, step-parents, siblings, spouse, anyone.
- Repent for cursing them, for cursing yourself, or for cursing or blaming God
- Break all ungodly soul ties between yourself and any past abuser.
- Renounce and cast out the spirit of anger.
- Ask the Lord to heal your heart and to fill you with His Holy Spirit.
- Humbly ask anyone whom you hurt with anger to forgive you.