

HEALING THE PAST GOD'S WAY
CHAPTER 15 TEACHING NOTES
ANGER

MEMORY VERSE:

Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding,
but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly.
Proverbs 14:29

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

The following books are additional resources that will be helpful in dealing with an individual who struggles with anger or depression and their requisite bondage:

Depression: A Stubborn Darkness by Edward T. Welch

Overcoming Fear, Worry and Anxiety by Elyse Fitzpatrick

Respectable Sins: Confronting the Sins We Tolerate (and discussion guide) by Jerry Bridges

As you teach on anger, remember that the immediate need is to remind those you are teaching of a right perspective and attitude. Anger, often, manifests itself in a visceral and tangible reaction to fear, to a loss of control or to a valued resource or object being threatened or removed. For example, if my life is about comfort, I may react in anger when I am told I have to get a job and stop *freeloading* off of my parents.

FOCUS: on SELF vs. on GOD

PERSPECTIVE: TEMPORAL vs. ETERNAL; ISSUE OF OWNERSHIP (mine or God's)

ATTITUDE: my RIGHTS vs. GRATITUDE

It is important to re-establish the boundaries of our lives. We are eternal; we are not here for ourselves; we belong to Jesus Christ; we will someday be held accountable for the choices we make. As in all things, I understand anger differently through the lens of God's perspective than I do through my own eyes. When I respond in anger to anything, I need to step back and ask myself – is my anger unrighteous (self-focus) or righteous (God-focus)?

AN ISSUE YOU MAY NEED TO DEAL WITH UP FRONT:

ANGER AT GOD IS NOT BIBLICAL

It presupposes an equal relationship with God (see last five chapters of JOB)

You and I can not pass moral judgment on God (ROMANS 1 – 6)

*Remember as you delineate between righteous and unrighteous anger that the fire of anger can be stoked by the presence of kindling. In other words, if an individual has not resolved *other* issues like fear or a false sense of control, then individuals or circumstances that strike a match have kindling to ignite. Anger, like temptation, often requires more attention during periods of calm and peace. We are better equipped to deal with the underlying issues that erupt into anger during those periods of peace. Encourage your people to learn how to equip themselves with truth and to deal with wrong attitudes, perspectives and focuses before those wrong views turn into the expression of unrighteous anger.

UNRIGHTEOUS ANGER:

ANGER AROUSED – A HEART RULED BY SELF

SELF-FOCUS: INJUSTICE – I WAS WRONGED; LIFE ISN'T FAIR; DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCE (ONE THAT COMPLETELY DEFINES ONES LIFE), PROBLEM PEOPLE, ETC.

ANGER MANIFESTS AS:

INTERNALIZATION – hatred, bitterness, self harm, physical symptoms

EXTERNALIZATION – angry outbursts lead to broken relationships, hatred or vengeance

ANGER IGNORED OR AVOIDED LEADS TO DEPRESSION / DESPAIR

RIGHTEOUS ANGER: A HEART CONTROLLED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

AM I AROUSED TO ANGER BY THAT WHICH ANGERS GOD?

Matthew 23:13 – 39 Jesus angered over hypocrisy, offers way back to God

Galatians 5:1 – 13 Paul angry over return to bondage, offers true freedom

DOES MY ANGER MODEL THE CHARACTER AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD?

God is compassionate, slow to anger – Exodus 34:1 – 7; Proverbs 14:29

God is merciful – Daniel 9:15 – 19; Ephesians 4:22 – 32

DOES IT ACCOMPLISH THE PURPOSES OF GOD?

When Jesus was angry, it was on God's behalf:

People were making it hard to reach God / Jesus overturned the money tables at the temple – Luke 19:45 – 48; Matthew 21:12 – 17; Mark 11:15 – 18

Teachers of the Law were concerned about the outside of a man and not the heart / Jesus rebuked them – Luke 11:37 – 54

Pharisees demanded signs and miracles to believe in Jesus / Jesus said no signs would be given to the unbelieving generation – Matthew 16:1 – 4

DOES IT WORK TOWARD A SOLUTION THAT HONORS GOD?

Nehemiah worked to right a wrong / God's justice – Nehemiah 5:1 – 13

GODLY RESPONSE TO ANGER: (Material from BCC of Arlington Heights, IL)

Pray for God's help, then expect victory (1 John 5:14 – 15)

Profess that God is sovereign and that His purposes are good (Job 1:20 – 22; Romans 8:28 & 29)

*Remember that we represent Jesus, even in difficult situations (1 Peter 2:19 – 24)

Consider whether you might have contributed to the problem (Matthew 7:3 – 5); if so, ask for forgiveness and correct the wrong (Luke 3:10 – 14)

Trust God with your “rights” and desires (James 4:1 – 10)

Follow Biblical rules of communication to promote unity (Ephesians 4:25 – 32)

Practice a Christ-like response to replace an ungodly response (Colossians 3:1 – 17)

*Develop a hitch in your step; learn to stop for a moment before you respond (a quick prayer, a silently recited verse from memory) Ecclesiastes 5:1 - 7

PUT OFF: FOCUS ON SELF – PUT ON: FOCUS ON OTHERS

D – Die to self (Luke 9:22 – 23; 1 Corinthians 15:31)

A – Ask for wisdom (James 1:5)

I – Intimacy with God, first and foremost (Matthew 22:37 – 39)

L – Love others (1 John 4)

Y – Yield to the Word of God and the Holy Spirit (Psalm 119)