

MORNING DEVOTIONS

Curb Your Anger

I'm quite sure you know what anger is, and we've all felt it – whether as a fleeting annoyance or as full-fledged rage.

Anger is a completely normal, usually healthy, human emotion. But when it gets out of control and turns destructive, it can lead to all sorts of problems—problems at work, in your personal relationships, and in the overall quality of your life. And it can make you feel as though you're at the mercy of an unpredictable and powerful emotion. Plus it can get you into an awful lot of trouble.

Have you noticed that some people really are more "hot-headed" than others are? They get angry more easily and more intensely than the average person does. There are also those who don't show their anger in loud spectacular ways but are chronically irritable and grumpy. Easily angered people don't always curse and throw things; sometimes they withdraw socially, sulk, or get physically ill.

So, it all depends on the individual, and we are all different in nature and temperament. Often when we picture a person with an anger issue, we imagine someone screaming and yelling, arms flailing in the air as they explode. Or imagine a chair being hurled across a room or punches thrown.

But there's much more to it than just a shouting match at home between husband and wife. Most people try their hardest to avoid getting angry, only to have it build up, and before you know it, the volcano of anger has erupted. Or it can remain bottled up inside, seemingly out of sight, but it's there – just below the surface – and can manifest itself in more subtle and dangerous ways.

The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle explained it very well I think:

“Anybody can become angry – that is easy; but to be angry with the right person and to the right degree and at the right time and for the right purpose, and in the right way – that is not within everybody's power and is not easy”.

He was correct in saying it's not easy to express your anger at the appropriate time – but he left God out of the equation. Can a loving Father God help us deal with this problem emotion? Yes, He can – and He does through His Holy Spirit.

Married couples do experience conflict at times. Dr James Dobson said in one of his books:

“Successful marriages are not those marriages where anger or conflict does not exist. But rather, successful marriages are where they've learned to manage their anger. When anger is managed it produces great marriages.”

And that's the key phrase here – “...when anger is managed”. And **we need the resolve to manage this troublesome emotion**. God has given you your biological make-up – the capacity to get angry. Anger is not always a bad or sinful thing. God got angry and so did Jesus – but it was handled correctly. It never got out of control.

And for you and me, we do have more control than we realise – “I can control my anger with God's help”. Faced with a potentially explosive situation we have to stop and realise there is

always a price tag. Proverbs 29:22 says, “A hot tempered man gets into all kinds of trouble”. Hot tempers cause arguments and people with hot tempers do foolish things. The word “danger” has one letter before the word “anger”. Thomas Jefferson said, “When you get angry count to 10. When we get really angry count to 100”.

Give yourself some time to stop, reflect, and think it through. Take a step back. Wait a few minutes and ask God to give you His view on the situation you are facing. The big question is, “Why am I angry?” Anger is never really the root problem in our lives. It is always a symptom or a warning light, telling you something is wrong. There is, in all likelihood, hurt, fear or frustration bubbling along in the background.

A helpful Bible verse is Ephesians 4:26: “When you are angry, don’t let it carry you into sin. Don’t let the sun set with anger in your heart”. There is so much anger in the media these days. But there are ways for anger to be appropriate and not harmful and spiteful *because nothing can ruin a relationship faster than out-of-control anger*. Aggression produces more aggression. Angry outbursts lead to other angry outbursts and it bounces back at you. You reap what you sow

The best way is to let God renew your mind. Because the Bible says in Romans 12:

“Then you will be able to discern what God wants, what is good, pleasing and complete”.

How does Jesus Christ help us overcome our anger?

He does it by attacking the root problem. Jesus talks about your hurt, your frustration, and your fears. He wants to replace that hurt in your life with His healing love.

You may have been hurt in the past, maybe you were abused, rejected, unloved, unwanted – maybe you could never get the approval of somebody who was important to you. Your pain matters to God. He cares about it. He wants to replace that hurt with His love in a way that nothing else can do.

Jesus Christ wants to replace your frustration with a new level of peace. He says:

“My peace I give to you, not as the world gives, but My peace — peace that passes understanding.”

You can’t even understand it, it’s so incredible.

Jesus Christ wants to replace your fears, your insecurities, the things that threaten you with His power because as the Bible says:

“God has not given us a spirit of fear but of power, love and a sound mind.”