

ANGER
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James 1:20 "for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God."

There is a lot of anger in the air these days. The war in Israel has brought out the worst in people. Protests are becoming mobs filled with angry people. Hatred toward Jews has escalated more than 400% in the past few weeks. Politicians are snapping at one another. Blame and finger pointing seem to be the norm these days. You don't see many people walking around with smiles on their faces.

And that brings us to our verse today. The Bible has a lot to say about anger, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament. And, throughout the Bible we find many angry people. King Saul was throwing spears at young David. Moses left Pharaoh in "hot anger," Exodus tells us. Naaman walked away fuming when things didn't go the way he expected. Jonah was angry that Nineveh was given a second chance. And the prodigal's brother was angry and unwilling to welcome his lost brother back.

There are two immediate problems with anger:

- ◆ **First, what anger does to us.** Our verse shows us the bottom line. Anger doesn't help us in our walk with the Lord. We don't become our best when we are thinking the worst. It's hard to be around someone that you are angry with. And, when we are angry it's hard to move off that island. We keep rewinding the pain and that keeps the wounds open.
- ◆ **Second, what anger leads us to doing to others:** Not only does anger destroy our insides, but it has a masterful way of wrecking our outsides, especially our relationships with others. When we are angry, we feel compelled to tell someone else. We lash out with words that often should never be said. When angry we quickly turn to the revenge mode and start thinking, saying and planning ways to get back at the other person.

Anger doesn't achieve the righteousness of God. Anger doesn't make us stand tall. Here are three quick reminders:

- ◆ **First, try not to speak when angry.** That's hard. We want to snap back. We want to set the record straight. We increase the volume and speed of our talking. We stop listening and default to the attack mode. Bite your tongue. Try to refrain from talking because most often we don't talk, we explode. And it is very hard to recover after that. You can apologize, but the damage has been done. Your reputation has taken a hit and you lost value with the person you are angry with.
- ◆ **Second, don't stay in a heated situation, it will only make you boil on the inside.** Sometimes you just have to walk away from things. Sometimes it is best to talk about the subject when both parties are calm and can reason. Be a thermostat in life. When things are too hot, try to cool things down. When things are too icy, try to warm the atmosphere up. It takes two to argue and if you are not engaging in that, the argument soon ends.
- ◆ **Third, don't make a quick decision when mad.** Most times those decisions are not thought out. We react based upon emotion and not logic. We let our heart and not our head lead us. I've seen people walk out of a church building in the middle of a sermon. I've heard of brethren getting in fist fights. The Corinthians were taking each other to court. Anger will push us to doing things that we may long regret later on.

The Ephesians were told, "be angry and do not sin." James says to be slow to anger. Build a long, long fuse to your heart. Achieving the righteousness of God ought to be important to us. Anger isn't the road that will get us there. So, find the exit and get off that road as quickly as you can. Turn around and follow the Lord.