

ANGER

Most everyone has been angry at one time or another. This emotional and often sinful problem must be dealt with or we can cause great damage to ourselves and others.

You have no doubt heard the statement, "every time we get angry we drive a nail into our own coffin." In one sense this is literally true because when one gets angry a powerful drug called adrenalin is released into the blood stream. It causes the blood pressure to rise, the heart to beat faster, the eyes to dilate, etc. No wonder John Hunter said, "My life is at the mercy of any rascal who can make me angry." An ancient proverb states, "Whom the gods would destroy they first made angry."

There is no doubt that anger destroys. Cain rose up in anger and killed his brother. Moses, in anger, threw down the tables of stone and broke them. The older brother was so angry that he would not attend the feast his father had prepared for the prodigal son (Luke 15). James and John had a temper that wanted to call down fire from heaven on those Samaritans who rejected Christ. Peter was so angry he whipped out his sword and cut off the servant's ear when they came to take Jesus away.

Consider the following:

1. Anger is to be put away. (Col. 3:8)
2. Man is to be slow to wrath. (James 1:19)
3. "For the wrath of man works not the righteousness of God." (James 1:20)
4. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that rules his spirit than he that takes a city." (Prov. 16:32)
5. Anger is listed alongside blasphemy, adultery, idolatry, murder, and drunkenness in Galatians 5:19-21.

Why then would a business man (because he knows anger is unproductive) be well-behaved in business relations and come home and act childish? Why would a golfer, after making a poor shot, wrap his club around a tree in frustration? Why would a child who spilled something at the table get slapped across the face (and sometimes be subjected to an explosion of words which rips and tears everything within earshot)? How can a woman who acts smooth and relaxed at church snap the

kid's head off at home? How can a person who is "blowing his stack" answer the telephone with perfect calm? The answer: Because this is how anger works. We must understand this and set about to overcome it.

Do not let anger get out of hand. If so, we could allow our anger to cause us to become bitter, or to seek revenge. Such often happens, but always to the serious harm of the one who has let his feelings get out of hand. "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." (Eph. 4:26)

Anger betrays emotional immaturity. Anger seeks to dominate and hurt others. Since anger is not hereditary, we should seek to control our emotions by confessing our problems to God, renouncing evil, and praying.