

internalizing your feelings. Here are a few guidelines to help anyone deal with general feelings of anger.

1. Recognize your anger. Don't brush off the reality of your anger. You can't deal with feelings you won't acknowledge.
2. Restrain your reaction. The book of Proverbs is filled with passages that explain the danger of giving in to angry emotions. This includes an outburst of angry actions or words. But, it also includes pouting and the silent treatment.
3. Identify the cause of your anger. Is it caused by someone else's sin, your own wrongdoing, or a misunderstanding? This is important to determining whether your response is directed appropriately. Take a measured look at the cause and see if your response is warranted by the true size of the wrong.
4. Determine options. What are the possible ways of dealing with the situation? Are you willing to really listen to a view from someone else? Does a sinful action need to be dealt with? Is it a minor infraction that should be overlooked? Can a compromise be reached? Should I give up my will or desires for the good of someone else? All responses should fit into the guidelines of Ephesians 4:29.
5. Grant forgiveness. No offense by another person could possibly equal our guilt before God, yet He offered forgiveness to us. He has asked you to show that same mercy toward others.

Sources:

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- Jones, Robert D. "Anger Against God." *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 14.3, Spring 1996, p.15-20.
- *Focus on the Family Health Resources*
(www.focusonthefamily.com/lifechallenges/emotional_health.aspx)
- Narramore Christian Foundation (www.NCFLiving.org)

Sermon Notes

INTERVENTION: A Moment of Hope Series

#2: "The Right and Wrong of Wrath"

What is Anger?

Is Anger Ever OK?

1. Anger is _____ sin. (Ephesians 4:26)
2. _____ expresses His _____. (Psalm 7:11)

Three Responses to Our Angry Feelings

1. _____ it out.
2. _____ it.
3. _____ it around.

Responding to Our Anger (and the Anger of Others)

1. Become _____ to anger.
2. _____ with it.
Attack the _____, not the _____.
3. _____ (Ephesians 4:32)
4. Develop a Plan
 - a. _____ angry people.
 - b. Determine a _____.
* Ephesians 4:26-32

ANGER

A Further Understanding on Dealing with Anger

Anger is a dangerous emotion because of the resulting damage that touches so many areas of our lives. This includes the physical impact (high blood pressure, tension headaches, heart attacks, etc.) and psychological reactions (from anxiety and fear to depression). Anger often leads to feelings of self-pity or thoughts of revenge based on perceived injustices done to or around us. We can allow strong feelings of anger to generate thoughts of hurting ourselves or others, and can even carry out these intense cravings. Our spiritual lives are impacted as we give in to bitterness, slander or angry outbursts in response to our feelings.

It is possible for Christians to deal with their anger in a way that honors God and allows us to avoid sin (Ephesians 4:26). In this article we'll consider (a) anger directed toward God and (b) some basic steps to dealing with anger in our lives.

Angry at God

Many people are reluctant to admit when they feel anger toward God. However, people must be honest with their feelings, especially Christians, in considering whether God is the target of the anger they feel. Without considering this option, the angry feelings could ferment within the soul developing into a deep hatred and distrust of God.

Anger directed toward God may be expressed through questions like, "Why did God do this?" or "Why didn't He stop this from happening?" One may be so blunt as to say, "I can't believe in a God that would allow things like this to happen in the world." These statements reveal a misunderstanding of the nature of who God is, and an incomplete understanding of the theology of suffering and pain. If one trusts that God is omnipotent (all-powerful) and omniscient (all-knowing), then it's easy to believe He's to blame when bad things happen because He could have stopped them from occurring. In reality, God is not the cause of pain; sin is the cause of suffering in the world. It's the reason bad things happen. The only

way to rid the world of suffering would be for God to eliminate all sinful people, therefore ridding the world of the source of the sin (us). The other option is to stop all consequences of sin (suffering) by His miraculous power, thereby eradicating the ability to choose wrong over right. Freedom, the ability to make one's own choices, always includes the possibility to choose wrong which brings about the consequences of suffering and pain. To eliminate this freedom would make man a preprogrammed robot unable to make choices or exercise free will. Free will can't continue without the possibility of consequences and suffering.

The inequity of suffering can also launch a person toward angry feelings directed at God. It's impossible to explain why one person experiences great tragedy while another escapes with hardly a scratch. But, that doesn't mean there isn't a purpose behind that inequity. Scripture explains that God is working in the lives of His people for their own good (Romans 8:28). The struggles and trials experienced in this life are designed to help people mature, become more like Christ (1 Peter 1:5-7; James 1:2-4), and even present a witness to the rest of the world (John 9:1-3). Though God's ways are not always understood, the Christian must develop a trust in God's plan and His goodness to avoid becoming someone who harbors anger and bitterness against Him.

God knows the heart of man (Proverbs 16:2) and is not surprised at our feelings toward Him. He desires our anger toward Him change to understanding. Robert D. Jones has explained the process like this:

"The solution to sinful anger at God lies in continuously repenting of our remaining unbelief and rebellion. We must reject the lies that deny God's goodness, power, and wisdom. We must reaffirm His righteousness, love, sovereignty, and justice. We must repent, knowing that 'God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.' (James 4:6)"

Dealing with Our Anger

Dealing with anger often depends on the depth of your feelings, the immediacy of the situation, and whether you release your anger by spewing it out toward others or swallowing the anger and