

Biblical Counseling
Dealing with Anger - from Anger is a Choice.

Dealing with Anger Mentally

1. Get more information before you respond. (Ask questions & understand before reacting).
2. Determine if the anger is over this person or if carried over from another incident.
3. Evaluate your angry feelings
 - A. What is making me feel angry?
 - B. Why am I feeling anger and not some other emotion?
 - C. Am I jumping to conclusions about the situation.
 - D. Is my anger justified?
 - E. How might others, including the person provoking my anger, view this situation?
 - F. What can I do to change the situation that will help reduce my anger?
4. Remind yourself that God is in control. (Rom. 5:3-5; Jm. 1:2-4; 1 Pet. 1:6-9)
5. Confess your emotions to God (Ps. 39:1-4; Ps 55)
6. Learn to deal with the sin of your anger.

Dealing with Anger Verbally (Expressing anger).

1. Learn to discipline your mind
2. Don't repress anger for long periods of time (Ephesians 4:26,27)
3. Make it a habit not to withdraw into silence.
4. Be open to criticism.
5. Share only one issue at a time.
6. Don't use the past to manipulate other people.
7. Learn to express your expectations for others verbally
8. State your hurt or complaint as objectively as possible.
9. Share your complaint in private, not in public.
10. Let the other party know what things are positive in the relationship.
11. Avoid a win-lose situation.
12. Don't make threats to terminate or leave the relationship.
13. Don't always be joking.
14. Don't accuse or attack the other person.
15. Don't exaggerate the issue.
16. Look for a solution, seek reconciliation.
17. Allow for reaction time

Counseling Situations - Anger

Read through all the situations below. Pick one or two and write out how you would respond to the situation and counsel those involved. Include in your answer:

- *What test of their faith may be involved;
- *The questions you might ask to uncover what might be going on in their Emotional; Volitional; Rational and Personal circles;
- *Relevant Bible verses that would encourage them in their faith and a righteous response;
- *Advise you would give them on how to handle the situation they are facing.

Remember the basic counseling flow chart & basic stages of counseling handed out previously

1) A friend of yours has changed somewhat over the last few months becoming increasingly irritable with sharp words, acidic sarcasm and even occasional profanities. Previously your friend had always been very calm, reserved and respectful of others. How would you approach your friend about their change in attitude and behavior? How would you help your friend overcome the increasing anger.

2) A lady in your church with whom you are a friend confides in you, *"I'm terribly afraid that I'm going to hurt my own children!"* Upon questioning you find out that in the last month she has verbally exploded several times at what she admits was only slight disobedience by her two pre-school children. Today it escalated and she struck one of her children sending him across the room. She is in despair over her own previously uncharacteristic violence. She is asking you to help her understand what is happening to her and to change before someone is hurt. How would you proceed to counsel her?

3) A woman in your church confides that she is being beaten by her unsaved husband who does not attend church. He has made it very clear to her that she can go for counseling, but he wants none of it. She is not sure what she should do. She wants to be a good witness to her unsaved husband understanding 1 Peter 3 and trying to win him by her chaste and respectful behavior, but she is not sure what more she could do. She has become fearful for her physical safety. How will you counsel her? What Biblical principles will you help her understand and apply to her situation?

4) What would be your response to the following situations? What emotion would you feel? If your emotion would be expressed, how would you express it? How would you want to express it?

- A) You spend three hours fixing something only to find out your brand new part is defective.
- B) You find out the new person at work whom you spent the last six months training, just got promoted over you.
- C) You warned the salesman not to come into your yard because your dog would bite. He came in anyway insisting that all animals love him. He got bit. He sued, and just won in court.
- D) You volunteer to help watch a group of kids as a service to your social club. You instructions to an unruly 6 year old are not only unheeded, he spits in your face and kicks you in the shin.
- E) When you arrive home from a long day at work, you find your house had been broken into and ransacked, with many of your valuables either stolen or purposefully broken.

1) A friend of yours has changed somewhat over the last few months becoming increasingly irritable with sharp words, acidic sarcasm and even occasional profanities. Previously your friend had always been very calm, reserved and respectful of others. How would you approach your friend about their change in attitude and behavior? How would you help your friend overcome the increasing anger.

Stage 1: Identify presenting problem (The test)

Changed behavior - from calm, reserved and respected to irritable, harsh and profane

Stage 2: Identify problem emotion (E):

Anger, irritability

Stage 3: Identify problem behavior (V).

Irritability, harsh language, profanity

Stage 4: Identify problem thinking (R):

Unknown. Something has changed resulting in anger issues. Investigate as to when this started, what happened, thoughts about particular situations that now upset him

Teach Biblical commands concerning problem areas (Correction of V, R & P)

Particular verses would be needed to address specific reasons for the anger. General verses:

**Be slow to anger: Proverbs 14:29; 16:32; 19:11*

**Keep away from angry people or you will be like them: Proverbs 22:24; 29:22*

**Learn to control tongue - James 3:1-12; Ephesians 4:29*

**See Stage 5 below*

Stage 5: Clarify Biblical thinking (R):

General cause of anger: James 1:1-4

*General responses: *Deal with issues quickly - Ephesians 4:26*

**Be slow to let emotions determine behavior: James 1:19*

**Seek righteousness: James 1:20*

**Seek the Lord's peace - prayer: Philippians 4:6-7 / Isaiah 26:3*

**Leave revenge in the Lord's hands - Romans 12:19*

**Teach proper use of the mouth*

Stage 6: Secure volitional commitment (V)

As you determine cause that prods anger, secure commitment to deal with the issues and making steps in a plan to deal with them.

Stage 7: Plan and carry out Biblical behavior (V)

Develop specific plan for what will be done when the emotion begins to rise. Determine Bible verses to memorize to train mind in righteousness and enable proper response

Stage 8: Identify Spirit controlled emotions (E)

Encourage as steps are taken toward proper response

2) A lady in your church with whom you are a friend confides in you, *"I'm terribly afraid that I'm going to hurt my own children!"* Upon questioning you find out that in the last month she has verbally exploded several times at what she admits was only slight disobedience by her two pre-school children. Today it escalated and she struck one of her children sending him across the room. She is in despair over her own previously uncharacteristic violence. She is asking you to help her understand what is happening to her and to change before someone is hurt. How would you proceed to counsel her?

Stage 1: Identify presenting problem (The test)

**Fear of harming children. *Verbal explosions of anger *Physical striking in anger*

Stage 2: Identify problem emotion (E):

Fear & Anger

Stage 3: Identify problem behavior (V).

**Verbal and physical abuse (it is abuse because it is done in anger)*

Stage 4: Identify problem thinking (R):

This is uncharacteristic violence, so when did change occur? What was happening related to that change occurring? Why is the children's disobedience getting to her now when it had not previously? Are there other things going on that are irritating her? How is her marriage? Family life? Other relationships? Is she sleeping well? Etc.

Teach Biblical commands concerning problem areas (Correction of V, R & P)

**She has some parenting issues contributing to the problem - teach Biblical principles of parenting and bringing children under control - Eph. 6:1, etc.*

**The verbal and physical expressions of her anger are contrary to godliness - she does not have righteous anger. Verses about being slow to anger, having patience, and setting aside anger (Col. 3:8) and that such anger will not achieve righteousness (James 1:20).*

Stage 5: Clarify Biblical thinking (R):

**As above -*

Stage 6: Secure volitional commitment (V)

As you determine triggers to the anger, secure commitment to deal with the issues and making steps in a plan to deal with them.

Stage 7: Plan and carry out Biblical behavior (V)

Develop specific plan for what will be done when the emotion begins to rise. Determine Bible verses to memorize to train mind in righteousness and enable proper response

Stage 8: Identify Spirit controlled emotions (E)

Encourage as steps are taken toward proper response

3) A woman in your church confides that she is being beaten by her unsaved husband who does not attend church. He has made it very clear to her that she can go for counseling, but he wants none of it. She is not sure what she should do. She wants to be a good witness to her unsaved husband understanding 1 Peter 3 and trying to win him by her chaste and respectful behavior, but she is not sure what more she could do. She has become fearful for her physical safety. How will you counsel her? What Biblical principles will you help her understand and apply to her situation?

Stage 1: Identify presenting problem (The test)

**Physically abusive husband*

Stage 2: Identify problem emotion (E):

**Fear*

Stage 3: Identify problem behavior (V).

**Physical abuse by husband who refuses to deal with his actions.*

**She is absorbing the abuse in effort to fulfill her understanding of 1 Peter 3*

Stage 4: Identify problem thinking (R):

**Try to find out from her perspective what may be triggering her husband's abuse of her. Is there something she does / says / etc. that contributes? Is he characterized by physical violence in other areas? Are there things bothering him that she can help with to help him calm down?*

**What is the degree of fear for her physical safety? Why does she believe she must absorb the physical abuse? If it is serious, then she must take action to protect herself - children? - This may include leaving his presence when he is upset - escalating to a separation until he is willing to deal with the issues. It could even include an order of protection.*

Teach Biblical commands concerning problem areas (Correction of V, R & P)

**Make sure she understands the proper application of 1 Peter 3 - and 1 Cor. 7*

**Identify any areas in which she can improve in her own godly demeanor / response*

**Identify proper way to pray for husband and her response so that she will not fear*

Stage 5: Clarify Biblical thinking (R):

As above -

Stage 6: Secure volitional commitment (V)

**She is already committed to the marriage - get commitment to *make changes in anything she can do to reduce husband's stress / anger *implement responses to ensure her safety (and children) *diligence in praying properly for the situation*

Stage 7: Plan and carry out Biblical behavior (V)

**As in 6 - hold accountable - be resource to call in emergencies*

Stage 8: Identify Spirit controlled emotions (E)

**Encourage when taking proper steps.*

4) What would be your response to the following situations? What emotion would you feel? If your emotion would be expressed, how would you express it? How would you want to express it?

A) You spend three hours fixing something only to find out your brand new part is defective.

Anger. Might be tempted to throw defective part. Would still be angry over lost of time and expense - not take actions that would damage anything - but use emotional energy to not only get new part, but write / call company about defect to seek prevention of it happening again or to other people

B) You find out the new person at work whom you spent the last six months training, just got promoted over you.

Anger over the injustice. Temptation to rash words or action. Would still be angry / disgusted - use emotional energy to find out why this was done. Listen for any failings or shortcomings in self that contributed to trainee being promoted over the trainer. Protest any actual injustice. Plan on course of action for future - including changing jobs if necessary

C) You warned the salesman not to come into your yard because your dog would bite. He came in anyway insisting that all animals love him. He got bit. He sued, and just won in court.

This happened to my Diane's uncle. Disgust over legal system. Temptation - to express that frustration inappropriately. Would still be disgusted - but direct emotional energy to prayer that God would take care of the situation including chastening of those involved in this injustice. Talk to lawyer about any possible countersuit

D) You volunteer to help watch a group of kids as a service to your social club. You instructions to an unruly 6 year old are not only unheeded, he spits in your face and kicks you in the shin.

Anger and frustration. Temptation - to respond with inappropriate words or actions. Would still be angry - but direct the emotional energy to talk with parents about their child and his actions. If parents are willing to listen, then an opportunity to help train them. If parents are unwilling to listen or take responsibility, take preventive measures escalating to your own refusal to watch their child in the future - talk with social club leadership about banning the child until the proper corrections are done.

E) When your arrive home from a long day at work, you find your house had been broken into and ransacked, with many of your valuables either stolen or purposefully broken.

Anger. Temptation - to respond with ungodly words or actions. Would like to respond calmly and take proper actions in calling police, gathering evidence and information needed for insurance company. Use emotional energy to pray for the vandals / thieves - their conviction of their sin leading to salvation. Leave revenge in the Lord's hands.

Proverbs on Anger
Selected Scriptures

Introduction

This morning we continue in looking at what Proverbs has to say about the various vices. Remember that a vice is simply a moral fault or failing. A vice can range from trivial imperfections to serious or even lethal wicked habits. Improper manners could be a trivial rudeness or escalate into something serious such as passing on your illness by coughing and sneezing on others. It can become lethal in things such as road rage that places others in danger of serious injury or death.

Societies develop moral customs, and while such mores determine what is acceptable and not acceptable in a group, they do not determine what is actually good or bad, right or wrong. Only God can do that. Social mores may guide societal response to a vice, but they cannot determine the natural consequences. Tobacco products may be welcomed by a particular group, but usage still increases the risk of cancer. Of even more serious consequence is the fact that God is the judge and will hold us accountable for all our vices.

We have already examined vices related to communication such as gossip, seduction, flattery, deceit and lying. (See: Proverbs on the Tongue). Last week we examined pride. There can be proper pride when it is related to that which is good and reflects God and godliness. It is proper for God to be proud. It is proper for humans to delight in God, their relationship to Him and all that He does for them. Taking pleasure and having satisfaction in what the Lord does through you is proper. This can and should be expressed to others that do what is good and right. It is also proper to have self-confidence in what you know you can and should do while recognizing at the same time that it is God that is working through you.

However, for the most part, human pride is very negative. It is an evil that God hates for it is at the root of so many other sins. It was the first sin of Lucifer in thinking he could rise up and usurp God and His position (Isaiah 14). Mankind has followed suit in pride and its various expressions of arrogance, haughtiness, pomposity, insolence, superciliousness and disdain. Man thinks of himself more highly than he ought, then looks down on others he thinks are beneath him. Whenever a man magnifies himself, there is a corresponding diminishing of God in his eyes. I think it is safe to say that most of man's problems both with God and other people will trace back to this issue of pride. That is why God is opposed to the proud (James 4:6).

Man's only hope is to do the opposite and magnify God while diminishing himself. Man must humble himself and think rightly. It actually is not that difficult to humble yourself. All you have to do is recognize the truth, but that is the problem for most people. People do not want to acknowledge that they are but finite, mortal creatures that have fatally disobeyed their Creator and therefore are under His just condemnation while being completely incapable of making restitution, payment or absolving their own sins in anyway shape or form. Without divine intervention all men are condemned and will be cast into the eternal lake of fire. Yet, that is exactly what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. He has intervened to pay the price of sin so that we can be forgiven, redeemed and adopted into His family. The offer of salvation is a gift of His grace, and grace is exactly what the Lord gives to the humble (1 Peter 5:5, Ephesians 2:8-9).

Human relationships are also resolved when there is humility. Philippians 2:3-4 explains that the means to living in harmony is to "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own

personal interests, but also for the interests of others.” This was the attitude of the Lord Jesus which we are also to have in ourselves (Philippians 2:5-8).

The next vice I want to look at has a close association with pride and has the same cure.

Anger

Anger is an emotion, a strong feeling of displeasure which is often accompanied by annoyance, antagonism or hostility. There are different levels of anger which range from the Lord’s burning and consuming wrath all the way down to vexation. These levels are expressed in many Hebrew synonyms. Because anger is an emotion, it is in itself neither good nor evil. Its moral quality is determined by its cause and the actions resulting from it. The anger of God is always righteous. When the anger of man reflects godliness, it can be righteous. However, man’s anger does not often reflect godliness and so is usually unrighteous. Even when man’s anger is righteous there must be great caution for as James 1:19-20 warns, “This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.”

As I prepared this sermon I soon realized that the subject of anger is large and the study of this subject would not be easy. There are many levels of anger with many different synonyms used. And even though I am limiting this study to only the various Hebrew synonyms since our study is focused on Proverbs, it became complex because the same Hebrew word can be translated as anger, wrath, fury, indignant or vexed depending on context while the same English word is also used for several different Hebrew words depending on context.

I will be giving fairly brief overviews of these Hebrew synonyms in broad categories that are descriptive of anger. I will also point out when that type of anger is righteous and when it is evil. I want you to have some idea about these various words and the levels of anger for that will give you a better understanding of the various Proverbs that use these them or their cognates. Since my goal is to help you practically apply the truth of God’s word to your life, this study will not be thorough and detailed. That would require writing a book and many weeks to go through it.

Anger that is Hot

The first broad category includes various words that describe anger in terms of being hot to some degree, or something that is being warmed including kindling a fire, or the smoke that rises from such a fire.

חַמָּה / hēmâ. This is the word for the most serious type of anger. The word is derived from either yāham, “be hot,” or hāmam “be or become warm,” “become hot. In the Old Testament it is only used in reference to heat within a person. It is used for both physical heat such as a fever (Deuteronomy 32:24), or the emotional heat of anger, hot displeasure, indignation, wrath, rage or fury.

Moses uses this term in Deuteronomy 9:19 to describe God’s reaction as “hot displeasure” alongside His anger and wrath over the unfaithfulness of His people concerning the incident regarding the idolatry of the Golden Calf (Exodus 32). In Jeremiah 42:18 it is translated as “wrath” that had been poured out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem for their sins. In Jeremiah 10:25 the prophet calls upon God to pour out His wrath, His fury on the evil nations that do not know the Lord and had laid waste Jacob. In 2 Kings 22:13-17 we find that while sorrow and repentance might delay it, it would not avert it. However, in Numbers 25:11 we find that the actions of Phinehas against those playing the harlot with the Midianite women did turn away God’s wrath from destroying the sons of Israel in His jealousy. It would seem then that once the Lord has become hot with this type of anger, it will have to either be poured out or some kind of execution of justice against its cause will have to be carried out. That makes this the most serious type of anger.

Hēmâ is also used in the Old Testament to describe this kind of anger in men - some righteously and some unrighteously. When Esau had this type of hot fury toward his brother because of his deception,

Jacob had to flee to Haran (Genesis 27). It would be two decades before he could return and even then he was very fearful of Esau (Genesis 32-33). Naaman was unrighteous in his rage when Elisha told him he could get rid of his leprosy by washing in the Jordan river seven times (2 Kings 5:12). Naaman considered the rivers of Damascus to be superior and was leaving until his servants convinced him to at least try it. His attitude changed abruptly when he was cleansed as Elisha said would happen.

This was the righteous kind of anger that Ahasuareus had when he found out from Esther the evil plot Haman had to annihilate the Jews. The king's anger subsided only after Haman was hanged on the very gallows Haman had prepared for executing righteous Mordecai. In this case the truth of Proverbs 16:14 was carried out in reality, "The fury (hēmâ) of a king is like messengers of death, But a wise man will appease it." Haman was not wise and so was executed.

This word is translated as "enrage" in Proverbs 6:34-35 which is a warning to those that would go in to his neighbor's wife, for whoever touches her will not go unpunished. "For jealousy enrages a man, And he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will not accept any ransom, Nor will he be satisfied though you give many gifts." The inability to appease brings out the seriousness of this type of anger. Proverbs 27:4 adds, "Wrath (hēmâ) is fierce and anger ('ap) is a flood, But who can stand before jealousy?"

The Scriptures warn the righteous about getting caught up in this type of anger. Proverbs 19:19, "A man of great anger (hēmâ). will bear the penalty, For if you rescue him, you will only have to do it again." Psalm 37:7-11, "Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who carries out wicked schemes. Cease from anger and forsake wrath; Do not fret; it leads only to evildoing. For evildoers will be cut off, But those who wait for the Lord, they will inherit the land. Yet a little while and the wicked man will be no more; And you will look carefully for his place and he will not be there. But the humble will inherit the land And will delight themselves in abundant prosperity."

חַרֵּה / hārôn is the next word and it has a similar meaning and is also one of the strongest words for anger in the Old Testament. According to the Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (TWOT - which I used a lot for this study), this word is related to an Aramaic root meaning "to cause fire to burn," and to an Arabic root meaning "burning sensation." However, the Hebrew word is used metaphorically in reference to an extreme anger or wrath that is hot or burning. This noun form is used only in reference to God and often joined with another Hebrew word for anger, אַף /'ap. Together they are translated as "burning anger" (Exodus 32:12), "fierce anger" (Numbers 25:4), "fierce wrath" (1 Samuel 28:18).

This idea that God has such burning wrath both surprises and repels some people because they have thought of God as a doting grandfather who only gives good gifts to His grandchildren and never corrects them. That is a false God and not fitting for our Holy Creator who is righteous, just and loving. He will carry out justice because it is part of protecting His holy nature and interests. The Lord is righteous and sovereign and so will carry out His divine order. He has an infinite passion toward the objects of His love and so has a corresponding holy jealousy. (Take note that while we often use the word jealousy to describe envy, another meaning of jealousy is "fierce protection of one's rights and possessions"). These demand that He respond in the various levels of anger toward anyone or anything that profanes, tries to block or rejects that love or His order. We naturally understand this when it comes to what rightfully belongs to us. There is a proper and holy jealousy that a husband and wife are to have toward each other and their children. They will seek to protect those family relationships from both external and internal dangers. Multiply that by infinity and you will have some idea about the nature of God's holy jealousy and His burning anger that arises from it.

Moses warned the Israelites in Deuteronomy 4:23-24 that they would need to be careful to keep their covenant with God and not fall into idolatry for "For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God." They had already seen this carried out when Nadab and Abihu offered "strange fire" before the

Lord in their incense pans. Because of their irreverence, fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them (Leviticus 10:1-3). They had also seen this in the matter of the sin at Peor when the people played harlotry with the Midianite women resulting in 23,000 being killed by a plague from the Lord and another 1,000 executed by the judges of Israel (Number 25, 1 Corinthians 10:8).

This type of righteous burning anger that is consuming to this degree belongs only to God. There is no hint of anything evil within it. In addition, it is tempered by God's other attributes otherwise we would all be consumed by it immediately. 2 Peter 3:9 tells us the Lord is patient, not willing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance. That is the Lord's present mercy, yet this burning anger is still present and will be unleashed in consuming the wicked in the future. Isaiah 13:13 says of that future day, "Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, And the earth will be shaken from its place At the fury of the Lord of hosts In the day of His burning anger."

Man can and does have something similar at times for there is a related word, חָרָה / hōrî, that is used of both God and man. It was in the Lord's "fierce anger" that He cut off Judah and let Nebuchadnezzar destroy Jerusalem (Lamentations 2:3). Jonathan was justified in having "fierce anger" after his father, King Saul, had hurled his spear at him for questioning his father's desire to kill David (1 Samuel 20:34). When your own father attempts to kill you for defending a friend, displeasure that is extreme to the point of feeling it burn is appropriate. However, such emotion by the Ephraimites against Judah in 2 Chronicles 25:7 was completely wrong. King Amaziah had hired and paid them to go into battle with him, but the Lord directed him to send them home before the battle began. The Ephraimites returned home in "fierce anger" because they selfishly wanted the opportunity to gain even more by collecting from the spoil from the attack on Seir. Their utter unrighteousness is seen in such a strong term being used to describe their anger. No wonder God told Amaziah to send them home. The Lord would not be with them in the coming battle if they were present.

The related verb form of this same word, חָרָה / hārâ, is also used for both God and man, and is a very strong term describing anger being kindled as would a fire. It is used in reference to both the source causing the anger and the object such anger was against. When used in reference to the Lord, it is a righteous anger that is generated and His anger toward anything is always righteous. For example, in Numbers 11, the Lord responded to the complaining of the people about lacking meat by sending them an abundance of quail, but they were so greedy in gathering the quail that "the anger of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord struck the people with a severe plague

When this word is used in reference to man, it could be a righteous or unrighteous anger. In Job 32:2-3, Elihu had his anger kindled because Job sought to justify himself before God and his three friends found no answer to Job's dilemma, yet condemned him. This is an example of a righteous anger being kindled because it reflects God's own reaction. In Job 42:7 the Lord rebuked Job's three sorry counselors saying "to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends, because you have not spoken of Me what is right as My servant Job has." Their arrogance, and self-righteousness prompted the Lord's great disapproval.

The same person can have a righteous anger kindled some times and an unrighteous anger at other times. In 1 Samuel 11, Saul was told about the Ammonites besieging the city of Jabesh-gilead and he became angry after the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. This was righteous anger that was kindled. Saul is also an example of a man who became unrighteously angry. I mentioned Jonathan having righteous anger toward his father earlier for trying to kill him. That was preceded by Saul becoming angry because Jonathan had given David permission to be away when it was Saul's plan to murder him.

Genesis 39:19 is an example of a man's anger kindled for right reason and yet he was still wrong. Potiphar's wife accused Joseph of trying to seduce her. It was right for him to become angry because a husband should be jealous in protecting his wife. But in this case, he was still wrong for his wife lied and Joseph was innocent. That is always one of the great dangers of man's anger. We can think ourselves justified and yet be unrighteous because we did not know the truth. This is one of the reasons Proverbs

gives many warnings about being slow to anger. Proverbs 15:18, “A hot-tempered man (hēmâ) stirs up strife, But the slow to anger (ʿap) calms a dispute.”

For the most part, man’s anger is kindled for sinful reasons and is therefore unrighteous. Jonah became angry because a plant that had been giving him shade from the hot sun was killed by a worm. While any of us can understand the displeasure that would come from losing something so pleasant, Jonah’s anger was selfish. It was not his plant and even more so, the reason he was sitting on the hill overlooking Ninevah was because he was hoping to see the Lord destroy the city and its people that he despised so much. They repented and God granted them mercy instead and that upset Jonah. More obvious examples of unrighteous anger include Cain’s anger due to envy of his brother, Abel (Genesis 4); Balak’s anger against Balaam because he would not curse Israel for him (Numbers 24); Saul’s envy of the praise being given to David (1 Samuel 18); Sanballat’s anger that Nehemiah was rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 3 & 4);

Proverbs 24:19-20 uses this term saying, “Do not fret (hārâ) because of evildoers Or be envious of the wicked; For there will be no future for the evil man; The lamp of the wicked will be put out.” The idea here is that you should do not let anger be kindled in you because of evildoers for God will deal with them in justice.

כָּאָס / kâʿas. This word is similar to הָרָא / hārâ, but not as strong as the idea of kindling a fire. This word means “to provoke the heart to a heated condition which in turn leads to specific actions” (TWOT), and so is translated as vex, agitate and stir up. Moses warned the people in Deuteronomy 4:25 that they would provoke God when they did evil in His sight. When these provocations continue long enough they kindle the fire of God’s fierce wrath. 2 Kings 23:26 is an example of this. “However, the Lord did not turn from the fierceness (hārôn) of His great wrath (ʿap) with which His anger (ʿap) burned against Judah, because of all the provocations (kâʿas) with which Manasseh had provoked (kâʿas) Him.” However, if the provocation has not reached the level of burning anger, then it can be calmed. Ezekiel 16:42 is such an example, “So I will calm My fury against you and My jealousy will depart from you, and I will be pacified and angry no more.”

People can also have their hearts provoked to a hot condition. The godly are vexed and brought to grief by the sin of the wicked. Hannah’s rival, Peninnah, provoked her to grief (1 Samuel 1:6,16). Psalm 6 describes the vexation caused to the righteous by their adversaries. There are two Proverbs that use this word in this sense translating it as either grief or vexed.

Proverbs 17:25, “A foolish son is a grief (kâʿas) to his father And bitterness to her who bore him.” A father’s heart will become hot with distress at the foolishness of a son while the mother’s pain and despondency is even stronger. Proverbs 21:19 describes the consequence of having an ungodly spouse. “It is better to live in a desert land Than with a contentious and vexing (kâʿas) woman.” In this Proverb it is the wife that is ungodly, but the same principle applies if it is the husband. Either of these can lead to separation or divorce, and if it is both husband and wife, it is unlikely the marriage will last long. When I was a pastor southern California, I actually had a man who was a new Christian come in to see me because he wanted to know if this verse meant he could leave his very contentious wife and move out to the Mojave desert.

In the opposite direction, the wicked are provoked to vexation and anger by the actions and lives of the godly. Psalm 112:10 describes this in general terms. Ecclesiastes 7:9 teaches that such provoking of the wicked is a sign of their foolishness. Proverbs 12:16 uses this word in the same sense, “A fool’s anger is known at once, But a prudent man conceals dishonor.” A fool cannot hide his displeasure when anything provokes him. Proverbs 27:3, describes the burden such fools are to everyone else. “A stone is heavy and the sand weighty, But the provocation of a fool is heavier than both of them.”

עָשָׁן / āśan. This word and its cognates are the last in this broad category related to anger as heat and it refers to the smoke that rises from a fire. It is used both literally and figuratively. Smoke and fire are often physical aspects of a theophany, a physical manifestation of the presence of God such as the smoking oven and flaming torch that appeared when God made His covenant with Abraham (Genesis 15:17), or the fire and smoke on Mount Sinai when God met with Moses and manifested Himself to His people (Exodus 19:18, etc.). The word is used in a figurative sense of God's anger in passages such as Deuteronomy 29:20 and Psalm 74:1 which says, "O God, why have You rejected us forever? Why does Your anger smoke against the sheep of Your pasture?"

The only usage of this word in Proverbs is in 10:26 which uses the characteristics of physical smoke to describe the irritation caused to others by those who are lazy. "Like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, So is the lazy one to those who send him." Those who are irresponsible prod to anger those who are depending on them.

Anger that Splinters

The next word, קָצַף / qāsap, and its cognates do not appear in Proverbs, but I want to briefly mention it just to give a fuller idea about the consequences of anger. It is used to describe a splintered or snapped off branch, and when used metaphorically it refers to the fracturing of relationships. It is used of God and people and variously translated as angry, furious, wrathful and enraged. Anger is dangerous because it can result in fractured and destroyed relationships with others.

Anger that Storms

רָעַף / zā'ap refers to the raging of a storm as in Jonah 1:15 and so is used to describe a storm in the heart that could result in a troubled appearance (Daniel 1:10), dejection (Genesis 40:6), or rage (2 Chronicles 26:19). Proverbs 19:3 describes the cause and storm within a foolish man. "The foolishness of man ruins his way, And his heart rages (zā'ap) against the Lord." His own folly brought him to destruction. King Uzziah is an example of this. He decided to take on the priestly role in the Temple, and when opposed by the legitimate priests, he became enraged (zā'ap) against them much as described in the first part of Proverbs 19:12, "The king's wrath (zā'ap) is like the roaring of a lion . . ." The Lord smote him with leprosy and he remained a leper to the day of his death.

Anger of Indignation

רָעַם (zā'am) refers to experiencing or expressing intense anger especially in denunciation or scolding. It is a characteristic of God for Psalm 7:11 states, "God is a righteous judge, And a God who has indignation every day." The Psalm goes on to speak of God's judgment of the wicked. Isaiah 66:14 states that God is "indignant toward His enemies" and will execute His judgment upon them.

This word occurs three times in Proverbs. It is first used in Proverbs 22:14 in the sense of a person who is denounced or cursed, "The mouth of an adulteress is a deep pit; He who is cursed (zā'am) of the Lord will fall into it." Those who have been declared to be evil are easy prey for the seductions of the adulteress.

In Proverbs 24:24 this is a reaction to the perversion of the wicked, "He who says to the wicked, "You are righteous," Peoples will curse him, nations will abhor (zā'am) him." God pronounces a woe upon those who would do this in Isaiah 5:20, so it is no wonder that such people bring on an intense anger against them.

In Proverbs 25:23 this is the natural reaction toward those who are malicious in what they say, "The north wind brings forth rain, And a backbiting tongue, an angry (zā'am) countenance." Talebearers and slanders should not be surprised when others become angry with them.

Anger that Overflows

רָבַע / ābar. This word group has a primary meaning to pass over, by or through, but is also used metaphorically for anger that overflows. It is used of God in several places to describe the Lord's burning anger that overflows to judge and destroy the wicked. An example of this is Isaiah 13:9, "Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, Cruel, with fury and burning anger, To make the land a desolation; And He will exterminate its sinners from it."

It is used of a king toward those who dishonor him in Proverbs 14:35, "The king's favor is toward a servant who acts wisely, But his anger (ābar) is toward him who acts shamefully." It is also used of the wicked in Proverbs 22:8, "He who sows iniquity will reap vanity, And the rod of his fury (ābar) will perish." When it is combined with pride it is an anger of arrogance and insolence. "Proud," "Haughty," "Scoffer," are his names, Who acts with insolent (ābar) pride," (Proverbs 21:24). Proverbs 11:4 & 23 use this word for the doom awaiting the wicked because God's wrath will overflow upon them. "Riches do not profit in the day of wrath (ābar), But righteousness delivers from death" (Proverbs 11:4) and "The desire of the righteous is only good, But the expectation of the wicked is wrath (ābar)" (Proverbs 11:23).

Anger that Trembles

רָגַז / rāgaz. The primary meaning of this word group is to shake or quake and includes the trembling that may come with anger, fear or anticipation. Its only usage in Proverbs is in 29:9 describing the extreme reactions of the foolish man, "When a wise man has a controversy with a foolish man, The foolish man either rages (rāgaz) or laughs, and there is no rest."

Anger of Face

אָפ / ap is used to refer to the physical nose, nostril or face. However, it is mainly used as a metaphor for anger. This seems to be due to way a person who is angry will change their breathing pattern and flare their nostrils. This word emphasizes the emotional elements of wrath and anger compared to other terms which focus more on the particular expression of anger. This term is used of both the anger of God and the anger of men and is the most common word in the Hebrew Scriptures for anger.

As with the other terms we have already looked at, this divine anger is God's emotional response to sin which is an offense to His holiness and also His love. The Lord's anger is always righteous and just and in keeping with and prompted by all of His other attributes.

It is possible for man's anger to be righteous, and there are things the righteous should be angry about as a reflection of godliness. There should be anger over sin and its consequences both in dishonoring God and its destructive force on man. Yet, even godly men must be very careful lest their anger be for the wrong reason or they allow it to control them. This is why Ephesians 4:26–27 admonishes, "Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity." This is why Proverbs gives so many encouragements to be slow to anger and warnings about being quick to become angry. Proverbs 14:29, "He who is slow to anger has great understanding, But he who is quick-tempered exalts folly." Proverbs 15:18, "A hot-tempered man (hēmâ) stirs up strife, But the slow to anger (ap) calms a dispute." Proverbs 19:11, "A man's discretion makes him slow to anger, And it is his glory to overlook a transgression." Proverbs 16:32, "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city." The slow to anger show discretion, great wisdom and are better than the mighty being able to calm a dispute. Those who are quick tempered exalt folly and stir up trouble.

The anger of man, however, is generally unrighteous due to man's innate selfishness and sinfulness. Man becomes angry because he does not get what he wants and what he wants is usually sinful to some degree. This is why Proverbs has such warnings about anger. Proverbs 29:22, "An angry man stirs up strife, And a hot-tempered man abounds in transgression." Proverbs 29:8, "Scorners set a city aflame, But wise men turn away anger."

You want to avoid becoming a person who becomes angry. Proverbs 22:24–25 strongly advises, “Do not associate with a man given to anger; Or go with a hot-tempered man, Or you will learn his ways And find a snare for yourself.” Frankly, a lot of people want to blame their ethnic heritage for being hot-tempered, but the truth is that its only blood tie is that it is a sinful behavior learned it from their parents. Proverbs 30:33 points out, “For the churning of milk produces butter, And pressing the nose brings forth blood; So the churning of anger produces strife.” This is an obvious truth, yet people prone to fighting either do not seem to recognize it or they enjoy the strife. If you are prone to being hot tempered, then break the cycle, learn how do deal with anger and save your children and your friends some anguish.

How do you diminish anger? Proverbs 15:1, “A gentle answer turns away wrath (hēmâ), But a harsh word stirs up anger (’ap).” Learn to be gentle instead of harsh. That requires you to be humble, which takes us back to where we finished last week. Learn the fear of the Lord and turn from your pride to humble yourself before Him. Recognize that God’s ways are always better than your own and commit yourself to learning about Him and how He wants you to live and following it. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins because of Jesus’ sacrifice for you and change you into being a true follower of Christ. Make it your goal to be able to say as did Paul in Galatians 2:20, “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”

Sermon Notes - 12/1/2012
Proverbs on Vices, Part 2 - Anger

Introduction

A vice is a moral fault or failing that can range from the trivial to the _____

Only _____ can set the standard of what is good or bad, right or wrong

Pride is thinking more highly than you ought - it magnifies _____ while diminishing God

Man's only hope is _____ - for God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble

Anger is an emotion, a strong feeling of _____ which is often accompanied by annoyance or hostility

Anger is an emotion and therefore neither good nor evil in _____

Anger is righteous when it reflects _____ and unrighteous when it does not

James 1:19-20

Anger that is Hot

חַמָּה / hēmâ - _____ within a person - physical or emotional

Deuteronomy 9:19 - God's "_____ displeasure" Jeremiah 10:25; 42:18 - God's "wrath," "fury"

2 Kings 22:13-17 - sorrow & repentance _____ it, but did not avert it

Numbers 25:11 - God's _____ turned away

When God has this type of anger there must be some execution of _____ or it will be poured out

Men with unrighteous hot fury - Esau (Genesis 27); _____ (2 Kings 5:12)

_____ hot fury - Ahasuareus (Esther 7) (see Prov. 16:14)

Righteous jealousy _____ - Proverbs 6:34-35; 27:4

Be _____ of hot fury - Proverbs 19:19; Psalm 37:7-11

חָרָה / hārôn - cause fire to burn, _____. Combined with anger = burning anger / fierce wrath

God's burning wrath is _____ and righteous arising out of His many attributes including love

Jealousy - "fierce _____ of one's rights and possessions"

Deuteronomy 4:23-24 "For the Lord your God is a _____ fire, a jealous God."

This particular anger belongs only to _____ and it is tempered with His longsuffering - 2 Peter 3:9

חֹרִי / hōrî - "fierce anger" in a man. Justified in _____ - 1 Samuel 20:34

Unrighteous in the _____ (2 Chronicles 25:7)

חָרָה / hārâ - Righteous in the _____ Numbers 11. Righteous in _____ - Job 32:2-3

Righteous in _____ in 1 Samuel 11 Unrighteous in _____ in 1 Samuel 20

_____ had a righteous motive to be angry, but was unrighteous because it was based on a lie (Gen. 39)

Man's anger is usually unrighteous because it is kindled for _____ and sinful reasons

קָעַס / kā'as - to provoke to the heart to a _____ condition (not as strong a "kindle a fire")

God's anger _____ - Deuteronomy 4:25; 2 Kings 23:26, Ezekiel 16:42

Evil people provoking others to _____ - 1 Samuel 1:6,16 - Peninnah provoked Hannah. Psalm 6

Proverbs 17:25 _____ Proverbs 21:19 _____

The unrighteous provoked by the _____ - Psalm 112 Eccl. 7:9 Prov. 12:16 27:3

אשׁ / āšān - _____ that rises from a fire - often associated with theophanies - Gen. 15:17; Exod. 19:18

Figurative of _____ - Deut. 29:20; Psalm 74:1 _____ - Proverbs 10:26

Anger that Splinters - קָסַפ / qāsap

Physically, a _____ branch. Metaphorically - a fractured relationship

Anger that Storms - זָעַפ / zā‘ap

Physically, a storm of weather. Metaphorically - a _____ within the heart.

Proverbs 19:3 _____ Proverbs 19:12 _____

Anger of Indignation - זָעַם / zā‘am - experiencing or expressing _____ anger esp. in denunciation

A characteristic of _____ - Psalm 7:11; Isaiah 66:14

Proverbs 22:14 _____ Proverbs 24:24 _____ Proverbs 25:23 _____

Anger that Overflows - רָבַע / ‘ābar - to _____ over, by or through.

Metaphorically - anger that _____ . Isaiah 13:9

Proverbs 14:35 _____ Proverbs 22:8 _____

Proverbs 21:24 _____ Proverbs 11:4 & 23 _____

Anger that Trembles - רָגַז / rāgaz - _____, quake, tremble with anger, fear or anticipation

Proverbs is in 29:9 _____

Anger of Face אָפ / ‘ap - physical: nose, _____, face

Metaphorically - anger emphasizing the _____ elements compared to anger's expression

The Lord's anger is always _____ & just in keeping with and prompted by all of His other attributes

Man's anger can be righteous, but there must be _____: Ephesians 4:26-27

Be _____ to anger: Proverbs 14:29; 15:18; 19:11; 16:32

Man becomes angry because he does not get what he wants and what he wants is usually _____

Proverbs 29:22 _____ Proverbs 29:8, _____

_____ learning to become angry - Proverbs 22:24-25

Angry people produce _____ - Proverbs 30:33

Diminish anger through _____ - Proverbs 15:1

Learn the fear of the Lord and _____ yourself before Him

KIDS CORNER

Young Children - draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. Older Children - Do one or more of the following: 1) Count how many times the words "anger" said. 2) Discuss with your parents how to be gentle instead of angry

Proverbs on Anger, Part 2

Introduction

This morning I am going to continue on the subject of anger. In studying for my last sermon, I found that it is a much more extensive subject that I had thought it would be. I did not realize prior to that study how many different Hebrew synonyms there were for anger and their range of meanings. You would not be aware of this from English translations since the same Hebrew word can be translated with many different English words, and the same English word can be used for many different Hebrew words. In the previous sermon I spent the bulk of the time just trying to define these terms and point out how they were used. I was not able to spend much time in making practical application of this information as I wanted, so that is what I want to do today. I will briefly explain the major terms again and then spend the majority of our time discussing how to deal with anger.

Review (See: Proverbs on Anger, Part 1)

Anger is the term we use to describe a wide range of feelings of strong displeasure ranging from simple vexation to a burning, consuming wrath. This is reflected in the many synonyms for anger that occur in both English and Hebrew. Since anger is an emotion, it is in itself neither good nor evil. Its moral quality is determined by its cause and the actions that result from it. The anger of God is always righteous, and man's anger may be righteous when it reflects godliness. However, man's anger rarely reflects godliness and so is usually unrighteous. There must be great caution taken even when man's anger is righteous for James 1:19-20 warns, "This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God."

The most common Hebrew word for anger is אַף /'ap which actually refers to the physical nose, nostril or face. It is used as a metaphor for anger probably due to the way a person who is angry will change their breathing pattern and flare their nostrils. This word emphasizes the emotional elements of anger compared to other terms and synonyms which focus more on the particular expression of anger. This term is used of both the anger of God and the anger of men.

זַעַף / zā'ap also emphasizes the emotional state but is stronger. It is used metaphorically to describe an internal storm in the heart that can result in a troubled appearance or dejection or rage. When used in reference to anger, it refers to a raging storm in the heart that results in foolishness.

The next term, מַעַז / zā'am, is used for both internal and external elements of anger. It refers to experiencing or expressing intense anger especially in denunciation or scolding. It is translated as anger, indignant, abhor and cursed. The anger is intense, but its expression seems to be limited to the countenance or verbal indignation though actions against the cause of the anger may also follow.

רָגַז / rāgaz describes an external expression of anger. It has a primary meaning of shake or quake and includes the trembling that may come with anger, fear or anticipation. It is translated as rages in Proverbs 29:9

רָבַע / 'ābar is an external expression of anger. It has a primary meaning to pass over, by or through, but is also used metaphorically of God and man for anger that overflows. It is a term that places emphasis on the action that will take place as a consequence of anger spilling out and overflowing.

רָצַץ / qāsap is descriptive of the consequence of anger. It is used to describe a splintered or snapped off branch, and when used metaphorically, it refers to the fracturing of relationships. It is used of God and people and variously translated as angry, furious, wrathful and enraged. Anger is dangerous because it can result in fractured and destroyed relationships with others.

There are also many Hebrew words that picture anger as being hot to some degree, or something that is being warmed including kindling a fire, or the smoke that rises from such a fire. Like the words already described, some of them emphasize the internal emotional elements while others describe the actions that result from intense anger. All of them are used for both God and man except *הָרוֹחַ* / *hārôn* which is only used for God.

קָעַב / *kā'as* is the first word in this group I want to describe. It means “to provoke the heart to a heated condition which in turn leads to specific actions” (TWOT), and so is translated as vex, agitate, stir up and even grief. This level of anger can be calmed relatively easily, but as the provoking continues that will become more difficult because anger will escalate to the next level. *הָרָה* / *hārâ* is a verb that is a very strong term describing anger being kindled as would a fire. It is used in reference to both the source causing the anger and the object such anger is against. The noun form of this word, *הֹרִי* / *hōrî*, is a fierce anger that is appropriate to describe as displeasure so extreme that you feel it burn. There is an emotional fire burning within.

The related term, *הִמָּא* / *hēmâ*, is the most serious type of anger experienced by men. It describes the emotional heat of anger as hot displeasure, indignation, rage, fury or wrath. This level of anger is very difficult to quench and so will pour itself out in wrath, though an execution of justice against its cause may appease it.

הָרוֹחַ / *hārôn* is a related word and is the strongest word for anger in the Old Testament. It is only used of God. It is used metaphorically in reference to an extreme anger or wrath that is hot or burning. It is often joined with *אֵף* / *ap* and together they are translated as “burning anger” (Exodus 32:12), “fierce anger” (Numbers 25:4), “fierce wrath” (1 Samuel 28:18). It is this attribute of God that Moses warned the Israelites about in Deuteronomy 4:23-24 that they would need to be careful to keep their covenant with God and not fall into idolatry for “For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.” The Lord’s mercy, and longsuffering temper this in the present, but His burning anger will be unleashed in consuming the wicked in the future.

The final word I want to briefly mention is *אֲשָׁן* / *āšan* which describes the fire of anger by pointing out its consequence. Its figurative usage for anger comes from its literal usage for the smoke that rises from a fire. When you see smoke, you know there is a fire even if you can’t see the flames. Likewise, you know there is anger when you see the destruction caused by it.

As these brief word descriptions indicate, anger is multifaceted and it is something that escalates. It starts with something that causes irritation and vexation. As further provocation occurs, it kindles an internal flame which may or may not be noticeably expressed outwardly except in perhaps a facial expression or a tone of voice. At this point we might recognize the person is getting upset. As the fire grows it will start expressing itself externally with a change in body language, countenance, and sharp words. We would now say they are angry. As the emotional displeasure continues to escalate, it reaches levels of ire, rage, fury, or wrath.

The ability of a person to control themselves outwardly can either mask or exaggerate their actual level of anger. A hot head can explode into rage over trivial matters and then calm down just as quickly which demonstrates their true level of anger is a lot lower than their lack of self control suggests. Other people can maintain a cool appearance outwardly while seething with fury as they quietly plot how to exact their revenge. This is an important point to note from the beginning because the outward expression may not tell you the true emotional state or the degree of sinfulness that may be at hand. It is not all that uncommon for the one that remains calm to actually be as sinful or even more so than the one that is visibly agitated. They may even be in sin by aggravating the situation by their self-righteous accusations that the other person is in sin because they are visibly angry. But as I said at the beginning of this sermon, anger is an emotion and therefore not good or evil in itself. Its moral character is determined by its cause and its resulting actions. As Ephesians 4:26–27 admonishes, “*Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity.*”

Causes of Righteous Anger

Anger is righteous when it is an emotional response that reflects God's perspective. It continues to be righteous if the actions taken as a result of it are carried out in godliness. As pointed out in the last sermon, God's anger is always righteous and always at the appropriate level in response to its cause. That is because all of God's attributes work together in perfect harmony. His holiness, purity, righteousness and justice are all in harmony with His love, patience, longsuffering, mercy and grace. Since that is not true of humans, it is rare that the anger of man in its emotional response to situations and in the actions taken as a result are both righteous. That is why the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God (James 1:20).

Because God has an infinite passion toward the objects of His love, there is a corresponding holy and righteous jealousy. This is not a jealousy which has any sense of envy, which is how we often use the word jealousy. This is the more foundational definition of jealousy as a "fierce protection of one's rights and possessions." God's anger is generated out of this jealousy to protect His holy nature and interests. His displeasure with anyone or anything will vary corresponding to the level that he, she or it profanes, tries to block or rejects Him or His divine order. We can understand this jealous anger when we consider the proper and holy jealousy that a husband and wife are to have toward each other and their children. They have a fierce protection toward one another and toward their offspring. It is very dangerous to get between as husband and wife or threaten their children. As Proverbs 6:34-35 warn the man who would go after his neighbor's wife, "For jealousy enrages a man, And he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will not accept any ransom, Nor will he be satisfied though you give many gifts." The fierce protection of children can be even stronger. Multiply this proper jealousy by infinity and you will have some idea about the nature of God's holy jealousy and His burning anger that arises from it.

The actions taken as a result of God's anger will be carried out in perfect justice tempered by His longsuffering, mercy and grace. That is the only reason man continues to exist without being immediately cast into eternal Hell. It is also the reason that Jesus had to become a man, live a sinless life and die as the substitute payment for man's sin. God's wrath was poured out on Him instead of us so that His eternal law would be satisfied and He would be both the just and the justifier in redeeming us from and forgiving us for our sins while adopting us into His family.

There are many things about which we should be angry. Anything that angers God should also be cause for the righteous to be angry. We should be angry when others worship anything other than the Lord God our creator. We should be angry when His holy name is profaned. We should be angry when children are dishonoring to their parents, when murder, adultery and thefts occur. We should be angry when events such as what happened in Newtown, CT occur. We should be angry when people lie and especially when it is done to destroy the reputation of another. We should be angry at the covetousness of our society. We should be angry at sin and all the consequences it has on us and those we love. The fact that we are often not angry at these things is a demonstration of how far we are from being righteous. Our society not only practices these things, but depicts them as sources of entertainment in movies, television, music, books and magazines of which Christians also readily partake.

It is my plan to tackle this subject of the Christian and entertainment choices in the future, but for the present, please start thinking seriously about your level of godliness in your entertainment choices. Can you honestly enjoy something in which the Lord's name is blasphemed? Should you laugh at a sitcom in which the children treat their father as an imbecile? The entertainment in a murder mystery is supposed to be seeing the perpetrator caught and brought to justice, but what about when the murder is portrayed as the hero, and is there anything redeeming in a slasher film? Positive portrayals of adultery and fornication and anything pornographic should make you indignant, not titillated. I think you get the idea and the seriousness of it. What we find entertaining reveals our level of unrighteousness.

Perhaps someone might object that to be angry about what is sinful would mean there would constantly be something that would make you angry. Isn't that true of God? Psalm 7:11 states, "God is a

righteous judge, And a God who has indignation every day.” 2 Peter 2:6-7 describes Lot as a righteous man dwelling among the ungodly and that in seeing and hearing their unlawful deeds, his righteous soul was vexed from day to day. Your soul should be troubled by the sin that occurs around you every day. I often feel like Lot did. What I see and hear about the ungodliness in this society vexes my spirit and troubles my soul making me sober and somber, but that does not mean anger at any level controls me or is my only emotion. I also find a lot to be joyful about because our God is gracious in so many ways. His multiple blessings pour out and is the cause of great joy, the greatest of which is that God redeems sinners and is in the business of transforming them to reflect His Son. We have a hope that transcends the troubles of the present. As a Christian, you are not what you want to be nor what you will be, but rejoice, you are not what you were either. The same is true for other believers.

As you become more righteous, you will have proper anger generated by the sin within and around you, but that leads to a different problem. What do you do with that anger? What is the righteous action that should be taken in response to that sin? The emotional reaction may be righteous, but because our motives are often, if not usually, mixed with our own sin and selfishness, unless there is great care taken, our actions in response to the anger will prove to be unrighteous. That is why there are so many verses that caution us to be “quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger” (James 1:19). There may be something provoking you and starting to generate some heat in your heart, but that does not mean you need to let it escalate quickly. Your emotions are important for a variety of reasons, but they should not control you. Anger can be a strong and needed motivator to action, but the mind and the will must remain in control to direct you to righteous actions instead of unrighteous reactions.

A little later in this sermon I will point out some things you can do in striving to make sure your righteous anger results in righteous actions. However, we first need to look at the causes of unrighteous anger because these are what lead us astray.

Causes of Unrighteous Anger

Anger is unrighteous when it is an emotional response that does not reflect God’s perspective or if the actions taken as a result of it are carried out in ungodliness. The normal moral quality of the anger of man is unrighteous on both counts. What are the causes of such anger? To handle anger properly you must deal with its root causes and not just its symptoms, otherwise that is like giving aspirin to a person with a brain tumor. You can alleviate the pain for a short time, but the tumor will cause the pain to come back, and if not taken care of, it will get worse and it will kill you.

The main cause of unrighteous anger is man’s sinful bent to selfishness which in turn feeds pride, fleshly desires and love of the world. James 4:1-4 explains, “What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

Quarrels, conflicts and fighting always have a basis in anger, for if you were pleased, there would be nothing to even argue about. People want what they want when they want it and when they do not get it they are not happy. The stronger the desire that is not fulfilled, (lust in verse 2 just means strong desire), the greater the displeasure which spills out in expressions and actions of anger that can escalate all the way up to murder. People get mad when their goal is blocked, and the more important that particular desire is to them, the hotter they get.

The difference between righteous and unrighteous anger starts here. Righteous anger has a foundation in desiring what is godly. Its motivations are unselfish and fixed on the honor of God and His will being done. Unrighteous anger has its foundation in desiring what is ungodly. Its motivations are

selfish. There will be differences from person to person in the particular thing that is desired, but usually it can be reduced to fame, fortune, power, pleasure or some mixture of these. James 4:1-4 specifically points out the selfish motivations of personal happiness, fulfillment of personal desires at the expense of others, envy, hedonism and worldliness. Because the motives for and what is desired are ungodly, the anger generated by the lack of fulfillment of those desires is unrighteous. All of these things are described in Proverbs as foolishness.

Throughout our study of Proverbs we have seen the problems caused by man's foolishness. The various ways in which foolishness expresses itself can and will result in unrighteous anger. It starts from the initial rejection of wisdom and continues on as foolishness becomes entrenched in a person's life. The naive are persuaded by the foolish and so ignore wisdom. They progress to become scoffers that dishonor wisdom and hate her reproofs. They will end up as the wicked that insult wisdom. (See: Wisdom's Call). Proverbs gives strong warnings against such foolishness and folly, but unless a person develops a proper fear of the Lord, which is the starting point of wisdom, he will descend into greater foolishness and all its consequences including unrighteous anger (See: Warnings on Folly).

Being a fool or having fools for friends will produce unrighteous anger for several different reasons. First, be very careful about whom you choose as friends that will influence you for you will become like them. Proverbs 22:24-25 warn, "Do not associate with a man given to anger; Or go with a hot-tempered man, Or you will learn his ways And find a snare for yourself." Second, you can be sure that those with low moral character such as liars, slanderers, gossips, and flatterers will be a source of trouble and conflict (See: Proverbs on Friendship Part 2, 3 & 4).

The same principles apply to foolishness in the family. Proverbs 14:1 contrasts the wise who build up their homes with the foolish who tear it down with their own hands which in turn will be the source of a lot of anger. We spent many weeks examining in detail the different types of foolishness that are destructive to a home - counsel from the ungodly, pride, wickedness, stubbornness, self-righteousness, selfishness, contention, nagging, quarreling, being critical, temperamental, harsh, hateful, neglectful, indifferent, manipulative, unfair, indiscrete, shameful or unfaithful (See: Proverbs on the Family, Part 3, 4, 5, 7, 8). Tragically, these things are all too common even in Christian homes. In addition, if parents are not careful and diligent to keep the right goals in mind and fulfill their God given purpose in training their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, they will find their children will provoke them to anger and they will do the same to their children (See: Proverbs on the Family, Part 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16).

Unrighteous anger is also generated by foolishness in finances and government (See: Proverbs on Economics and Proverbs on Government). Envy causes those without to be angry at those who have. Unethical business practices provoke anger in those exploited. The greedy are generally displeased that they do not have more. The diligent and the lazy resent each other. Government corruption, injustice and failing in its God given purposes are sources for lots of anger as increasingly seen in our own nation.

Foolish use of the tongue will aggravate all these other types of foolishness resulting in lots of anger at every level. (See: Proverbs on the Tongue). How should we respond to keep unrighteous anger at a minimum and learn to pursue righteous actions even when angry?

Responding to Anger

The starting point is a life time commitment to deal with the underlying causes of anger. This is serious for if you do not learn to control your anger, it will control you. Proverbs 29:22, "An angry ('ap) man stirs up strife, And a hot-tempered (hēmâ) man abounds in transgression." This is also a difficult battle because it is both internal and external.

The internal battle is between your flesh and the Spirit of God. As Paul describes in Galatians 5:16-17, "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so

that you may not do the things that you please.” Paul’s use of “flesh” here includes both the desires of your physical body and of your mind for what is sinful. That is why he states in verses 20-21 that the deeds of the “flesh” include “idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” Notice that there are several levels of anger and things that result in anger included in this list of the deeds of the flesh. Yielding to the flesh will result in unrighteous anger while yielding to the Spirit will result in the fruits of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). The one you obey will be your master (Romans 6:15f).

There is also an external battle due to the pressure the world places upon you to pursue what it values instead of what God values. The apostle John warned in 1 John 2:15–17, “Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.” It does not make logical sense to pursue what can only satisfy for a short time - the pleasures of the flesh, covetousness and pride - when you could instead pursue what will satisfy for eternity. However, the attractive power of those temporal pleasures to man’s sinful and selfish bent is not to be underestimated.

The world is an external pressure that plays upon the internal sinful desires of man. You determine that you are going to treat your body in a more godly manner by sticking to your diet and getting some more exercise, then the world entices you with your favorite foods and overwhelms you with other stuff you need to do so that your exercise plan falls apart. You determine that you will be a better and more godly steward of your finances, then the world entices you with every form of advertisements for things you don’t need, but would like. You determine you will be a more humble and godly person, then the world puts your rival in front of you boasting about his accomplishments. Those are things that can make you angry at the world for enticing you and at yourself for yielding to it. Paul makes it clear in Romans 12:2 that it is up to you to resist the pressures of the world and go the opposite direction, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

The starting point in controlling anger is to be determined to pursue righteousness instead of unrighteousness. Let me now give you seven practical steps to take when you feel the emotional heat rising as the fire of anger is kindled. These will help you resist ungodly anger and press on to walk in godliness. Prayer is always appropriate at every step.

First, slow down. There are many Proverbs addressing the wisdom of being slow to anger and foolishness in responding quickly. Proverbs 14:29, “He who is slow to anger has great understanding, But he who is quick-tempered exalts folly.” Proverbs 15:18, “A hot-tempered man (hēmâ) stirs up strife, But the slow to anger (’ap) calms a dispute.”

Second, remain calm. This is the first step being applied to even a very aggravating situation and helping the one provoking you to slow down too. Proverbs 15:1, “A gentle answer turns away wrath (hēmâ), But a harsh word stirs up anger (’ap).” Proverbs 19:11, “A man’s discretion makes him slow to anger (’ap), And it is his glory to overlook a transgression.”

Third, get the truth. Make sure you have your facts straight before you speak otherwise it is a folly and shame on you (Proverbs 18:13), and you will aggravate the issue instead of calming it down (Proverbs 10:19; 15:1; 17:27). You cannot speak with wisdom and godliness if you do not know the truth. In counseling for so many years, I have found that a large percentage of interpersonal conflicts are the result of poor communication and misunderstandings which can be quickly cleared up as truth is brought to light.

Fourth, reflect. This is taking the quest for truth to the next level so that you can apply wisdom and understanding to yourself. Your emotions do not spring into existence in a vacuum. They arise based on your perceptions and beliefs. Use your anger to expose what you are thinking and your belief system. As already pointed out, anger is generally generated from a personal desire being unfulfilled or a goal being blocked. What specific desire is unfulfilled or goal is blocked?

Fifth, evaluate. Once you have worked through step four and know why you are angry, you can evaluate that cause by the Scriptures to determine if it is righteous or unrighteous. A godly friend or counselor may be needed to help you with this step as well as the previous one and the ones that follow. If it is righteous anger generated by desiring what is godly and focused on the honor of God and His will being done without selfish motivations, then skip to step Seven. If it is anything less than that or you find that your motivations are a mixture, go to step Six.

Sixth, repent. Be humble and change your mind about those causes of your anger that are unrighteous and your emotion of anger will change in due time. Yes, the other person or the cause of your anger may be worse than what you were thinking or believing, but your goal must be to become like Jesus Christ regardless of anything else going on in the world. Confess anything that is contrary to God's commands and turn away from them and toward godliness. Ask God to create in you a clean heart (Psalm 51:10) and be transformed by the renewing of your mind by the power of the Holy Spirit through the word of God.

Seventh, respond. Now that you know the truth, reflected on the cause of your anger, evaluated that cause for any sinful thought or belief and repented from it, you will be able to determine how to respond with righteous actions instead of ungodly ones. The ultimate goal is to reflect Jesus Christ living in you, and so your specific response to a situation will be as varied as His. He was always glorifying to God in His responses and demonstrated the practical application of wisdom we have seen throughout our study of Proverbs. That must guide your own response. Be humble, pursue godliness, seek to honor God, walk in the practical wisdom of Proverbs. Do what is right and leave the results in the hands of the Lord. Psalm 37:7-9, "Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who carries out wicked schemes. Cease from anger ('ap) and forsake wrath (hēmâ) ; Do not fret (hārâ); it leads only to evildoing. For evildoers will be cut off, But those who wait for the Lord, they will inherit the land."

Sermon Notes - 12/16/2012
Proverbs on Anger, Part 2

Introduction & Review

Anger describes a wide range of feelings of strong _____ ranging from vexation to burning wrath

The moral quality of anger is determined by its _____ and the actions resulting from it.

Man must be very _____ even when the anger is righteous - James 1:19-20

אף / ʾaf - metaphor for anger emphasizing its _____ compared to its expression

זַפְּזָ / zāʾap - metaphor depicting anger as a _____ within the heart

מַצְעַז / zāʾam - experiencing or expressing _____ anger especially in denunciation

רָגַז / rāgaz - _____, quake, tremble with anger, fear or anticipation

רָבַע / ʾābar - to pass over by or through - used to describe anger that _____

רָצַק / qāsap - anger that causes a fractured or _____ relationship

סָעַב / kāʿas - to provoke to the heart to a _____ condition

הָרַח / hārâ - anger being _____ as would a fire

הֹרִי / hōrî - “fierce anger” of a displeasure so extreme that you feel it _____

הֵמָה / hēmâ - the most serious anger in men describing it as “_____ indignation, rage, fury or wrath

הָרוֹחַ / hārôn - strongest word for anger in the OT - hot or _____ wrath - used only of God

אֲשַׁע / ʾāšan - _____ rises from a fire - used to describe the consequences of anger

Anger is multifaceted and that _____ from irritation and vexation to levels of ire, rage, fury and wrath

The ability of a person to control themselves can _____ or exaggerate their actual level of anger

Causes of Righteous Anger

Anger is righteous when it reflects _____ perspective & continues to be so when its actions are godly

Proper jealousy is a fierce _____ of one’s rights and possessions & this generates God’s anger

The God’s actions taken in anger are carried out in perfect _____ in keeping with His other attributes

_____ that angers God should be the cause of righteous anger in His followers

The lack of righteous anger is a indication of the lack of _____

God is indignant _____ day (Psalm 7:11) and Lot’s soul was vexed by the sin around him (2 Peter 2:6-7)

Unless great care is taken, even righteous emotional anger can result in unrighteous _____

Causes of Unrighteous Anger

Anger is unrighteous when it does not reflect God’s _____ or responds in ungodly actions

The main cause of unrighteous anger is man’s bent to _____ & selfishness - James 1:1-4

People get angry when their _____ is unfulfilled - their goal is blocked

Unrighteous anger is founded in desiring what is _____ and has selfish motivations

Everything listed as _____ in Proverbs can be a cause of unrighteous anger

Being a fool or having foolish _____ - Proverbs 22:24-25

Foolishness in the _____ tears apart the home - Proverbs 14:1

Foolishness in _____, government and use of the tongue generates unrighteous anger

Responding to Anger -

The starting point is a life time commitment to deal with the underlying _____ of anger

The internal battle between the _____ and the Spirit of God - Galatians 5:16-17

The external battle with the pressures of the _____ - 1 John 2:15-17; Romans 12:2

Practical considerations when you feel the emotional heat of anger rising.

1) _____ down: Proverbs 14:29, 15:18

2) Remain _____ - Proverbs 15:1; 19:11

3) Get the _____ - Proverbs 18:13 - 10:19; 15:1; 17:27

4) _____ - What are you actually thinking? What do you truly believe?

5) _____ - Compare your thoughts, beliefs & intended actions with God's word. A counselor can help

6) _____ - Be humble, change your mind and turn confessing anything contrary to God's commands

7) _____ - Determine the righteous actions that should be taken that reflect Jesus living in you

Do what is right and leave the results in the hands of the Lord - Psalm 37:7-9

KIDS CORNER

Young Children - draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. Older Children - Do one or more of the following: 1) Count how many times the word "anger" said. 2) Discuss with your parents how to respond to anger in righteousness.

THINK ABOUT IT!

Questions to consider in discussing the sermon with others. What is anger? Why must you be very cautious about your response to it even if it is a righteous anger? What is the range of meaning for the different Hebrew synonyms for anger? What do they teach you about the nature of anger? How does a person's level of self-control either mask or exaggerate their actual level of anger? What is righteous anger? Define proper jealousy? How is God's anger generated out of proper jealousy? Why are God's actions taken in anger always righteous? List out some things about which you should have righteous anger. What is demonstrated when that righteous anger does not exist? Should righteous anger control you? Explain. Why is man's anger, even when generated by a righteous motive, still usually unrighteous? Define unrighteous anger? What are the main causes of man's unrighteous anger? What have you learned from Proverbs about the many specific actions of foolishness that can generate unrighteous anger - In general? In friendships? In marriage? In the family? In finances? In Government? In the use of the tongue? What internal battle that is fought against unrighteous anger and its causes? What external battle is fought against unrighteous anger and its causes? List out the seven steps to resisting unrighteous anger and pursuing a righteous response to anger? Which ones would be easy for you? Which ones would be difficult? How would practicing these steps change the way you live your life? - Your response to anger?