

Anger Must Fall

Introduction

Anger.

This identifies a giant that most who face will not admit to facing because they do not see it.

People who face Anger find justifications for their anger; they may know why they are angry and feel justified in their anger or they may not know the reason or even recognize that the fruits of their lives grow from anger.

Anger represents a natural emotion of the human nature, but those who face the giant Anger live constantly angry, explode angrily at minor things, misjudge the intents or motives of others regularly, and/or experience regular relational difficulties.

Let's begin considering Anger by looking at our series text in 1 Samuel 17.

Bible

(28) And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.

1 Samuel 17:28 - KJV

Explanation

Notice what our text reveals about Eliab. His "anger was kindled."

The Hebrew word translated "anger" literally means nose of nostrils. In fact, the very first time this word appears in Scripture is in Genesis 2:7 where the Bible declares...

Bible

(7) And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Genesis 2:7 - KJV

Explanation

"Nostrils" comes from the same Hebrew word translated "anger" in our text.

Then, "kindled" translates a Hebrew word that means to grow warm or hot.

This represents the regular Hebrew way of expressing anger. The penman expressed anger as his or her "nose burned hot."

The expression makes sense. It identifies the way your body reacts when you experience anger.

When you experience anger, you go through biological and physiological changes including:

increased energy levels, raised blood pressure, spike in adrenaline or noradrenaline, increased

body temperature, and increased muscle tension.

Why did Eliab's nose burn hot toward David in this text?

We're not told directly, but three cues in the text provide insight.

Was it jealousy? David was anointed king ahead of him (see 1 Samuel 16:6-7).

Application

Is there an individual or situation you are jealous over?

Explanation

Ingratitude? David came from home to bring Eliab and his two other brothers food (1 Samuel 17:17-18).

Application

Are you a generally grateful person?

Explanation

Embarrassment? David's words spoken just before this highlighted the fear and faithlessness of Israel's soldiers, including Eliab (1 Samuel 17:26). While they feared and were faithless, David saw an uncircumcised blasphemer who would not be able to stand before any of God's people.

Application

Have you experienced or do you feel some embarrassment that has left you angry?

Explanation

There are other possible reasons not expressed in the text.

Application

What are some other reasons that you face the giant Anger?

Have you been abandoned?

Rejected?

Neglected?

Ignored?

Cheated on?

Unprioritized?

Stressed?

Overworked?

Underpaid?

Unappreciated?

Unheard?

Unloved?

Betrayed?

Cut down?

Hurt?

Unwanted?

Abused?

Oppressed?

Overwhelmed?

Burdened?

Self-focused?

All of these and more can lead to Anger growing in your life to the point that it is a giant that immobilizes you, and makes you less effective for God.

It's time to slay Anger.

Anger must fall.

Let's look to Ephesians 4 where we can learn how Anger can fall.

Bible

(26) Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: (27) Neither give place to the devil.

Ephesians 4:26-27 - KJV

(31) Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: (32) And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. (5:1) Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; (2) And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

Ephesians 4:31-32; 5:1-2 - KJV

1...Let go of Bitterness and Anger (vv. 26-27, 31)

Explanation

The first portion of the command grammatically is a present passive imperative. If you remember from grammar, a passive verb indicates the subject as the receiver of the action.

Here's what Paul is indicating: The source of the anger, what led to it, is something outside of you that creates this response in you. Usually, it is something external that causes a response

that is internal, but this is not permission to blame our sin on others. Expressing anger sinfully is not a product of the external problem, but a product of our internal problem.

What is the internal problem that is common to all of us?

Sin.

When you experience and express anger and the expression of anger is itself sinful, someone or something else is not the cause of your sin.

One writer wrote, "Don't let sin against you produce sin in you."

That's good, and that is often what happens with our experiences and expressions of anger.

Something happens outside of us, and we become angry and sin through the experience and expression of our anger. The Bible says, "Be ye angry, and sin not."

Describing what it is to sin in our experience and expression of anger, Tony Evans wrote that "anger is sinful when it attacks people and seeks revenge rather than addressing the problem."

This thought is repeated from Psalm 4:4 where the Psalmist helps us identify what to do with anger.

Bible

(4) Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.

Psalm 4:4 - KJV

Explanation

In Psalm 4:4, David speaks of communing with your own heart and being still. "Commune" speaks of thinking, meditating, reflecting, talking to self. "Be still" means to be quiet, be at rest, be silent.

Application

When you experience anger, the best course of action before expressing anger is to stop and reflect. Think on it before acting. Connect this counsel with Paul's statement in Ephesians 4:26, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." This speaks of the necessity of dealing with it promptly and appropriately. These are not contradictory, but work together.

Often, we respond to the experience of anger with expression of anger in the moment that is explosive and destructive. It's not purposeful or productive. So, we need to stop and think before we act.

On the other hand, we can be guilty of doing nothing and putting off dealing with our anger so that it goes unresolved. This too is destructive, in a different way. We should not ignore, but should deal with anger promptly and appropriately - after we have taken time to wisely pursue the right response.

Jesus, of course, is our example. One author wrote, "His (Jesus's) anger never led to sin, because His emotions were kept under perfect control. Christians must be sure that their anger is that of righteous indignation, and not just an expression of personal provocation or wounded

pride. It must have no sinful motives or lead to sin in any way."

Application

Experiences of anger that have been wrongly expressed should be recognized and responded to as sin. Confess the sin to the Lord and make confession to others whom your sinful anger has hurt.

Explanation

In verse 31, Paul exhorts...

Bible

(31) Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

Ephesians 4:31 - KJV

Application

Are you holding onto the anger or grudge of some conflict, a wrong that has never been righted, a violation that you experienced by someone you trusted?

Today, I am likely addressing a wife who harbors resentment against her husband or a husband who harbors resentment against his wife for some previous argument or wrong. There is a parent who is bitter against his or her children for how they have failed to live up to expectations and children who are bitter against their parents for some of the decisions that their parents

have made. Brother who is bitter against brother and sister who is bitter against sister... There is someone who has lived for years with resentment stemming from situations of their childhood. Some are even carrying anger against God.

Explanation

There are many symptoms of bitterness such as...

- Angry thoughts whenever that person's name is mentioned,
- Replaying the unresolved experience over and over again in the mind,
- Explosive anger at little frustrations,
- Reading that person's behavior into interactions with others,
- Not being yourself,
- Feeling the need to slander,
- Excessive complaining...

These and responses like these are often the signal that there is unresolved anger that has progressed or is progressing to bitterness.

If these sound familiar or the Holy Spirit has pricked your heart about anger that you have held on to over some situation, experience, or conflict, Paul's exhortation to you is to let go of your bitterness and anger.

Regardless of your situation and experience, bitterness and anger are hurting you and those close to you more than they are hurting the one that the bitterness and anger is harbored

against.

Application

Let go of your bitterness and anger!

How?

I'll ask you to notice that the verb in the text, "let...be put away" is in the passive tense.

Bitterness and anger are not responses that you can simply will away or actively, from your own resources, lay down. You can face and defeat the giant when you willingly release the source of that giant into the care of Jesus.

That is the key!

You must willingly give the situation, the experience, the bitterness and anger that you are harboring over to Jesus by laying it at His feet so that you can experience the peace and freedom that comes when you follow Jesus. He is inviting you to simply be willing to release it to Him so that He can free you from the anger and bitterness that is weighing you down.

Are you facing that giant?

Are you carrying bitterness and unresolved anger everywhere that you go?

Friend, the situation that caused the bitterness and anger may have hurt you deeply, but don't you see that the bitterness and anger are only hurting you further?

Come to Jesus!

Let it go!

Jesus is waiting for you to willingly release the situation, along with your bitterness and anger into His care, so that He can free you and give you victory over the giant.

2...Live out Kindness, Forgiveness, and Love (4:32-5:2a)

Illustration

In her book, *Forgiving What You Can't Forget*, Lysa Terkeurst shares from her personal experiences produced by the hurt of a deep, personal betrayal by her husband. In the introduction to her book she wrote...

Explanation

In that personal testimony of her own experience, Lysa pinpointed the root of bitterness and unresolved anger...unforgiveness. The failure to live a life of following Jesus through kindness, forgiveness, and love is the root of bitterness and unresolved anger. About forgiveness, the apologist and author C. S. Lewis wrote, "Everyone says forgiveness is a lovely idea, until they have something to forgive" (quoted by Lysa Terkeurst, *Forgiving What You Can't Forget*, page 21).

Did you notice that verse 32 begins with the connecting conjunction "and"?

Letting go of bitterness and anger also necessitates living out kindness (compassion), forgiveness, and love. The freedom and healing that you need to experience will not be experienced apart from letting go and living out. By the way, we are not called upon to do this for the other individual's sake or even for our own sake, we are called upon to do it as God has done it for us for Christ's sake.

Application

How can we forgive what seems unforgivable, even when the individual who caused the hurt is not sorry?

In Matthew 18, Jesus was teaching Peter about forgiveness. He told a parable about a king who forgave his servant a debt of 10,000 talents. This was an incredible amount of money that the servant would never be able to repay. Yet this same servant went out and refused to forgive a fellow servant who owed him less than a year's wages. When the king heard about his servant's behavior, he said...

Bible Verse

(32) Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: (33) Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?

Matthew 18:32-33 - KJV

Application

The parallel to our lives is we are the servant who owes our king an incredible debt that we could never pay. Yet, through Jesus, God has forgiven us this debt. We are the servant who sometimes is owed a debt (wronged) by another and when we do not forgive them, we are failing to live out what we have so graciously received.

How does this parable help us understand how we can forgive what seems unforgivable?

It is not in or through us, but in and through Christ and what we have already received and continue to receive from Him that we can forgive others. If you focus on the hurt and the person who caused the hurt, you will not find place for forgiveness. Instead, reflect on Jesus. Reflect on the reality that He has forgiven you of all of the wrongs that you could never make up for and He has provided forgiveness for all of the wrongs that have been done to you that the one who has done the wrongs can never make up for. Whether they seek forgiveness or not, Jesus' sacrifice has provided for their forgiveness and the strength you need to forgive.

3...Look ahead to Christ and the Cross (5:2b)

Explanation

Two important exhortations are in play here.

First, we are called to be followers of God. That is, we are to imitate God.

Then, immediately after that, we are commanded to "walk in love." As the example, Paul considers Jesus who loved us and laid down His life for us.

So, we are to look back to Christ and the cross.

Yet, that's not what I said. Look ahead to Christ and the cross. A walk is a progression. As growing believers, we look back to Christ and the cross in remembrance of what He has done for us. But we look ahead to Christ and the cross in recognition that we have been called to imitate God and to walk in love. We are moving toward that in our lives. We are moving closer to Christ and the cross. Christ and the cross is my goal. To love as He loved. So, I look ahead to my goal and seek His help to grow in His likeness more and more each day.

Application

Friend, look to Christ and the cross! That is where you will find what you need to defeat anger and live out kindness, forgiveness, and love.

Conclusion