

## Anger, What Good Is It?

The Bible tells us in Proverbs 15:1 that a gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

What is anger? *It is a strong feeling of displeasure. It expresses itself in several forms, chief of which are bitterness, resentment and unforgiveness. Let's talk about these three expressions of anger.*

**Bitterness** is detected in a person's speech and then in his actions and attitudes. If left unchecked by the Holy Spirit, it will settle in the heart, where a root of bitterness will spring up (see Hebrews 12:15).

Bitterness leaves a trail of broken relationships and obscures one's vision of life: "But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes" (I John 2:11).

Bitterness severs one's relationship with God. As a result, we become insensitive to God's Word and will violate it. When we let sin dominate us like this, it becomes difficult to read the Bible and pray. Our spirits are cluttered, for sin has clogged the communication lines between God and us.

When this happens, we should search our hearts and let God point out the sin that is cutting off fellowship with Him.

A broken relationship with God, moreover, keeps us from growing to spiritual maturity (see I John 1:6-7).

Bitterness is one of the greatest tools of destruction the enemy has at his disposal. No Christian can sustain himself in bitterness. The Bible speaks very strongly against this form of anger. It makes no difference what has caused the bitterness. It must be confessed and forsaken. (see Ephesians 4:31-32; Hebrews 12:15).

**Resentment**, the second major variation of anger is a negative hostile feeling usually directed openly at life's difficult circumstances and at God's working in our lives.

Resentment is caused by not getting what we want when we want it. We can be very lustful, selfish people, unwilling to wait for God to fill our needs in His timing. Because we do not get what we want when we want it, we fail to see God's purposes in our waiting, or in satisfying our needs rather than our desires. So we do not trust God. We can then miss His way and the timing of His will for us.

"The mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (Romans 8:7-8; see also James 1:6-8; James 4:3; I John 2:11).

God commands us to confess resentment and put it aside so that we might grow into mature Christians. (see I Peter 2:1-2).

**Unforgiveness** is the third major expression of anger and often the most prevalent in the Body of Christ. We often overlook Jesus' teaching about continual forgiveness, yet it provides the key to solving many personal problems (see Matthew 18:21-22). We are not to limit how many times we forgive someone.

Unforgiveness is sin against God. If we do not forgive someone who has offended or wronged us, we disobey God and He will not forgive us, nor will our prayers be answered (see Mark 11:25-26; Matthew 6:14,15).

Forgiveness begins with a decision, not with feelings. We cannot wait for our feelings to change; they may not. We simply have to decide to forgive and act on that decision. We will be miserable until we do. Unforgiveness will not just disappear. We must confront it and resolve it.

God does not give us a license to be angry, but teaches us how to handle anger when it arises. If we become angry, we should confess and repent of it immediately. If we have hurt someone we must ask for their forgiveness. Once a word has been spoken, it cannot be taken back. So we need to clear it as quickly as possible to prevent further emotional pain. (Psa. 37:8; Eph.4:26-27; James 1:20).

**The following steps will help you to resolve anger:**

- Recognize anger that involves others as sin (see Eph. 4:30-31).
- Confess your sin to God (see I John 1:9).
- Receive God's forgiveness (see I John 5:14-15).
- Forgive and ask for forgiveness of others (see Col. 3:13, Eph. 4:32).
- Ask God to fill you with His Holy Spirit so that your heart may be cleansed from all anger (see Luke 11:13).

In answering the question, "Anger, what good is it?", we can see how when we harbor anger in our hearts that we grieve God and hurt others.

Let's purpose not to allow anger to reside in our hearts and to live our lives in such a way as to be at peace with ourselves, God and others.