



## God's Answer for Anger

### Consider this:

- More than 60 percent of the homicides in America are committed by angry family members.<sup>1</sup>
- The number one killer in America is heart disease. And one of the major causes of heart disease is anger. Dr. Redford Williams, director of Duke University's Behavioral Medicine Research Center, stated, "**The hostility and anger associated with Type A behavior is the major contributor to heart disease in America.**"<sup>2</sup>
- People who struggle with anger are **five times** as likely to suffer coronary heart disease as the average person.<sup>3</sup>
- **20 percent** of the general population have levels of hostility that are high enough to be dangerous to their health – that's one in five!<sup>4</sup>

### What Is Anger?

Webster defines it as "A strong feeling of displeasure aroused by a real or supposed wrong. Anger is a sudden violent displeasure accompanied by an impulse to retaliate (a burst of anger)."

### Two words for "anger" in Greek:

"thumos," defined as a fire in dry straw. Quick kindling. Burning hot. But just as suddenly gone.  
"orgizesthai," defined as a cold, calculated anger. Nursed. Long-lived. A slow burn.

### Biblical Words to Describe Anger<sup>5</sup>

- **INDIGNATION** is simmering anger provoked by something appearing unjust or unworthy and often perceived as justified. (**Mark 10:14**)
- **WRATH** is burning anger accompanied by a desire to avenge. (**Romans 1:18**)
- **FURY** is fiery anger so fierce that it destroys common sense. (**Proverbs 27:4**)
- **RAGE** is blazing anger resulting in loss of self-control, often to the extreme of violence and temporary insanity. (**Proverbs 19:3**)

<sup>1</sup> Bill Webber, *Conquering the Kill-Joys* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1986), 30.

<sup>2</sup> *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 11 May 1989.

<sup>3</sup> John Barefoot of Duke University, as quoted in Don Colbert, *Deadly Emotions* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2003), 40.

<sup>4</sup> Colbert, *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>5</sup> June Hunt, *Biblical Counseling Keys on Anger: Facing the Fire Within* (Dallas, TX: Hope For The Heart, 2008), 13-15.

# Why We Get Angry

- When people accuse you of wrongdoing (Genesis 31:36)
- When bad things happen to good people (Genesis 34:7; 2 Samuel 12:5)
- When things don't go my way (Numbers 24:10; 1 Kings 21:4)
- When you compare yourself with others (1 Samuel 18:8)

## Ways We Express Our Anger<sup>6</sup>

- The **Maniac** (Example: Cain – Genesis 4:5, 8)
- The **Mute** (Example: Jeremiah in Jeremiah 15:17-18)
- The **Martyr** (Example: The Prodigal's Brother in Luke 15:28)
- The **Manipulator** (Example: The Pharisees in Luke 6:11)

## Healthy Ways We Can Deal With Our Anger<sup>7</sup>

### 1. Pray it out (1 Samuel 15:11)

- Look to God, not others, for your self-worth. (Eccl. 7:21; Prov. 14:26)
- Continually ask God to fill your life (Gal. 5:22; Prov. 19:11)

### 2. Think it over (Psalm 4:4; Proverbs 13:16; 16:23)

- Understand why you get angry (Are you hurt? Frustrated? Insecure? Threatened? Afraid?)
- Ask: What will my anger accomplish? What will happen to my witness? Who will be hurt by my anger?

### 3. Slow it down (Prov. 15:18)

- Learn to Relax. ("A relaxed attitude lengthens a man's life." Proverbs 14:30 LB)  
"Pent-up anger is the root of nearly all clinical depression." – Paul Meier and Frank Minirth
- Be aware of your feelings; recognize your tension.

### 4. Tone it down (Prov. 15:1)

"A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control." (Proverbs 29:11)

### 5. Let it go (Prov. 19:11; 17:14)

"You can tell the size of a man by the size of thing that makes him mad. A little person can never overlook a wrong. A little person magnifies every insult. A little person remembers every criticism leveled his way, and he makes a big issue out of it... A Christian is one that learns to let those petty comments just to roll off his back."<sup>8</sup>

### 6. Look Around (Prov. 22:24; 13:20)

Who do you spend the most time with? Our close friendships influence us, for good or bad. Make sure those close to you are those who control their anger.

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<sup>6</sup> Rick Warren, *Defusing Your Anger* (Saddleback Church, November 19-20, 1988), audio recording.

<sup>7</sup> Two of these insights and a few verses are from Warren, *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Bob Russell, *Overcoming Anger* (Southeast Christian Church, September 16, 1979), audio recording.