

Dealing with Anger

Before we can learn how to deal with anger, we must know where anger comes from and WHY we get angry. To understand where it comes from we will look at three types of anger: (1.) anger against yourself, (2.) anger against other people, and (3.) anger against God.

1.) Anger against yourself - This breaks down into anger against God for making you the way He did, or not understanding God's forgiveness, if you are angry because you **can't forgive yourself for your own sins and shortcomings**. You must learn to forgive yourself and see yourself as God sees you, which means you must learn and **understand WHO you are in Christ Jesus**. There is no short cut to this understanding, because it comes as you renew your mind with the word of God (Romans 12:1-2). If you are angry with God because of the way He created you, you must realize that "God don't make no junk!" He allowed certain things to happen in the way you were formed and made, and you can **allow God to use you for His glory** if you truly SURRENDER and SUBMIT your life to Him. **God has a plan and purpose for your life**, but it will never be fulfilled if you wallow in self-pity or rebel in anger.

- **Psalm 139:13-16** "For You formed my inward parts; You did weave me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret.....Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Your book they were all written, **the days that were ordained for me**, when as yet there was not one of them."
- **Ephesians 2:10** "For **we are His workmanship**, created in Christ Jesus for *[the purpose of]* good works, which **God has prepared beforehand** that we should walk in them."
- **Jeremiah 1:5** "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and before you came forth out of the womb, I sanctified you and I **ordained** you to be a prophet unto the nations."
- **Ephesians 1:4-5** "Just as He **CHOSE us** in Him **BEFORE the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love; Having **PREDESTINED** us to **ADOPTION** as sons (children) by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will."

According to these Scriptures, it doesn't matter if your birth was planned, or if you were "wanted" in your earthly family, because **God CHOSE you** before He even created the earth, and planned that YOU would be **ADOPTED into His family** for all eternity through Jesus Christ.

2.) Anger against other people - This kind of anger usually comes from feeling that your rights were violated, your schedule was interrupted, your plans overturned, or you were mistreated in some way by someone. Anger against God is often involved, because you don't understand why God allowed these people to do what they did to you. It may be something as trivial and small as someone taking the parking place you wanted or your spouse not putting your socks in the right drawer, or something as serious as a loved one who betrayed you, or a dysfunctional family that mistreated you. What it all boils down to, either way, is **self-centeredness**. Read Ephesians 1:1-14 to see how much **"it is NOT all about YOU!"** It says that God does everything He does **according to His own will**, "after the counsel of His will," and for the purpose that "we should be to the praise of His glory." God allows certain people in our lives, and sometimes even allows them to do things that seem unfair to us, but it is all according to His plan. He may use them to smooth down some of our rough edges, or to prune off some of the dead wood from us as "branches" (John 15:1-11). Your part is to FORGIVE the person, and leave the rest up to God.

- **Mark 11:25** "And whenever you stand praying, if you have **anything against anyone, FORGIVE him**, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses."
- **Ephesians 4:26-27 & 31** "**Be ANGRY and do not sin**; do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor GIVE PLACE to the devil." "Let all **BITTERNESS**, wrath, **ANGER**, clamor, and all evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice."
- **Colossians 3:8 & 12-13** "But now you must also **PUT OFF all these: ANGER, wrath**, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth." "Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, **PUT ON** tender mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering (patience); bearing with one another, and **FORGIVING one another**, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so YOU also must do."
- **James 1:19-20** "Therefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to **wrath** (slow to get angry); for the wrath of man does **not** produce the righteousness of God."
- **Mark 3:5** "So when He (Jesus) had looked around them **with ANGER**, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.'....."

Jesus could be ANGRY and not sin, because his anger was towards those who were mistreating other people, corrupting God's message, and hindering people from coming to God. We, on the other hand, usually get angry because someone has done something that hurts US, or inconveniences US, or embarrasses US, or for some other SELFISH reason. Then, we tend to HOLD ONTO that anger, and it turns into bitterness and resentment. To "not let the sun go down on your wrath" means to **LET GO of all anger, and FORGIVE** before the end of the day, or as soon as possible. If you don't deal with your anger and forgive quickly, **you give the devil an opportunity** to cause trouble in your life. Satan is roaming around LOOKING for someone who is open and vulnerable to his attacks, and if you are holding onto anger and **letting it turn into BITTERNESS** and unforgiveness, it is a sure way to ALLOW Satan to MESS UP your life. You must USE your FAITH to ward off ANGRY thoughts and all SINFUL THOUGHTS that Satan throws at you like "fiery arrows." Be careful - Satan will not announce that these temptations and sinful thoughts are from him, but will make them seem like YOUR OWN thoughts.

- **I Peter 5:8-9** "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary (enemy) the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the **FAITH**..."
- **Luke 22:31-32** "And the Lord said, 'Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that **your FAITH** should not fail.....'"
- **Ephesians 6:16** "Above all, taking the **SHIELD of FAITH** with which you will be able to quench all the **fiery darts** of the wicked one."
- **Hebrews 12:14-15** "Pursue peace with all men, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord; looking diligently lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any **ROOT of BITTERNESS** springing up cause trouble, and by this **many become** ."

Bitterness hurts MANY MORE people than just the one who is bitter ("many become defiled"). Many family dysfunctions and generational sins begin as a ROOT of BITTERNESS (anger that has not been dealt with) in someone's life, which then passes down to their families in the form of more DYSFUNCTIONS, ADDICTIONS, and other problems.

3.) Anger directly against God - You may not realize it at first, but if you are upset with circumstances in your life, or think "life has dealt you a bad hand," etc., you are basically saying that God is not in control of your life, or if He is, He is doing a lousy job of it! Many Christians whine and complain that the devil is attacking them, and rather than stand up against the devil, they complain to God for not protecting them. Satan can only attack you as far as God will allow him, or YOU will allow him. If your anger is not so much against a person, but rather against CIRCUMSTANCES, the Lord's COMMAND in His word is that you "**REJOICE**

always and **give THANKS in everything** - in all circumstances" (I Thessalonians 5:16-18). The only way you can do that, and deal with this kind of anger, is to gain an understanding of God's will for your life. Again, there is no short cut, because you must spend time reading the word of God, meditating on the word of God, and growing closer to the Lord. As you get to know the Lord in a deeper and more intimate way, **you will be able to trust Him** to know what is best for you in ALL circumstances. You must learn to **trust God completely**, and NOT to rely on your own understanding, or try to figure things out yourself ("being wise in your own eyes").

- **Proverbs 3:5-7** "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and **do not lean on your own understanding**. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; FEAR the LORD and depart from evil."
- **Ephesians 5:15-18** "See then that you walk **CIRCUMSPECTLY**, not as **FOOLS** but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but **understand what the WILL of the Lord is**. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but **BE FILLED with the Spirit**."
- **Proverbs 9:10** "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and **the knowledge of the Holy One** is understanding."
- **Psalms 111:10** "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; **a good understanding** have all those who do His commandments."
- **Proverbs 1:7** "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but **FOOLS** despise wisdom and instruction."

Definition: - "Circumspectly" means to look around, be cautious, CAREFUL to consider all circumstances and **POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES**. People who are easily angered or always taking offense are NOT looking at the consequences of their actions. They lash out and speak angry, hurtful words without thinking of the harm they are doing to others. Christians who grumble, complain, or get **ANGRY at circumstances** are not being careful to consider what a **bad testimony** that is to their Lord. "The Fear of the Lord" means reverential AWE and RESPECT for God, especially as evidenced by OBEDIENCE to His commands and **DOING His will**. The New Testament equivalent is HOLY LIVING and being FILLED with the SPIRIT. As we OBEY God's commands that we see in His word, even the simplest ones, He will REVEAL **more of His will** for our lives to us. Why should He give us more detailed information if we don't even obey His will that is revealed in His word?

- **I John 3:22** "And whatever we ask, we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments, and DO those things which are **pleasing in His sight**."
- **Philippians 2:14-15** "Do all things without grumbling or disputing (arguing), that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world."
- **II Corinthians 7:1** "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting HOLINESS in the FEAR of God."

Ephesians 5:15-21 says to "understand what the will of the Lord is," and when you have that understanding, you will **not get ANGRY** at so many things that happen to you, or blame God for allowing trials and testings in your life. First of all, it says that God's will is to be "filled with the Spirit" which means you are to be "under the INFLUENCE" of (controlled by) the **Holy Spirit**. This is NOT a ONE-TIME experience, but a continuous YIELDING of yourself and **your FREE WILL** to the Holy Spirit's control. The literal translation of the Greek is "keep being filled" with the Spirit, so it is a daily, even moment-by-moment decision to yield or surrender your will to God. Next, it says **His will is to GIVE THANKS in all situations and circumstances**, because He is using ALL things to get rid of your stubborn character defects, and to make you more like Jesus. **When you understand that God's will is to conform you to the image of Jesus**, to prepare you for service for Him here on earth, and to prepare

you to live with Him for all eternity, you will wonder WHY you are getting ANGRY at the people or things that He is using to accomplish that purpose! Last of all, verse 21 tells us that God's will is for us to SUBMIT to one another. To submit or be submissive means being HUMBLE or compliant, YIELDING to the authority of another - the **opposite** of REBELLIOUS. We are to be submissive to God and His authority, and to human authority and governments. If we submit to one another, especially in the church, we try to please one another, and put the other's well-being before our own, and we will have fewer instances that cause anger. Whether your ANGER and rebellion are against God or people or both, the solution is the same: humble SUBMISSION and giving of THANKS to God.

- **Ephesians 5:19-21** "Speaking to one another psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **singing and making melody** in your heart to the Lord. **Giving thanks ALWAYS for ALL THINGS** to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, **SUBMITTING to one another** in the fear of God."
- **Philippians 2:3** "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or deceit, but in lowliness (humility) of mind let each esteem (regard) others better than himself."
- **I Thess. 5:18** "In everything GIVE THANKS; for this is **the WILL of God** in Christ Jesus for YOU."
- **Romans 8:28-29** "And we know that **ALL THINGS work together for GOOD** to those who love God, to those who are the called (chosen) according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be **conformed to the image of His Son....**"

Are you still holding anger or resentment against God, because you don't think it's fair that He uses Satan, and difficult people, and evil things to test us and try us? Why doesn't He just teach us what He wants us to do in His word? Well, **GOD'S WORD is certainly His first choice** for our training and growth (see II Tim. 3:16-17), but most of us are too STUBBORN, self-centered, and PRIDEFUL to **listen and learn just from His word**. God does NOT deliberately lead us into evil situations (see Matt. 6:13), but He will USE an evil situation we have already gotten into for our GOOD. In this sinful, fallen world, God ALLOWS trials and testings, even attacks from the enemy, if it will get our attention and drive us to our knees in prayer, and drive us to His word. When everything is going smoothly in our lives, we many times feel we do not need God. He allows trials and testings to show us our need to depend on Him entirely.

- **II Timothy 3:16-17** "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, **for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness**, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."
- **Psalms 119:67, 71** "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now **I keep Your word.**" "It is **good** for me that **I have been afflicted**, that I may learn Your statutes."
- **James 1:13 & 17** "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot **be tempted by evil**, nor does He Himself tempt anyone." "Every **good gift** and every **perfect gift** is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning."
- **Hebrews 12:11** "Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."
- **James 1:2-4** "My brethren, **count it all JOY** when you fall into **various TRIALS**, knowing that the **TESTING of your faith produces PATIENCE**. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing."
- **Job 23:10** "But He knows the way I take; **when He has tried me**, I shall come forth as gold."
- **I Peter 1:6-7** "In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved (distressed) by **various trials**, that the genuineness of your FAITH, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though **it is TESTED by fire**, may be found to praise, honor and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

- **II Corinthians 5:7** "For we walk by FAITH, not by sight."

Please also read **Overcoming Part 2: Dealing with Difficult People**, "Walking in Your Deliverance" Parts 1 & 2, "Knowing Who You Are in Christ - Using Your Spiritual Authority" Parts 1, 2 & 3", **Forgiveness**, **How to Have God's Peace**, and **Testing and Trials**.