

RESPONDING TO ANGER

Anger is not condemned altogether in the Bible, but inappropriate anger is (Ephesians 4:26; Proverbs 2:24-25; 15:18; 29:11, 22). Anger where a person is out of control is inappropriate (Proverbs 25:28).

Inappropriate anger must be “put off” and godly self-control must be “put on” in its place (Ephesians 4:31; Colossians 3:8; Proverbs 16:32). This is easier said than done. Here are some steps to help you put off the old way of becoming angry inappropriately and losing control.

Step 1: When you realize you are becoming angry, step out of the situation (Proverbs 17:14; 1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22-26). Excuse yourself and go to another room or place.

Step 2: Pray for wisdom, direction, and grace from God (James 1:5). Take captive the ungodly angry thoughts and ask God for His help in dealing with it (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

Step 3: Specifically ask God to fill you with His Spirit (Luke 11:13). It is the Holy Spirit who brings self-control to us (Galatians 5:16-24).

Step 4: Do a thorough self-examination to see where you failed to think, speak, and or act biblically (Matthew 7:1-5). Ask God to reveal sinful thoughts, words, and actions that you need to confess (Psalm 139:23-24). Here are some questions that will help you with this:

(1) What are my thoughts about what is happening? Am I interpreting things through a biblical understanding or my own understanding (Proverbs 3:5-6)? Am I wanting something that is unbiblical? Are my desires selfish and self-centered or are they Christ-centered (remember that biblically it is selfish desires that lead to anger and fighting – James 4:1-4). Examples of unbiblical, ungodly, worldly thoughts and desires are: “I must have respect.” “I must be happy.” “She must listen to me.”

(2) What am I being tempted to do right now that is unbiblical? Am I being tempted to lash out, yell, or worse? Am I being tempted to give up and run away?

(3) What would be the biblical, God honoring response?

(4) What will I choose to do at this point? Will I choose to follow God’s way or my own way? Will I please God or myself and my desires?

Step 5: Confess any unbiblical thoughts and actions to God (Psalm 32:3-7; 1 John 1:9).

Step 6: Determine what biblical thing you will do to replace the ungodly thoughts and actions you had been moving toward doing, and then put these into practice (James 1:21-25; 4:17; John 14:15). You will probably have to go back to the person you were angry with and ask their forgiveness. Then you can respond to them in a calm, loving, controlled way.

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