

Seven Steps to Anger Management

What Comes To Mind When You Think Of Anger?

- Aggression,
- Violence, rage,
- Passive-aggressive behaviors,
- Withdrawal,
- Ulcers,
- Depression

These are all expressions of poorly managed anger. In Ephesians 4:26, the apostle Paul says *"In your anger do not sin."*

The above are examples of anger expressed in a way that is not glorifying to God, in other words, in a sinful way. Those expressions of anger also destroy our relationships with other people. But anger, in and of itself, is not a sin. The Bible is full of examples of times when God the Father and Jesus were angry.

Consider this verse *"Do not take advantage of a widow or an orphan. If you do and they cry out to me, I will certainly hear their cry. My anger will be aroused."* (Exodus 22:22-24). In Mark 11:15-17 we read of Jesus righteously clearing out the money changers from the temple. Our Heavenly Father and Lord know how to use anger appropriately, to right that which is wrong.

I like to think of anger as a surge of energy, a gift from God, to give us the strength to proactively deal with situations in which we are hurt, frustrated, or afraid. Anger is a secondary emotion that is a response to the primary emotions of hurt, frustration, or fear. When we are hurt, we want to hurt back.

When we are frustrated, we want to right what we feel is wrong. When we are afraid, we want to protect ourselves from harm. Anger quickly comes in to play. We may experience an adrenaline rush, which is uncomfortable, and we can get quick relief by lashing out on whomever or whoever is handy. But acting quickly is not always wise.

The Lord has not given us an impossible standard of anger management.

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Seven steps to help you and your family deal constructively with anger:

1. **STOP!** Anger is like a signal light and it is red! Unless it is an emergency, stop, calm down, and follow the next three steps.
2. **PRAY:** Ask God to help you do what Jesus would do. Pray for the person you are angry with.
3. **THINK:** What outcome would be best for all involved? How will your response affect your relationship with the offending party?
4. **LOOK UNDERNEATH:** What other emotions are under the surface - hurt, frustration, and fear? Knowing where your anger comes from will help you to know how to use it.
5. **ACT WISELY:** Choose the most proactive and/or non-harmful action to deal with the situation.
6. **FORGIVE:** Because the Lord commands it and because it is good for you. Harboring bitterness only eats away at you!
7. **PLAN AHEAD:** Learn from your experiences of anger management. Be ready for the next time you feel that surge of anger energy - use it wisely!

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