

Be Ye Angry and Sin Not

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We live in a world that is filled with anger and rage. Uncontrolled anger can take you where you do not want to go. Wars often begin with anger, as does spousal abuse, child abuse, and elder abuse. Road rage can manifest itself in many serious ways, even murder. Uncontrolled anger breaks up friendships and marriages, it can lead to self-isolation, or even to jail or prison time. One person described anger as a short fuse attached to an explosive device that takes no accounting for the future.

We all exhibit anger from time to time. And that is OK. The Bible even says, “*Be ye angry, and sin not,*” Ephesians 4:26. **Anger is not the problem, but it is uncontrolled and undeterred anger that is sinful.** Pent up anger only tends to fester and build up until it explodes in a fit of rage. So, what can we do to prevent our anger from becoming sin?

First of all, Paul continued his admonition in Ephesians 4 with these words, “*let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil.*” Don’t act on your anger in a selfish or childish way. Deal with your wrath as quickly as possible before it gets too bad, so you don’t do something stupid or commit sin. Nighttime is when we seem to do our best “stewing.” We build ourselves up into a frenzy that can lead to bad behavior. Whoever makes you mad, quickly go to that person and work out the problem while you can still speak and act reasonably. Christians are to pursue peace and not conflict (Romans 12:18; Hebrews 12:14-15).

Secondly, always be mindful of your speech. Think about your words before you say them. The wrong words or the wrong tone in which you say your words can quickly turn a conversation into a confrontation. Paul gives some good advice in Colossians 4:6, “*Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.*” And remember the words of Solomon in Proverbs 15:1, “*A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.*” Make sure your intent is to deescalate the situation and not to escalate it.

Third, we must never let our anger result in wild, public outbursts. Solomon said in Proverbs 12:16, “*A fool's wrath is presently known: but a prudent man covereth shame.*” How can we be followers of the Prince of Peace if we act foolishly in public fits of outrage? As Christians we are to be a discerning and discretionary people. Again, Solomon said in Proverbs 19:11, “*The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.*” As someone once said, “When we walk by the Spirit of God, we practice self-control in all facets of life (Galatians 5:23).”

Fourth, instead of venting our anger with unchristian behavior, we should channel our frustrations into doing something good. Physical exertion helps to relieve stress and helps to release tension. Mow someone’s yard, work in their flower beds or gardens, help someone with chores that have gotten too strenuous for them due to illness or old age. It will help them as well as helping you. Also doing good to those who wrong us will often change their behavior as well as ours. Paul instructs us in Romans 12:19-21, “*Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou*

shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” Jesus said in Matthew 5:44-45, “*Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.*” It takes humility, maturity and wisdom to be able to channel our anger properly - all characteristics of a true Christian.

We are to deal with anger differently than the world. We are to walk in light and not in darkness (Ephesians 5:8). We are to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13-16). We are to walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise (Ephesians 5:15). You cannot be an example of Christ if you act in the behavior of the world. It is OK to be angry, just be careful how you handle it and take care of the problem quickly as the Bible instructs.