

Chapter 4

The Problem of Anger

Be Angry!!! and SIN NOT!!

(Ephesians 4:26)

We all face the problem of sinful anger. We know what it is like to lose our temper, blow our stack and fly off the handle at others. Sometimes we tend to boil up and burn up within with bitterness and resentment. The Bible teaches that wrath or anger is one of the “works of the _____” (Galatians 5:19-20). It is the product of our old sinful nature. God tells the believer what to do with sinful anger:

“PUT IT _____” (Colossians 3:8)

“PUT IT _____” (Ephesians 4:31)

Indeed, the book of Proverbs has much to say about sinful anger (see Proverbs 14:17,29; 15:18; 19:11; 22:24-25; 29:22). James tells us that we are to be...

(See James 1:19)

SWIFT (QUICK) TO _____

SLOW TO _____ (see Proverbs 29:20)

SLOW TO _____

James 1:20 gives the reason why.

Man is swift to anger, but

God is _____ (Psalm 103:8)

Do You Blow Up or Boil Up?

Sinful anger is expressed in different ways:

1) Some people tend to **BLOW UP**

Many people are like a living, active volcano—they tend to erupt and explode (Mount Vesuvius or Mt. Saint Helens style!) They let it all come out, and the smoke and lava pours forth! Those who live near or around the eruption must suffer from the damaging effects of man's sinful anger and temper. Anger which is allowed to BLOW UP primarily hurts and destroys OTHERS (although the person who explodes will also be hurt, just as when a gun is fired at another there is often a powerful recoil).

2) Some people tend to **BOIL UP**

Sinful anger is also manifested in a less obvious yet equally damaging way. Some keep anger within, allowing this powerful emotion to slowly burn and boil. As they hold it in, bitterness and resentment slowly begin to build up. Boiling anger is just as sinful as exploding anger! The difference is that anger which is allowed to BOIL UP primarily hurts and destroys SELF (although others will certainly be affected by the built up bitterness and resentment).

**Blowing Up
Towards Others**



**Boiling Up
Within Self**



**Sinful
Anger**

“I Just Can’t Control My Temper!”

Yes you can! You do it all the time. Consider this example:

Mrs. Jones loses her patience and begins yelling at the children. Mr. Jones, who is trying to read the paper, finally can take it no longer! He violently explodes at both his wife and the children! Suddenly, in the middle of this eruption, the doorbell rings and it’s Pastor Smith who has stopped by for a visit. Mr. and Mrs. Jones go to the door and with a warm smile say, “Pastor Smith, it’s so good to see you!”

Do you see what they did? They immediately controlled their temper (because they did not want their Pastor to enter their home and see two active volcanoes!) If we can control our anger in such fleshly ways, how much more can the Spirit of God control this powerful emotion for God’s glory, if we will but let Him and trust Him!

Is Anger Always Sinful?

Elsewhere in our notes we studied that worry (being rightfully worried and concerned about our relationship with Christ), fear (the fear of the LORD) and doubt (being rightly suspicious of others who may be trying to deceive us) can be very healthy emotional responses, even as God intended them to be. What normally is considered a VICE can become a VIRTUE if it is used in the right way according to God’s Word.

The same is true with ANGER. The Lord has built into man the emotional capacity to BE ANGRY, and this powerful emotion was originally meant to be helpful and not harmful. Anger can be a proper and useful emotion! Yes, there is such a thing as a HEALTHY, HOLY, RIGHTEOUS ANGER (sometimes called “righteous indignation”).

On page 34 there is a list given of four illustrations which shows that there is such a things as HEALTHY, HOLY, RIGHTEOUS ANGER:

Healthy, Holy, Righteous Anger

1) God is angry.

“God is _____ with the wicked _____” (Psalm 7:11). God is always and ever angry against sin!

2) The Lord Jesus is sometimes angry.

Consider the following passages and discuss why the Lord Jesus was angry:

- a) Mark 3:5 (compare Matthew 12:10-12—these religious leaders were more merciful to a dumb animal than they were to their fellow man!)
- b) Mark 10:14 (“much displeased” should be translated “moved with indignation or anger”)
- c) Mark 11:15-17 (compare John 2:13-17).
- d) Matthew 16:21-23.
- e) Matthew 18:6-7.
- f) Matthew 23:13-33.
- g) Revelation 2:6,15
- h) Revelation 19:15-16

3) The Holy Spirit sometimes causes men to be angry

(1 Samuel 11:6).

4) God commands the believer to “BE _____”

(Ephesians 4:26).

Caution: The Lord knows that with frail men righteous anger can very easily become sinful anger, so He adds the words, “and _____ not” (Eph. 4:26). It’s easy for us to get angry at the wrong things or to get angry at the right things for the wrong reasons! If your sinful anger has harmed someone else, don’t go to bed until you have corrected the problem in God’s way (prior to the age of electric lights people used to go to bed when the sun went down!).

As you consider the following people and their anger, decide whether their **anger** was

SINFUL (indicate by “**S**”) or **RIGHTEOUS** (indicate by “**R**”):

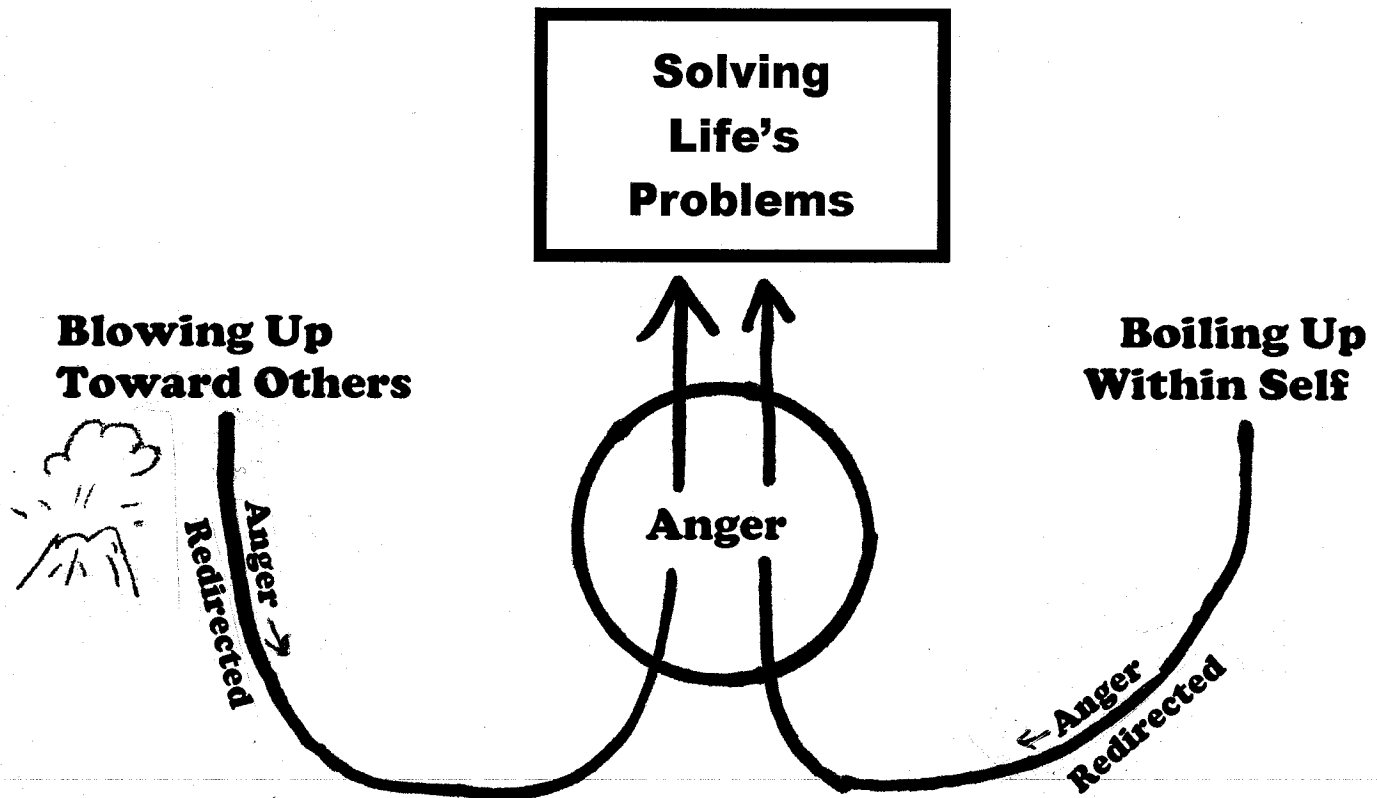
1. _____ Cain (Genesis 4:5-6).
2. _____ Esau (Genesis 27:41-45).
3. _____ Moses (Exodus 16:20; 32:19; Leviticus 10:16-17).
4. _____ Moses (Numbers 20:7-13; compare Numbers 27:12-14; Deut. 1:37; **Psalm 106:33**).
5. _____ Balak (Numbers 24:10).
6. _____ Saul (1 Samuel 11:6).
7. _____ Saul (1 Samuel 20:30).
8. _____ David (1 Samuel 17:26, 1 Samuel 17:45-46).
9. _____ David (2 Samuel 12:5; note: David was right in getting angry at the sin of this man, but who should he really have been angry at?).
10. _____ Elisha (2 Kings 13:19).
11. _____ Asa (2 Chronicles 16:10).
12. _____ Nehemiah (Nehemiah 5:6).
13. _____ Jonah (Jonah 3:10; 4:1-11).
14. _____ Herod (Matthew 2:16).

15. _____ People of Nazareth (Luke 4:28).
16. _____ The Elder Brother (Luke 15:28).
17. _____ The Jerusalem Jews (Acts 7:54-58).
18. _____ Saul (Acts 9:1).
19. _____ Paul (Acts 13:9-11; Galatians 1:7-9).
20. _____ Satan (Rev. 12:12,17).

Anger Used for God's Glory and Man's Good!

Anger was intended to be a very constructive (not destructive) motivating force in our lives. It is a powerful emotion and this power may be used in good and helpful ways. God is glorified when we are angry *in the right way and for the right reason!*

“Blowing up” and “boiling up” has never solved one problem, nor has it ever helped one person! When we blow up or boil up, we are directing all of our energy at others and at ourselves in a harmful way (see diagram on page 32), and our problems only grow worse. How much better to redirect that energy and use that energy to attack and to solve the problem! Why not harness this vast supply of energy and put it to good use!



Am I angry at sin in my own life? Am I angry at the sinful ways in which I have treated my family and loved ones? Is all of my energy being used to straighten things out with the Lord and with others?

Stop being angry against others and against God! Be angry (in a good way) with yourself!!

“Thou art the man”

(See 2 Samuel 12:1-9)