

A Dangerous Emotion

Anybody can become angry—that is easy; but to be angry with the right person, and to the right degree, and at the right time, and for the right purpose, and in the right way ... is not easy.

(Aristotle)

Everyone faces the challenge of harnessing the energy of anger without allowing it to ruin our relationships, our health, and—in some cases—our very lives (Louisa Rogers). Anger is not a bad emotion, even God gets angry, but it is a dangerous emotion. When angry, do not sin; do not ever let your wrath—your exasperation, your fury or indignation—last until the sun goes down (Paul). Anger must be dealt with immediately. Moses, the great prophet who gave us the Ten Commandments, almost destroyed his ministry after exploding in a fit of rage.

While leading the Jews through the desert towards the Promised Land, Moses faced many obstacles. They were in constant need of suitable drinking water. Three days into their journey the Israelites arrived at Marah and found water—it was poison. The Jews complained and lashed out, threatening to kill Moses and return to Egypt. He prayed and the Lord healed the water (Exodus 15:22-26). Later at Rephidim they were in dire need and the people went ballistic. Again God came through for them. He told Moses to take his shepherds rod and stand on Mount Horeb. At His command the prophet struck a rock and water gushed out (Exodus 17:1-7). God proved Himself to be a capable provider in the midst of impossible circumstances.

Again Israel needed water, and as was their custom they complained and made threats. “Take your rod;” God told the prophet, “... gather the congregation. Speak to this rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water.” Moses had his fill, so instead of speaking to the rock, he flew into a rage and hit it with his rod. Fresh water gushed out and everyone was elated—everyone but Moses. Instead of taking his problem to the Lord, he allowed the attitude of the congregation to affect him negatively. He lost it and blew up. Moses quickly repented but because of his wrongdoing he was not allowed to enter the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 3:23-29). Whatever is begun in anger ends in shame (Benjamin Franklin).

The body is made for goodwill, not for ill will (E. Stanley Jones). Anger and resentment paralyzes our inner being, causing us to be confused and ineffective at dealing with the everyday pressures of life. When angry do not lash out; reach up to the Lord. Cry out to Him. Park yourself in His presence and pray through your problem until God’s strength and power calms your emotions. The Lord will empower you inward when you vent your frustrations upward.

December 24