

Anger

Joe Slater

We usually think of anger as a bad thing. Would it surprise you to know that when Scripture speaks of anger, wrath, and the like, it usually refers to God? So anger isn't necessarily sinful. In fact, Paul quoted Psalm 4:4, "*Be angry and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath.*"

While it's possible for us to be angry without sinning, let's be honest – that doesn't happen often. Our anger, unlike God's, is usually unjustified and involves us in sin. A few questions will help us determine whether our anger is righteous or not.

The first question may be the most complex of all: "Why are you angry?" God asked this very question of Cain in Genesis 4:6. By reading the first five verses of that chapter, we can summarize the reason for Cain's anger in one word: ENVY! His brother, Abel, had been accepted by God after offering a sacrifice by obedient faith. But the Lord rejected Cain and his self-willed offering. So Abel had something Cain didn't have: God's approval. Cain demonstrated the childish attitude, "If I can't have it, nobody can have it!" So envy, itself a work of the flesh (Galatians 5:21), produced its evil fruit, anger.

Is there ever a good reason for anger? Throughout Scripture, God's anger resulted when people didn't respect and obey His word. Jesus became angry when God's Temple was defiled and God's people abused. In the same way, sin (including our own) ought to make us angry. When God's word is held up to ridicule, when sin is flaunted, when innocent people are abused, we ought to become angry – yes, angry enough to take steps to correct the situation. And that leads to the next question which we'll cover next week!

Miracles Jesus Didn't Do

Jesus' four biographies tell of thirty-seven specific miracles He performed during His earthly ministry. He fed thousands with a few morsels. He stilled tempests and walked on water. He healed the deaf, blind, and lame. He even raised the dead!

Much may be gained from a study of the miracles Jesus performed; but let's examine some miracles Jesus did not do. These were miracles which were suggested, which He could have done, but refused to perform.

After fasting 40 days in the wilderness, Jesus was tempted by Satan: "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." That would have been an abuse of His power, so He refused, saying, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:3-4).

In Samaria, a village did not receive Him. James and John asked, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?" But Jesus rebuked them, saying, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke 9:51-56).

When the mob came to Gethsemane, Jesus said to Peter, "Do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matthew 26:53). Here was another miracle Jesus did not perform.

At His trials, Jesus' enemies challenged Him to perform miracles, but He would not. His power was not intended to satisfy their wicked curiosity (Matthew 26:67-68; Luke 9:51-56).

Finally, while they were crucifying Him, Christ's enemies taunted, "If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross" (Matthew 27:40). He was, indeed, the Son

of God; and He had the power, but chose to die that others might live.

A study of all the miracles of the New Testament validates the claims of Christ and His apostles (John 20:30-31). His works showed that He is God's Son (Hebrews 2:1-4). The miracles that He did not do also show much of His compassion.

--Randy Vaughn (Hinesville, GA) via *Old Paths*

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Live Longer, Better

Time Magazine (2/26/18) had a cover story, "How to Live Longer, Better." Instead of focusing on diet and exercise, they found that good personal interaction was a key to both happier years and more years. Interestingly, congenial conversations with friends matters more than with family.

One finding of particular interest to *Preacher Talk* readers: Religious people live longer. "Worshippers were 55% less likely to die during the up to 18 years sample."

The magazine did warn, "You are still going to die, though."

Compare *Time's* advice to that of David, quoted by Peter. "*Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil*" (Psalm 34:12-25; 1 Peter 3:10-120).

--Cecil May (via *Preacher Talk*)

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Never look down on someone unless you're helping them up