

Anger

Joe Slater

When thinking of anger, we often picture something bad. But the Bible most often uses words like anger, angry, and wrath in reference to God! “*God is angry with the wicked every day*” (Psalm 7:11). Since Scripture abounds with teaching that God is absolutely holy, righteous, and good, we rest assured that anger is not necessarily evil. H o w e v e r . . . (you knew this was coming) . . .

Both Scripture and experience teach us that our own anger usually comes from impure motives and offends God. While it’s possible to “*be angry and sin not*” (Ephesians 4:26), most episodes of human anger fail that test.

Next time you’re angry, ask yourself, “**Why** am I angry?” Skip the usual excuses and discipline yourself to give an honest answer. Is your anger due to envy, pride, or some other form of selfishness? Most likely so.

The Lord asked Cain, “*Why are you angry?*” (Genesis 4:6). If Cain answered we have no record of it, but the previous five verses make it clear that he envied his brother Abel. God had accepted Abel’s worship but rejected Cain’s self-willed offering. Envy produced anger.

In Ephesus silversmiths, being “*full of wrath,*” rioted when the gospel of Christ converted many pagans away from Diana-worship (Acts 19:28). The market for silver shrines of Diana was drying up, besides which they feared that the city of Ephesus and the goddess herself were being disrespected. Pride and selfishness were on full display!

So why are you angry? Occasionally your anger could be justified; but usually not! (More next week).

Closed On Sunday

When I was growing up, Sunday was a day set aside for rest and reverence. Most stores and businesses were closed, and most folks got together with family for Sunday lunch. There were “blue laws” which allowed only basic necessities such as food or gasoline to be purchased. Yeah, Sundays were different back then.

Nowadays, it’s hard to tell Sunday from any other day of the week (other than a lot of people are off work). Every conceivable business or recreational activity is available, allowing us to purchase or do most anything on the “first day of the week.” As convenient as this is, it poses a great challenge to the disciple of Christ. Instead of Sunday worship taking priority, it would seem that “going to church” is something we do as long as there’s nothing else happening. This is especially true when it comes to the evening services. But as we continue to strive for spiritual growth, we must make the commitment to place God’s service first and not just work it in when feel like we can. Let’s remember to:

- ◆ Seek First the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness (Matthew 6:33)
- ◆ Continually Offer the Sacrifice of Praise to God (Hebrews 13:15)
- ◆ Place God First then Family Second (Matthew 10:37)
- ◆ Be Steadfast in the Work of the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58)
- ◆ Not to Neglect Meeting with Our Church Family (Hebrews 10:25)
- ◆ Not Love the World, but Love the Lord (James 4:4)
- ◆ Make Self-Sacrifices that Will Please God (Hebrews 13:16; Romans 12:1)
- ◆ Be Good Examples to Those Outside the Church

--Jay Launius (Maud, TX) adapted

ADVICE FROM A COOKIE

“**He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son**” (*Revelation 21:7 NASB*).

I enjoy Chinese food and the other day, after a meal, I opened the fortune cookie. I kept this saying as it inspired me. *Toil awhile ... endure awhile ... believe always ... and never turn back.* I just had to change *awhile* to *always*.

Toil always! Serving God and carrying out Jesus’ mission is our work. When do we rest? The Hebrews writer tells us our rest is in heaven (Hebrews 4:1-11). Jesus said, “*I must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work*” (John 9:4). While we have health and life, we are to work God’s works. When death comes the time to work is over.

Endure always! Endure no matter what comes along in this life (which, compared to eternity, is less than the blink of an eye). The letters to the seven congregations in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 have promises that encourage us to endure until the end.

Believe always! Do not lose trust in God’s promises and Jesus’ sacrifice. We will have doubts and we need to work through our times of doubt. Trust in God’s faithfulness. “*For I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day*” (II Timothy 1:12b).

Never turn back! Jesus said, “*No one, after putting his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God*” (Luke 9:62b). Don’t be like the Israelites who looked back to Egypt. Be like Paul; forget what is behind and press forward to the goal!

--Ed Wittlif (Denver, CO)