
Identifying and Understanding your Anger

Anger is a much-misunderstood emotion. It can have a bad reputation and many avoid, deny or give into the passion that anger generates. BUT what if anger was there to help us understand ourselves a little better? What if anger were an emotion that is trying to tell you that something is wrong, for you? As Ephesians 4:1-7 says, 'be angry but sin not'. How can we do this and what might it mean?

Anger can often be confused with other emotions, such as **frustration**. Frustration can be a milder form of anger, but it also tends to be an emotional response to our sense of feeling disappointed or constrained in something we would like to achieve or change. Because frustration has a milder emotional effect we tend to try and look at the issue we are struggling with in a more rational and solution focused manner. Ongoing levels of frustration however can lead to internal stress and if this is not resolved our stress levels can increase to the point where it affects our anger levels.

Anger itself, creates an **energy** and often it is this energy that is used incorrectly and disrespectfully (which gives anger its bad reputation). Anger can be used to blame another, to become violent, to act in an aggressive manner, to sulk, manipulate, and become vicious or vindictive (just to name a few behaviours). Rather than give into these negative and hurtful behaviours it can be more productive to notice our anger, make a decision not to hurt ourselves or another with our anger and then allow its important information to '**ground us**' to help identify what has happened for us.

So, for example, when we feel the energy of anger, a good strategy can be to remove ourselves from the source of anger. We need to breathe deeply and concentrate on noticing the possible tensions in our body. Engage our minds in positive messages such as 'relax, release and breathe'. Try not to let our minds dwell on the source of anger as this can continue to make us feel angry, let it go and focus on what is happening in your body. Our minds can become quite paranoid when we feel angry and we can look for reasons to maintain the energy of anger and this is not a scriptural instruction. Allow the anger to inform. 'Am I feeling hurt, betrayed, sad, disrespected' etc. Once you have identified what your anger is about, continue to breathe and ground yourself with this information. Allow calm thoughts to return so you can return to the issue, think about how it has affected you and develop strategies to deal with it. As long as you remain angry there is the strong possibility that the energy of the anger can be used inappropriately.

All of us have vulnerabilities that can be most uncomfortable when triggered. It can help to try and identify what the vulnerabilities were for Moses, David, Job and many others, when their anger erupted. Our vulnerabilities are unique to us. **When we can learn to identify our vulnerabilities**, we can then begin to develop better coping strategies, firmer boundaries and a more respectful expression of anger. **It can bring us closer to our Heavenly Father if we include Him in our struggles**. If we let it, anger can transform our experiences and help to make our unconscious more conscious.

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