

## Equipped to Counsel 201

### Module 8, Lesson 30

#### Counsel for Anger in Need of Redemption

Definition: p. 305

Headline 8/11/13 in Winchester Star:

***Obliterate Your Stress at Winchester's Wreck It Rage Roomz; Maybe you have some pent-up frustrations that might be quashed by splattering copious amounts of paint around a room while your favorite playlist blares in the background!***

David Powlison in his booklet *Anger, Escaping the Maze*, says the **common therapeutic treatment** for anger is the "hydraulic" theory of anger, treating anger as an emotional fluid that builds up pressure and must be released. "Anger just is, it's neither good nor bad, it's pent up."

Can you think of some common expressions for anger that use that concept? *Blow your top, Blow off steam, Explode, Erupt, Steamed up, breathe fire, hot-blooded, do a slow burn...*

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A. Man's Anger: Can be diagnostic tool to reveal what we want/value/believe/worship.

1. Reflects our depravity, rarely God's righteousness.
2. Requires a judge: is something displeasing "in my eyes", "in your eyes", or "in the eyes of the Lord"? Sometimes it's a combination. For example:
  - Messy house displeases me (pride) and doesn't impress others (fear of man). When I set up the standard and the eyes that judge me, I also create my own definition of a savior. I may strive to attain perfection, a diligently clean house!
  - Or try to overcome sin of abortion by working doubly hard for pro-life movement.
3. Reflects the desires of our hearts. It will be as holy and righteous as the person at the moment of anger. Nu. 25:7-8; Jonah 4:7-8.
4. Shows itself in our works/behavior. P.307
5. Blames others. See Adam and Eve as first example of this.
6. Blames God for our troubles. We get angry at God for not doing what we thought He should do or the way He should do it or when He should do it. Our pride is a core commitment of the heart. We want what we want when we want it. Jonah is a prime example of this, as well as Cain (Gen. 4:4-7), the Jewish crowd against Jesus (John 7:23) and others. The root problem of our anger against God is that it accuses Him of evil or injustice. *God should not let this nightmare happen to me or to those I love.* Examples:
  - A Christian woman whose daughter gets pregnant out of wedlock;
  - Parents whose child dies; boss fires you;

- You are an adult who was abused as a child...

We question God's goodness, His wisdom; if He is sovereign, why didn't He stop this?

7. Other misuses of anger: To threaten, move and change others;

To keep people at a distance;

To cover insecurity;

To defend ourselves when mistakes/sins come to light;

Intensifies around areas of life where there is unresolved sin and guilt

(See David's response to Nathan's story in 2 Samuel 12:1-6).

8. Ways we use anger for good: expresses our love for God and people.

Can be expressed through prayerfulness, wise and serious conversations, and risking our lives for the glory of God and the good of others.

B. Counsel for Anger p.308-11.

1. **Be slow to anger.** Might need attitude adjustment! Address entire outlook on life; gratitude meter.

Anger at God may be an underlying sin that crops up in more recent expressions of anger. Especially if the person is quick to anger, look for earlier disappointment with God. eg. A man whose father dies when he is a toddler, stepfather leaves at age 12 just as he professes faith in Christ. What would be his view of God? Of self? As he mourns the loss of a father and envies those who still have theirs, would he believe he caused this to happen and become perfectionistic, or a high achiever, to atone? What happens when he fails to "measure up"? Does he think God is punitive and unloving? Or that God must be appeased? A common therapeutic treatment for this might be "getting in touch with the inner child". Perhaps a better option is to point to Ephesians 1:4 and the fact that God "chose us in Him before the foundation of the world", and He adopted us as sons. Other teachings on identity and worship and character of God, His sovereignty and goodness...

2. In your anger, do not sin. Rx: Psalm 4:4-5.

If anger is at God, we haul Him into court and accuse Him of injustice and evil. Here are some solutions to anger at God from a booklet by Robert D. Jones, *Angry at God*.

- Continually repent of remaining unbelief, pride, and rebellion- "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." James 4:6
- View hardships as trials, which gives hope through God's purposes found in James 1:1-12, 2 Cor.1. God always embeds the hardships we experience as a subset for His larger purposes:
  - a. To make us more like Jesus.
  - b. Draw us closer to Himself.
  - c. Expose our remaining sin.
  - d. Taste something of our Savior's suffering.

- e. Equip us for compassionate ministry.
- f. Increase our longing for Christ's return.

Our problems are not blind chance, but providential dealings of our omnipotent Ruler who "does whatever please Him." Psalm 115:3

- When current struggles conflict with what you know to be true about God, eg. "He could have prevented this", go to Lament Psalms. Compose own lament using Ps 13 or Ps 77 as guide. Turn to God, Complain to him, Ask for what you need, and Trust him. "Trust in the Lord at all times, O People; pour out your hearts to Him, for God is our refuge." Ps 62:8.
- Remember God promises to judge evil. Rom. 12:19. He is compassionate.
- Remember the cross as final proof God loves you. Rom 5:8.
- He's with you; He gives you Himself. 2 Cor. 9:15.
- Repent and Lament and Trust!

3. Don't let the sun go down on your anger.

4. Learn from anger. "Anger is simply the end of the string that leads downward into desires and affections of the heart."

a. Follow anger to the source. Dx: Matthew 22:37-38.

b. ID the loves and affections of the heart. What do we worship?

c. Acknowledge the source/motives.

d. Repent from unholy anger/idolatry. (See p.268-269 on Godly repentance)

The Gospel is the bridge between the law as a mirror and a lamp. The law is a mirror that shows what I love more than God; the law is a lamp to help me gain wisdom to apply God's will to a situation. The Gospel bridges the chaos of sin and the joys of wisdom. (Powlison, *Anger, Escaping the Maze*)

Galatians 5:14-16 *The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself". If you keep biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other. So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*

e. Pray for holy anger.

From lesson 15, "The love of God is the wind behind us" 2 Cor. 5:14; Eph. 2:4; 5:1

"For His glory is the joy set before that draws us." Eph. 1:6, 12, 14. Heb. 12:1-3

Resources: *Anger, Escaping the Maze* by David Powlison; *Angry at God?* By Robert D. Jones

*Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy; Discovering the Grace of Lament;* by Mark Vroegop