

Problems – Study 5

Thank you for joining me once again for “It’s a Good Life.” We’ve been studying the subject of problems, and if you haven’t had any problems or if you don’t have problems, I’d like to meet you sometime and just discuss that with you and find out your secret. I’m sure that most of us, if not all of us, have problems today, and that’s one of the subjects that we want to study as we look into the Word of God... problems.

But, you know, I’ve also discovered that problems produce symptoms, and that’s in particular what we’re looking at in our study... the symptoms of problems. I’ve discovered this, as well, that, if we take care of the symptoms, that helps us to overcome those problems that are producing the symptoms.

Today, we want to look at the symptom of anger. And as we look at this, I’d like for us to see in Ephesians 4:26 it says, *Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath.* Be angry and sin not; what does that mean? I’m sure that we’ve all faced the problem of sinful anger, and we know what it’s like to lose our temper. In other words, to blow our stack and to fly off the handle at others. Sometimes we tend to boil up and burn up with bitterness and resentment.

God tells the believer what to do with sinful anger. In Colossians 3:8, it says, *But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.*

And the Bible also says in Ephesians 4:31, *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.* Put it away, according to Ephesians 4:31.

And the book of Proverbs has a lot to say about sinful anger. In Proverbs 14:17, it says, *He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated.*

And then in Proverbs 14:29, it says, *He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.*

Proverbs 15:18: *A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.*

Proverbs 19:11: *The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.*

And we continue reading in Proverbs 22:24-25 where it says, ²⁴*Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: ²⁵Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.*

And finally in Proverbs 29:22: *An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression.* So, we see there are plenty of verses and Scriptures that tell us that it’s simply wrong to be angry.

Well, what about actions that take place in our lives? The actions, notice in James 1:19, it says, *Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.* We’re not to be quickly irritated. Sometimes it sneaks up on us, and we’ll see that in a few moments. I believe it seems sometimes just to sneak up on us and catch us by surprise, but we need to learn to control that. And James 1:19 tells us this... be swift, in other words quick to hear. Pay attention. Think before you speak or react. We also see that it’s saying in that verse be slow to

Speak and do not be in a hurry to speak but think before you speak.

And Proverbs 29:20 says, *Seeest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him.* I certainly don't want to be compared to a fool. I want people to think that I'm smart, you know, not to be lifted up with pride, but I don't want to be compared to a fool.

And then we also see according to that verse in James 1:19, it says be slow to wrath, and once again, it's simply saying think before you act. Don't react or lash out. Think before you do that.

Well, why do as James 1:19 says? Man's wrath does not produce God's righteousness. In James 1:20, it tells you, *For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.* That's why we are to do as James says, and let me read that again. *Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.* That's James 1:19. When we are quick to react, then we're not letting the righteousness of God be seen in our lives.

Well, man is swift to anger, but God is merciful and gracious according to Psalm 103:8. It says there, *The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.* You know, I'm thankful to God that He has been so gracious to me throughout my life. He's been slow to anger. He has plenty to be angry with me about throughout my life, but He is plenteous in mercy. It's by God's mercy, by His grace, that He saved me and made me fit for Heaven. And He wants to do the same for you if you've never trusted Him. He wants you to be saved. He wants you to go to Heaven to be with Him forever.

Well, as we look on, we see that we're not to blow up or boil up. Sinful anger is expressed in different ways. Anger is seen sometimes and sometimes not seen. Some people tend to blow up. The blow-up primarily hurts and destroys others. The person who explodes will also be hurt just as firing a gun at another. There is often a powerful recoil.

Many people are like a living, active volcano. They tend to erupt like Mount Vesuvius or Mount St. Helens, and they let it all come out. The smoke and lava pour forth, and those who live near or around the eruption must suffer from the damaging effects of man's sinful anger and temper.

Well, some people blow up and some people boil up. Anger... and this is anger which is allowed to boil up... and it primarily hurts and destroys the self, the person himself.

And sinful anger is also manifested in this less obviously equal damaging way. Some keep anger in, allowing this powerful emotion to slowly burn and boil. As they hold it in, bitterness and resentment slowly begin to build up. Boiling anger is just as sinful as exploding anger. Others will certainly be affected by built up bitterness and resentment.

Can anger be controlled? Sure, it can be controlled. It's a matter of controlling the flesh, letting God take care of that in our lives. As we study these things and look at the Scriptures, we understand that the hope that we have, first of all, of going to Heaven, is through Jesus Christ. And the hope that we have of controlling these simple emotions in our lives lies also with Jesus Christ.

And that brings me to this point. Let me ask this question and I'll answer. Is anger always sinful? Well, we've studied worry, fear, and doubt in our study so far and have seen that

these can be healthy and helpful emotional responses, even as God intended them to be. But what normally is considered a vice can become a virtue if it is used in the right way, according to God's Word.

The same is true with anger. The Lord has built into man the emotional capacity to be angry, and this powerful emotion was originally meant to be helpful and not harmful. Anger can be a proper and useful emotion, and, yes, there is such a thing as healthy, holy, righteous anger, sometimes called "righteous indignation."

First, notice with me as we think of this, God is angry with the wicked every day. Now, He's not mad at the person and wanting them to go to Hell. He is not saying, "I hate you," or anything like this, but He's angry with the results, with the person who allows this to take place in their life. He doesn't hate the person. He hates the sin that is there. And God is always angry against sin. In Psalm 7:11, it says, *God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day.*

Well, the Lord Jesus is sometimes angry, and we see this in the Scriptures. Consider the following passages and think of the ways that the Lord was angry. If we read Matthew 12:10-12, we'll notice how the religious leaders of Christ's day would be more merciful to a dumb animal than they were to their fellow man.

As we look in John 2:12-16, it says this: *¹²After this he went down to Capernaum... this is Jesus... he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days. ¹³And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, ¹⁴And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: ¹⁵And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the*

*temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; ¹⁶And said unto them that sold doves, **Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.***

Well, three years later after the first cleansing of the temple, Jesus would once again enter the temple in Matthew 21:12-13 and primarily the same thing happened. It says, *¹² And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, ¹³And said unto them, **It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.***

We see by reading these verses, and there are others, as well, about the Lord, we see that He had righteous indignation. He did not want any shame brought about His Father's house, the things of God.

And, you know, it really irritates me sometimes when I see the pictures that some portray Jesus to be this effeminate, easy-going person, and certainly He was a God of love as He walked this Earth, and sometimes it just really bothers me when I see these paintings that portray Him in such an effeminate way or hear people talk about Him and say that He is simply a God of love, which he is. He's a God of love, but let me tell you that He also frowns and He's angry with sin. He frowns upon that and He is not some effeminate person who walked this Earth, but He is One who stood for the things of God. He was the One who stood up for God the Father and said you must be saved in order to go to Heaven. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, the Bible says.

Well, anger, we see, can be used for God's glory and man's good. Anger was intended to be a very constructive, not destructive, motivating force in our lives. Ask yourself: *Am I angry at sin in my own life?* This is what we need to be angry with, angry with the sin in our life. *Am I angry at the sinful ways in which I have treated my family and loved ones? Is all of my energy being used to straighten things out with the Lord and with others?*

Remember this, anger is not in itself evil or sinful, but in some cases a necessary duty. Stand up for the Lord. Let people know that you love Him and that you're on your way to Heaven.

Now, if you're not on your way to Heaven, you need to trust Jesus as your Savior. "Lord, I can't save myself. Please come into my heart and save me so I can go to Heaven."

If you'll say a prayer like that and mean it within your heart and want to go to Heaven, Jesus says, "I'll save you and make you fit for Heaven."

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Until next time, this is Doug Anderson reminding you it's a good life living for the Lord. May the Lord bless you richly in our prayer.