

ANGER

Anger is an emotion which God created and is, in and of itself, not sinful. It was designed to be used constructively in overcoming problems. When we are angry and hold it in, or when we blow up at other people, it then becomes harmful and destructive. It then becomes sin. This study is designed to help you distinguish between sinful and righteous anger, and to help you to overcome your tendencies to sinful anger.

A. At whom or what is your anger most frequently directed?

1. Other people _____
2. Your circumstances or environment _____
3. Yourself _____
4. God _____
5. Your spouse _____
6. Your children _____

B. Describe the last three situations in which you became angry.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

C. Read the following verses and write down what they say about wrong ways to handle anger. You are handling anger in a sinful and unbiblical way when you:

1. Proverbs 19:11, 20: Lose your temper quickly. Don't stop to think about what you are saying in your rage of anger.
(EXAMPLE).
2. Proverbs 15:1: _____

3. Proverbs 26:21: _____

4. I Corinthians 13:5: _____

5. Ephesians 4:31: _____

6. Colossians 3:8: _____

7. Proverbs 25:28: _____

D. Read the following verses and write down what they say about the right ways to handle anger. Read over these scriptures often and make a continuing effort to apply God's way of handling anger to your life.

1. Proverbs 15:1: Give a gentle answer to those who anger you.
(EXAMPLE).

2. Proverbs 15:28: _____

3. Proverbs 16:32: _____

4. Proverbs 29:11: _____

5. Psalm 37:1-11: _____

6. Matthew 5:43-44: _____

7. Romans 12:17, 19, 21: _____

8. I Corinthians 6:20: _____

9. Galatians 5:16-23: _____

10. Philippians 4:8: _____

11. Ephesians 4:25-32: _____

E. Examine your own life in the light of Matthew 5:3-10; Galatians 5:22, 23; and II Peter 1:5-8. Use the space below to write down the qualities which are most lacking in your life. Remember that God wants to use all circumstances which anger you to develop these qualities in your life. When anger is handled sinfully, these qualities cannot be developed.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____

F. Stop and think of how God can use your present irritations and annoyances to reveal your lack of these qualities and to develop them in you. When you are tempted to become sinfully angry, consider why God may be wanting you to learn from your trial.

G. The following scriptures list some of the benefits that your irritations and problems may bring to you. Remember Job 23:10 and Romans 8:28. God has a good purpose for everything that comes into the Christian's life.

1. Psalm 119:67, 71: Keeping God's Word and learning what scriptures say.
(EXAMPLE).

2. Romans 5:3-5: _____

3. II Corinthians 1:3-6: _____

4. II Corinthians 12:10: _____

5. Philippians 3:10: _____

6. Hebrews 12:11: _____

7. James 1:2-5:

8. I Peter 1:7: _____

9. I Peter 4:12-13: _____

H. Which of the following do you consider to be your "rights"? Usually we become sinfully angry because we think some "right " is being denied.

1. Right to have and control personal belongings _____
2. Right to privacy _____
3. Right to have and express personal opinions _____
4. Right to earn and use money _____
5. Right to plan your own schedule _____
6. Right to respect _____
7. Right to have and choose friends _____
8. Right to belong, be loved, be accepted _____
9. Right to be understood _____
10. Right to be supported _____
11. Right to make your own decisions _____
12. Right to determine your own future _____
13. Right to have good health _____
14. Right to date _____
15. Right to be married _____
16. Right to have children _____
17. Right to be considered worthwhile and important _____
18. Right to be protected and cared for _____
19. Right to be appreciated _____
20. Right to travel _____
21. Right to have the job you want _____
22. Right to a good education _____
23. Right to be a beautiful person _____
24. Right to be treated fairly _____
25. Right to be desired _____
26. Right to have fun _____
27. Right to raise children your way _____
28. Right to security _____
29. Right to fulfilled hopes and aspirations _____
30. Right to be successful _____
31. Right to have others obey you _____
32. Right to have you own way _____
33. Right to be free of difficulties and problems _____
34. Others _____

I. Which of the above "rights" are you being denied, and by whom?

RIGHT

BY WHOM

1. Personal belongings My spouse

2. Privacy

My parents

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

J. Consciously recognize that, if you are a Christian, you and all you have and are (your rights included) belong to God (I Cor. 6:19, 10: Rom. 12:1; Ps. 24:1). Acknowledge this and dedicate all that you are and have, including your "rights," to God. Trust Him to take care of His property. Cease to think in terms of you "rights" and concentrate on God's will and purpose and promises. For a while, until the fact that all your "rights" belong to God reaches the awareness level, you will want to specifically dedicate your "rights" to God on a regular basis.

K. The following is a recommended procedure you should follow if you desire to "put off" the sinful, destructive, unbiblical use of anger and "put on" the Biblical, constructive use of anger. When something occurs which might lead to bitterness (clamming up, internalization of anger, resentment, hurt feelings; hostility, a grudge) or an explosion (angry words, verbal abuse, accusations, physical abuse, gossip, slander, retaliation of some sort, blaming, sarcasm, put down, exaggerations, shouting), you should immediately put the following procedure into practice. You must do this every time you are tempted to become sinfully angry. Remember, "there is a way of escape" (I Cor. 10:13), "the fruit of the Spirit is . . . self control" (Gal. 5:22, 23), "God has . . . given us the Spirit of power, and love and of self discipline" (II Tim. 1:7). With promises like these from a God who cannot lie, there is no excuse for defeat, and there is every reason for victory. Here, then, is a procedure for victory. When a potentially distressing, fretful circumstance arises:

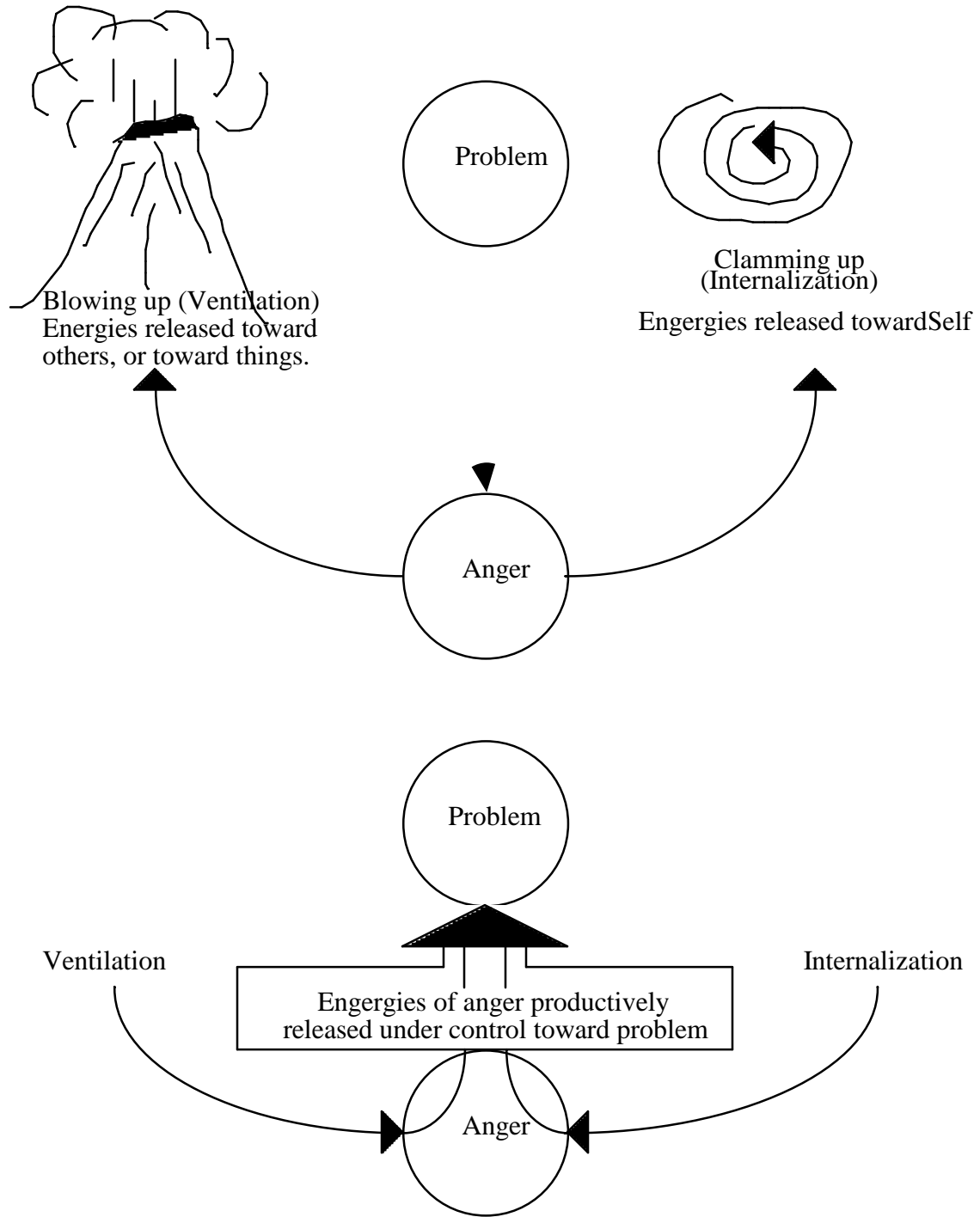
1. Immediately ask God to help you handle it in a God-honoring, Biblical way.
2. Remind yourself that God is sovereign. He could have prevented this circumstance from arising. He can now empower you to face it, and if you face it His way, it will serve a positive, constructive purpose.
3. Thank God for the victory He is going to give you and the blessing He is going to bring into your life through this trial.
4. Consider what witness, service, modeling opportunities this situation may provide. Others are watching you, and you can now demonstrate the sufficiency of Christ, the reality and power of Christianity, the tremendous relevance and practicality of the Word of God in a fantastic way. Think of this and expect God to use you.

5. Examine yourself to see if you have done anything to promote the situation. Have you been lazy, irresponsible, stubborn, critical, wasteful, ungrateful, bossy, haughty, overly demanding, a nag, inconsiderate, unwilling to change or give in to other people, unmerciful, rude, crude, proud, too stern or austere, unfriendly, boastful, deceitful, sloppy, disorganized, jealous or envious, unmannerly, manipulative, suspicious, selfish, morose, solemn, sensitive, negative and pessimistic? Often we sow the wind and reap the whirlwind. With what measure we dish it out we receive it back. Our problems are often the mirror of our own faults. According to the Bible we roll a stone and it rolls back on us; we dig a pit and then fall into it ourselves; we are taken captive by our own iniquities.
6. Consider what character quality God may be trying to develop in you through this situation. If I am being unjustly accused, He may be trying to develop meekness or love or joy or patience or self-control or forgiveness, or poverty of spirit. My initial, natural response to the situation may pinpoint a fault and reveal what God wants to do in my life. I must acknowledge my shortcomings and ask God to use circumstances to develop Christian traits to overcome them.
7. Discern which "rights" of yours are being denied or neglected in this situation. Do you think you have a right to be respected, and is that why you are becoming upset because your wife won't fulfill your wishes? Do you think you have a right to be appreciated, and is that why you are becoming resentful toward someone who has criticized you or won't express his indebtedness to you? Identify what you think you are being denied and then turn the matter over to God. You belong to Him. He knows what you really need (Phil. 4:19). Trust Him to take care of you. He knows what things you have need of even before you ask (Matt. 6:25-34). Believe that God is much wiser than you. He knows much better than you what you really need, and He will supply what you need if you handle matters His way.
8. Seek to associate with those who are calm, self-controlled, handling problems God's way. You will learn from them, be strengthened and encouraged by them in the right way, and become like them (Prov. 13:20; II Tim. 2:22; Heb. 10:24,25; Prov. 22:24,25; 29:22; I Cor. 15:3; Heb. 3:12, 13; Prov. 27:17).
9. Discern specifically what God wants you to do and how He wants you to act at this time. Reflect on Biblical illustrations and exhortations that are applicable to your situation. Go over the passages mentioned under points C, D, E, and G of this study. Seek to obey each of these Biblical insights. Anything less will not solve but compound the problem. The question is - How does God want you to handle the situation? Certain things you must not do. Certain things you must. Plan a Biblical course of action. Do you need to confess your sin? (Compare K - 5). Do you need to make restitution? Have you taken something you never returned? Have you gossiped? Have you withheld something that you should have given? Should you agree to separate and give the matter some thought and prayer and then try to resolve the difficulty? What words would solve the problem rather than attack the other person or compound the situation (Eph. 4:29, 30)? Should you be willing to compromise or even give in to the other person? Have you tried to look

at the situation from the other person's viewpoint? Have you tried to role play the situation, taking the other person's place? Have you put the best possible interpretation on what the other person has said or done? Do you allow things to build up or do you deal with one issue at a time? Do you need to seek the counsel of some Biblical counselor (your pastor, another godly Christian, or a professional Christian counselor) to help you discover God's way of handling the situation? How can you express kindness and concern for the person with whom you are having problems (Rom. 12:14-21)? As a Christian you must not attempt to overcome evil with evil, but with good. You must neither hold resentment under, nor give full vent to, your anger. Rather you must learn how to control your anger and use it for constructive purposes. You must release your anger under control.

This can be done only if you do not allow your feelings to activate your words and actions and if you learn the habit of being guided by a mind that is controlled and marinated and instructed by solid Biblical principles. To make sure that this happens (to change the sinful habit patterns which have become deeply ingrained), it may be helpful for a time to actually write out how you should say. Check your plan out with someone who is wise in spiritual matters, and if this person agrees that yours is a Biblical course of action, put the plan into operation. Do this again and again until it becomes rather normal for you to handle situations in a biblical fashion. This, of course, is work, but it's worth it. God wants you to live this way. Your relationships with others will improve. Your health may even improve. You'll be happier and your testimony for Christ will be much more powerful. This plan for overcoming sinful anger will work if you will put it to work.

The following diagrams depict what you have been studying about the wrong and right ways to handle anger. Hopefully these diagrams will fix in your mind the truths you've been studying. They are taken from a pamphlet by Dr. Jay Adams on "What to Do When Anger Gets the Upper Hand?"



- L. Habit patterns and responses that have been part of us for years are not always easy to change. In fact, the reverse is usually true. But, by the power of God, we can change. We can control our anger. We don't need to continue to explode or become bitter. Thus

far we have seen that to change we must plan ahead, we must think Biblically, and exercise self-control when stress situations arise. In addition to these things, the person who wants to change should review what he is doing on a daily basis. Daily fill out the following chart, which will reveal your progress in changing sinful patterns. The chart was developed by Dr. John Broger.

Problem or Circumstance: (Identify it)	Sounded off	Took it and Gritted My Teeth	Followed the Scripture
1.	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____
7.	_____	_____	_____
8.	_____	_____	_____
9.	_____	_____	_____
10.	_____	_____	_____
11.	_____	_____	_____
12.	_____	_____	_____
13.	_____	_____	_____
14.	_____	_____	_____
15.	_____	_____	_____
16.	_____	_____	_____
17.	_____	_____	_____
18.	_____	_____	_____
19.	_____	_____	_____

20. _____
21. _____
22. _____
23. _____
24. _____
25. _____
26. _____
27. _____
28. _____
29. _____
30. _____