

Solving Problems of Anger and Mistreatment

Biblical Guidelines

Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. Colossians 3:13

I. Christians must control anger or they may be castaways from useful witness for Christ. I Corinthians 9:27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

A. Anger itself is not sinful.

1. God's righteous anger defends good and attacks evil. Nehemiah 9:17 ...thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness... Psalm 7:11 God judgeth the righteous, and God is an angry with the wicked every day.
2. Man's righteous anger is a powerful emotion designed to mobilize us to defend good and attack evil. Anger is righteous when under control and directed at eliminating the problem while helping strengthen others in righteousness. Nehemiah 5:6 And I was very angry when I heard their cry... 9 Also I said, It is not good that ye do: ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God... 13 ...And all the congregation said, Amen, and praised the LORD.
3. Jesus indicates that there are causes for righteous anger. Anger without proper cause is condemned. Mark 3:2 And they [Pharisees] watched him [Jesus], whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him... 5 And when he had looked round about on them with an anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts... Matt. 5:22 But I say unto you, That who so ever is an angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.

B. Sinful anger is expressed in two sinful ways:

1. Clamming up—an anger is sinful when turned inward into resentment and bitterness. Ecc. 7:9 Be not hasty in thy spirit to be an angry: for an anger resteth in the bosom of fools. He brews 12:15 ...lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.

- a. Seek to settle problems quickly, even before night fall. Ephesians 4:26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath.
 - b. Matters must be settled with God first, then with others. Psalm 32:5...I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin... James 5:16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another...
 - c. Unabated anger is condemned by God. Amos 1:11 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because... his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever.
2. Blowing up—anger is sinful when directed toward others in uncontrolled or harmful outbursts. Ephesians 4:29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.
 - a. Anger is sinful when hastily expressed. James 1:19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: 20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.
 - b. Hasty anger causes strife. Prov. 15:18 A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.
 - c. The Bible directs us to control and restrain anger. Counting to ten (or higher!) is in harmony with Biblical guidelines for controlling anger. Prov. 14:17 He that is soon an angry dealeth foolishly. 29 He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.

II. The Bible must guide Christian response when someone has been wronged. Psalm 73:24 Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.

- A. If you have wronged someone, you must go to the one you have wronged and be reconciled. Matt. 5:23 There fore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; 24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.
- B. If someone has wronged you, you must go to

the offender seeking to resolve the problem and rebuild fellowship with him as described in Matthew 18:15 More over if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

1. Christian witnesses will help you if necessary for resolution. Matthew 18:16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.
 2. Your church will help you if necessary for resolution. Matthew 18:17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.
 - a. Offenders who refuse to submit to their church's decision must be considered as unsaved persons, and we should seek to win them to Christ. Gal. 1:16 ...that I might preach him [Christ] among the heathen. 2:9...we should go unto the heathen.
 - b. Offenders are never to be mistreated, for we are even to love our enemies. Luke 6:27 But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you.
- C. Three elements are involved in solving problems of mistreatment:
1. Repentance with confession of sin to God and to any others who have been offended. Acts 26:20 ...repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. Proverbs 28:13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whose confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. James 5:16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another...
 2. Forgiveness by God and by the one who has been offended. I John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Luke 17:3 ...If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.
 3. Reconciliation establishes new or renewed fellowship between the offender and God, and between the offender and offended party. II Cor. 5:18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.

III. Offenders must repent to receive forgiveness and reconciliation. Repentance is the changing of the mind concerning actions and admitting error. If the offender repents, he MUST

BE FORGIVEN. Luke 17:3 Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. 4 And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

A. True repentance will bear fruit that shows change has taken place. Matthew 3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.

B. Works may show that an offender has repented, and specific words of repentance may not be necessary. Some have been openly sinful and many who have been offended may never be present to hear the offenders' words of repentance. Only God knows the heart of an offender. When offenders' works are seen which demonstrate repentance, offenders must be forgiven, even though their repentant words have not been heard by those offended. Jonah 3:10 And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

IV. Forgive as Christ has forgiven you.

Ephesians 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Colossians 3:13 ...if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

- A. Pray for those who offend you. Pray that God will lead them to repentance, faith and forgiveness. Luke 23:34 Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots... 47 Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man.
- B. Forgive offenders who repent. Repentance is changing the mind about actions thought to be right and admitting they are wrong. Repentance is necessary for forgiveness of sins. To convert means to turn from wrong to right. Acts 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out...
- C. To forgive without repentance falsely implies that Christ forgives without repentance. Luke 24:46 ...Thus it is written, and thus it is proved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name...
- D. Biblical forgiveness requires work! Obey God

and you will never be a hypocrite. It is not hypocritical to work at forgiveness because such work is obeying God! II Corinthians 10:5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

1. You must do what is right no matter how you feel. If you do not feel like forgiving, then forgive anyway. Obey God and your feelings will improve. Galatians 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these... 20 ...wrath, strife... 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.
2. Avoid mentioning the offense. Forgiveness means no longer continuing to dwell on the sin that was forgiven. When you forgive, each new offense is not the second, third, or seventh, etc. Each new offense is always the FIRST! Psalm 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he [the LORD] removed our transgressions from us. Psalm 32:1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.
3. Refuse to discuss the offense with others. Forgiveness means the problem will not be raised again to offenders, to others, or to oneself. Proverbs 17:9 He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends. I Peter 4:8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.
4. Put the offense out of mind by declining to think and dwell upon resentment or self-pity. He brews 10:17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. 18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.
 - a. Holding grudges or brooding is a violation of the meaning of forgiveness. Leviticus 19:18 Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the LORD. James 5:9 Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned...
 - b. Think on the right things and the peace of God will control the desires of your heart (emotions and feelings) and the thoughts of your mind (intellect and memory). Philippians 4:7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding,

shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

- V. Reconciliation must follow repentance and forgiveness. Acts 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out... II Cor. 5:19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.
 - A. Every small annoyance and offense can not be subjected to the complete reconciliation process. We must learn to forgive in love the many slight annoyances and offenses that are common to all sinners. Proverbs 10:12 Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins... 19:11 The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.
 - B. In reconciliation, peace and fellowship replace enmity and alienation. Colossians 1:20 And, having made peace through the blood of his [Jesus'] cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself... 21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled.
 1. The offended person has no right to make the offender suffer more. Frequently used methods for oppressing offenders involves the offended adopting a martyr stance of depression, crying, self-pity, What did I do? attitude, etc. By such oppressive attitudes and statements one causes the supposedly forgiven offender over a period of time to suffer for his/her sin. Psalm 119:121 I have done judgment and justice: leave me not to mine oppressors.
 2. Oppressive attitudes show that true forgiveness has not been granted. God does not oppress offenders when He grants forgiveness in Jesus Christ. Matt. 18:21 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? 22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.
 3. Both saved and unsaved sinners are capable of doing wrong, even when no one has prompted them. Romans 3:23 For all have

sinned, and come short of the glory of God...

7:19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

- VI. Turn over all unresolved problems to the LORD. Unresolved problems will finally be resolved by the LORD. Romans 12:19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.
 - A. Turn over to the LORD all issues of unrepentant offenders. Proverbs 20:22 Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee... 24:29 Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work.
 - B. Never become vengeful. David turned over the problem to the LORD when he continued to be mistreated by King Saul. I Samuel 24:12 The LORD judge between me [David] and thee [Saul], and the LORD avenge me of thee: but mine hand shall not be upon thee.
 - C. Do not mistreat people who continue to misbehave or mistreat you. Romans 12:20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. 21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.
- VII. How to change. John 3:7 ...Ye must be born again. Gal. 3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. II Cor. 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; be hold, all things are become new. Romans 13:14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ...
 - A. Change requires believers to put off bad habits and to put on good behavior as a new person in Christ. Colossians 3:8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. 9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him... 23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.
 - B. God demands that believers change from being lustful (feeling-motivated) to being submissive (commandment-motivated) in all of our living. Romans 6:12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof... 22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

Ephesians 4:17 ...walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind.

1. God changes us by renewing the image of God in man that was ruined by the sin and fall of Adam. Ephesians 4:22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.
2. Biblical change breaks bad habits and replaces them with good habits. No change commanded by God is unrealistic for those who know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

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