

The Weakness of Anger

“But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.” (James 1:20, NASB)

Anger is as old as Cain and Able. Cain was angry and killed his brother when, in reality, it was Cain's lack of godliness that caused God to reject his offering. Since early in Genesis, anger has been one of the main banes of human existence. Anger fuels everything from family arguments to international wars.

Virtually everyone knows that anger is a negative, often destructive emotion, yet few ever obtain any degree of control over it. In fact, anger becomes the master of those who don't struggle to overcome it.

Back to Genesis 4. When God rejected Cain's offering “from the fruit of the ground” (it was supposed to be an animal sacrifice) “...Cain became very angry, and his countenance fell.” God shows up to show the way (Genesis 4, 6, 7), “Then the Lord said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will not *your countenance* be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.’”

Right then and there, early in the first book of God's word, He gives us one of life's most important lessons in two parts, verses 6, 7:

1. If you do well (self-discipline) your countenance (literally “face” in Hebrew) will be lifted up. (Think, self-image, happiness, satisfaction, joy, etc.).
2. If you do not do well sin is crouching at the door and its desire is for you, but you must master it. (Lack of self-discipline increases the closeness of sin, and a critical battle between right and wrong ensues.)

So why is the sin of anger so ferociously hard to master? *Specifically, because Satan can and does disguise anger so deceptively that it literally feels like power!* Let's be frank, we like power. We **should** like power. Properly used power is self-discipline in action!

Properly wielded, power builds character, strengthens resolve and even protects the innocent. Remember James 3:18? “The seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.” Did you catch it? God expects His children to be able to **make something - peace!** We literally make it. We create something that was not there before. Improperly wielded, power creates anger and violence.

Self-discipline, in the list of the fruit of the spirit, lives in a precious place with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness faithfulness and gentleness, Galatians 5:22,23. Outbursts of anger live in the bad company of verses 19 - 21. Let's live in the right place.

-Ray Wallace