

## **The Anger of Man** **08-19-18 AM**

*This you know, my beloved brethren. 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 1:19-20*

James warns against the many sins we might commit with our tongues, and the many things we might do righteously without mouth. He warns about cursing God, each other, and defaming the principles of God. He also advises us to pray, to confess our sins, and to sing. In James 1:20 he warns about the danger of speaking with anger, stating that the anger (or wrath) of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

This implies that there are two types of anger: that of man and God. The anger of God is a righteous anger found throughout Scriptures. It differs dramatically from the anger of men. It is long suffering (1 Pet. 3:20, 2 Pet. 3:9); we see that God waits a great long while before His anger is manifested. Then when it is manifested, the anger of God brings absolute results (Num. 11:1, Deut. 7:4). In other words, God's wrath is not arbitrary, but produces predictable results that can be anticipated.

In contrast, man's anger is not a result of our righteousness, but is emotional; Our anger is based in feelings. Feelings are dangerous in general, because they are unreliable and inconsistent. Unlike God, our anger is not predictable in outcome nor consistent in application. Therefore, our anger does not produce the righteous results of God's anger.

Man's anger may not be righteous, but is not sinful of itself. We are told in Ephesians 4:26 that we can and must "be angry, and do not sin". As an emotion, ANYONE can become angry. That means that good people get angry. Since it is not a sin, we need to understand that it is worldly; that is to say, it is of the world (natural, fleshly) and leads us to sin.

An excellent example is in the man Moses. We are told that Moses was a faithful servant of God (Heb. 3:5) who was more humble than any man alive (Num. 12:3). Yet we also see that Moses is often depicted as a man of anger (Ex. 16:20, Lev. 10:16, Num. 16:15, Num. 31:14). Perhaps that anger is most clearly manifested at the waters of Meribah (Num. 20), where Moses lost his cool, and spoke rashly, and was condemned by God.

There are many examples of men acting in anger, and it not achieving the righteousness of God. Cain's uncontrolled anger in Genesis 4:5-7 resulted in the murder of his brother and being cursed by God. Potiphar's uncontrolled anger in Genesis 39:12 resulted in imprisoning an innocent man. Simeon and Levi's uncontrolled anger in Genesis 34 (Genesis 49:6-7) resulted in the murder of an entire town. Saul's uncontrolled anger in 1 Samuel 2:30,34 resulted in a hateful division between father and son. Ahasuerus' uncontrolled anger in Esther 1:12 resulted in the divorce and driving away of his wife.

These examples and others teach us that actions done in anger not only fail to produce the righteousness of God, but lead us to sin. As Job said "*For anger slays the foolish man, And jealousy kills the simple*" (Job 5:2). The truth about anger is this: it does not matter WHY you are angry (Moses' anger was just but still led to sin: Anger produces bad judgments; you can control your anger.

We can overcome anger in our lives. First, we need to know that spiritual growth limits carnal ideas. Just as being worldly reduces spirituality, so too being more mature reduces worldliness (2 Pet. 1:5-7). Second, we need to understand that often the antidote to anger is forgiveness. Third, to be more forgiving we need to be more empathetic. Fourth, we need to deny any chance for anger to grow. And finally, if we simply are not able to control our anger, we need to flee the situations that produce it.