

“The Man From Mad” or Glad?”

When were you last teed off? Anger can be triggered by:

- 1- being insulted
- 2- a loss or setback
- 3- being hurt
- 4- major frustration or stress
- 5- being dealt with unjustly
- 6- being fearful

6'-9" Steve Patterson played center on three national title teams at UCLA, '69 to '71, between Alcindor and Walton. Steve and I had been apart from his NBA days in the 70s until last October when he and Carlette, Liz and I had dinner in Scottsdale. Then again in San Diego in February. Steve and Carlette had blended two kids each from their first marriages, then added a little girl to give them five.

On June 30 he, a non-smoker, discovered he had lung cancer. Four weeks later, July 28, he was dead at 56. Loss, hurt, stress, injustice, fear – if you were Steve and his family, wouldn't you be outraged?

DISCUSS: What makes you very angry; and what do you do with it?

Fourteen centuries ago someone compiled the so-called “Seven Deadly Sins,” a list not in the Bible, but each a sin for sure, the last being anger, i.e., the state of being extremely annoyed, provoked, exasperated. God has no ratings for sins. *All* are deadly, and none enters heaven.

Healthy anger is a God-given emotion – like being furious with tyrants, abusers, slavery or terrorists. Even God gets angry...at sin. He says anger is justified when:

- 1- you don't let anger become sin. Let's read James 1:19-20
 - 2- you keep yourself under control (Proverbs 29:11)
 - 3- you give *gentle* answers because *harsh* words stir up anger
- Perhaps God's clearest instructions on dealing with anger are relayed thru Paul. Let's read Romans 12:9-21.

Paul outlines God's 5-point *Anger Management Plan* for his readers, revealing a better way to live, now that they're committed to Jesus. Let's read Ephesians 4:24-32.

Let's recap God's counsel re Anger Management.....

- 1- Don't let your anger make you sin.
- 2- Don't let the sun set on your anger; it's cumulative.
- 3- Never give anger the soil to take root in.
- 4- Avoid unwholesome speech.

-5- Boycott the root of bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, slander, malice. (Note the downhill progression.)

Bitterness – an attitude that refuses to make peace

Rage – a visible explosion of anger

Anger – a continuous, subsurface seething

Brawling – making a scene

Slander – destroying another’s reputation

Malice – deliberately trying to inflict harm

When you feel anger bubbling up.....

-1-Remember, feelings are neither right nor wrong.

-2-Nobody can *make* you angry. Your “chooser” decides.

-3-Instead of erupting on the spot, make an appointment now to discuss things later after some cool-down.

-4-Use “I” statements, not “you” statements, e.g. “I get livid when I feel misunderstood.”

-5-If you must, release your rage on an inanimate object, e.g. do a “Lou Piniella” and drop kick your footstool.

-6-Use “Quick Listening” to diffuse anger and create mutual understanding which is Step #1 toward resolution.

-7-If you have an anger problem, admit it and get help. If you don’t get help, it can destroy you and those near you.

-8- Take the Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis Test. It measures personality traits, helps you understand your strengths and weaknesses, and gives you a tool to improve your relationships. (And it’s free.)

-9-Dump your anger into God’s ear. Then do something *really* crazy: *thank* Him for it! (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18)

-10-Above all, instead of harboring anger, remember Christ calls us to love God totally, and to love others as much as we love ourselves (Matthew 22:36-40).

-11-Check the reading list below.

-12-What anger controls have you used successfully?

God’s anger is directed not at you -- ONLY at your sin (John 3:14-18). In fact, He’s *already* made peace with you about your past, present and future sin. They were all paid for in full. You were forever forgiven when Christ took your place on the cross (2 Corinthians 5:17-21)!

But here’s the catch: if you haven’t yet accepted God’s forgiveness, making Him your Savior and Lord, the Bible says that both your sin AND you will languish forever exiled from God’s presence in a place the Bible calls the “lake of fire” (Revelation 20:10).

Ahhh, but there’s sensational, hope-giving GOOD news.....

If, by faith, you'll trust in Christ, accepting His great love for you that He proved by giving His life for you on the cross, God will immediately transfer Christ's righteous (i.e., right standing) to your spiritual account, never again to condemn you for your sin (Romans 8:1)! It's a 100% gift from God – unearnable, no matter how moral a life you may live (Romans 3:28).

God sincerely wants to NOT give you and me what we DO deserve -- eternal punishment. Instead He wants to give us what we DON'T deserve, that is, the right to be called His sons, equally, and a perfectly sinless standing before God, in His holy presence for all ages to come (Ephesians 2:8-9)!

If God's love gift of forgiveness and total acceptance interests you, just tell Him so, or let's talk about it.

SUGGESTED READING:

James 3:3-12

Psalm 103:8-15

Proverbs 15:1-4

James 1:19-21

Ephesians 4:25-32

Colossians 3:1-17

Romans 12:9-21

- *THE DANCE OF ANGER*, Harriet Lerner
- *THE ANGRY SMILE*, Nicholas J. Long and Jody E. Long
- *MAKE ANGER YOUR ALLY*, Neil Clark Warren
- *IS IT WORTH DYING FOR?* Robert S. Elliot and Dennis Breo
- *THE BLESSING* Gary Smalley and John Trent
- “*THE MAN FROM MAD*,” a His Deal Bible study on Anger (see below)
(<http://www.hisdeal.org/archives/various-topics.html>)
- *CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?* Dallas Demmitt PhD and Nancy Demmitt MC
- *HEALING THE SCARS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE*, Gregory L. Jantz PhD and Ann McMurray

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