

'Taming the horse before it bolts'

(How to deal with anger!)

An untamed (un-broken) horse is free spirited, energetic and free ranging!

Will such a horse be of value to its owner unless and until it is 'broken in', 'trained', 'tamed'?

Ephesians 4:26-27 "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 and do not give the devil a foothold."

This lesson is in the context of what Paul writes in Ephesians 4:17-32.

Introduction...

All of us get annoyed and sometimes angry - over certain things.

Our society has many angry people in it who have become destructive!

What do we do?

Expect those responsible to apologize?

'Get-em-back' ASAP

Get angry at work, and then explode at home?

Why do we often feel 'freer' to explode in anger at home?

Why do we 'take it out' on those we love the most?

What does the Bible teach us about anger?

Ephesians 4:26 "In your anger do not sin":

1. We do get angry

EG: Husband who left wife for another woman...

Counsellor asks the wife: 'What are you doing with your anger?'

Woman: 'I don't have any anger!'

The truth: 'There is anger!'

'I am not angry!' - (said in frustration)

Researchers say we feel anger 10 to 14 times per day (A general public survey)

It starts by being annoyed... then leads to anger!

We may not show our anger... but the seeds are there

a) What is anger?

Anger: (Wrath) The emotional response to perceived wrong and injustice, often translated "anger," "indignation," "vexation," and "irritation." Both humans and God express wrath or anger. (Holmans Bible dictionary)

Anger: The feeling one has towards something or someone that hurts, opposes, offends, or annoys, strong displeasure (Dictionary)

Anger: Any natural impulse, or desire, or disposition, comes to signify anger as the strongest of all passions (W.E.Vines expository dictionary)

b) Does God get angry?

Exodus 32:11 "But Moses sought the favor of the LORD his God. "O LORD," he said, "why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand?"

Deuteronomy 4:25 "After you have had children and grandchildren and have lived in the land a long time--if you then become corrupt and make any kind of idol, doing evil in the eyes of the LORD your God and provoking him to anger,"

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Deuteronomy 7:4 "for they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods, and the Lord's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you."

Hebrews 3:11 "So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.'"

Ezra 8:22 "I was ashamed to ask the king for soldiers and horsemen to protect us from enemies on the road, because we had told the king, 'The gracious hand of our God is on everyone who looks to him, but his great anger is against all who forsake him.'"

Psalms 103:8 "The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love."

Psalms 145:8 "The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love."

Jesus became angry with hypocrisy and cleansed the temple

Mark 3:4-5 "Then Jesus asked them, 'Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?' But they remained silent. 5 He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored."

c) Anger is a God given emotion

90% of references to anger in the Bible are of God being angry with wickedness

Anger is the feeling or emotion of being violated, cheated or wronged in some way.

God is angry when his love is rejected, or, when righteousness is spurned.

d) Is anger a sin?

It is an emotion that is aroused because of being violated, ripped off, being wrongly used, abused, etc

Anger is not a sin...but...

Ephesians 4:26 "In your anger do not sin"

2. Do not allow anger to become sin

a) Anger is a normal response when we feel we have been violated!

EG: Crime, rape, injustice, corruption, etc

Some anger is valid (but still has to be dealt with)

Our anger is not always justified

We may have a perverted belief of what we believe is our right.

We may feel anger if we do not get our own way... pride!

We need to honestly assess why we are angry

Is it my pride that causes me to be angry?

Is my selfishness contributing to my anger?

This has been described as the 'angry generation'

EG: The Bumper sticker that says; 'Don't get angry, ... get even'

There are a lot of people who live in anger and develop a victim mentality.

b) Anger can lead to sin

We can 'internalise' our anger – and the 'seed' grows into a 'plant'!

If we entertain thoughts of anger

If we think about how we can retaliate

Anger is an emotion that can lead to an 'ingrained attitude'

To retaliate is to move anger to sin!

c) What we do with anger determines if it becomes sin

Anger turned outward leads to aggression!

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We 'let loose' with our mouth or actions or worse....?

If it is unchecked – it can lead to violence and destroy lives!

Anger turned inward can lead to depression!

EG: Jonah: Was angry with God and sulked, got mad, depressed, withdrew, and had a 'pity party', etc.

God challenged Jonah's anger.

d) Signs of subtle retaliation

Some of us retaliate in a subtle way

Procrastinating, being late, certain (sarcastic) humour, down grading ourselves, down grading others, etc.

e) What are we to do with our anger?

When should we take action?

Ephesians 4:26 "Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry"

3. Deal with anger quickly

a) Jesus said that anger should be dealt with quickly (Today)

Matthew 5:25 "Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison."

How do we deal with the businessman who 'ripped you off', the person who mis-used, abused or violated us?

b) Why am I angry?

God asked Cain this question in Genesis 4:2-13

Why did Cain get angry?

He was angry because of the way God treated (favoured) his brother – and then Cain's anger turned aggressive and he killed his brother!

We must identify the reason for our anger

EG: I have found this a very important key – by quietly reflecting!

c) I must face my anger

Admit that I am angry

If I do not admit my anger – I will never deal with it and it will soon become sin – and very destructive!

d) I cannot blame others for the anger I have

Even if I have been violated: I cannot hold on and allow my anger to become sin!

e) Paul tells me to 'get rid of ...anger'

Ephesians 4:31. "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice"

Anger neglected turns to bitterness and then bitterness turns to sin!

f) Scripture instructs us to keep short accounts

I must not allow my anger to go beyond the night (ie today/24 hours)

God tells us this because He knows that if we carry anger forward it will harm us

Unprocessed anger affects our health

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eg: Headaches, tormented thoughts, stomach problems, ulcers, hyper-tension, etc

g) Forgive, forgive, forgive, forgive, forgive...

There are several categories to consider:

1. Un-intended action that angers me!

EG: *Being cut off by a motorist*

- * Why has it angered me?
- * Look at my attitude, pride, manners, impatience, etc

2. Intended action that angers me!

- * I must go to the person and sort it out – this is a 'must do'.

3. Un-intended or intended **habitual action** that angers me!

- * Why is it angering me – hurt, pride, selfishness, unforgiveness, etc?
- * Do I have wrong attitudes, impatience, lack of self-control, etc

Forgiveness is a choice not an emotion!

Ephesians 4:27 "and do not give the devil a foothold."

4. Do not give the devil a foothold in your life!

a) Un-dealt with anger gives the devil a foothold (Wow!)

If it goes beyond the sunset (24 hours)

Harboured anger leads to bitterness and bitterness will lead to sin

Colossians 3:8 "But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips."

Hebrews 12:14-15. Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

b) Destructive emotions need to be dealt with

Like a tumour – anger must be removed

EG: *When a car overheats... do not keep driving it ... and get angry...*

Anger not properly dealt with leads to hostility and harmful actions

c) I must catch my responses early

If I take it into tomorrow, it will turn sour, then bitter!

Do I get angry quickly?

If so.... there are attitudes that need attention

James 1:19-20 "My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, 20 for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires."

I must take careful stock of my anger... if it is carried over... it is time to do some repenting!

EG: *Albury - Article about me and our church – and my anger – and repentance!*

Matthew 5:44. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.

Proverbs 15:1 "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."

We need to take charge of our words... answer softly and gently!

Self control needs to be exercised

*God will empower us to forgive as we humble ourselves and ask
for His grace and love!*

Anger is a response... not a sin!

We are responsible with what we do with our anger!

Ephesians 4:31 "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice."

Summary

I need to acknowledge my anger

I need to confess anger that has turned to sin

I need to forgive those who are hostile to me

I must learn to stop, look and listen before I act

So, scripture instructs me to deal quickly with anger

Ephesians 4:26-27 ""In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 and do not give the devil a foothold."

Ephesians 4:31-32. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ, God forgave you.

I must not harbour anger – I am to praise and worship without anger

1 Timothy 2:8 "I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing."

*Only a broken, tamed and trained horse will be of true value to its
owner to ride or to draw the kings' carriage!*

“So! I must tame the horse before it bolts!”