

# The Stumbling Block of Anger

Anger is a reactionary emotion. The fact that something or someone can stir us up to be angry is natural. It is part of human nature. God created man, and He created man in His likeness (cf. Genesis 1:26). God is Spirit, and we are spiritual beings in physical bodies. God's nature possesses emotions, and we too are emotional creatures. Anger is in the list of emotions that come from our Creator.

Anger, though, left untended gets us in trouble and leads to sin. Unlike our heavenly Father (cf. James 1:13), we are tempted by evil. Darkness finds residence in men (cf. 1 John 1:5). Misplaced and misdirected anger causes a person to transgress, to commit iniquity. Also, just because anger is a reactionary emotion, it does not mean that a person's reaction is always the right reaction. "*Outbursts of anger*" are condemned deeds of the flesh (Galatians 5:20, 21). Thus Christians are admonished to put away all anger from themselves (Ephesians 4:31).

Our adversary the devil has many schemes in his arsenal with which to attack. One of his greatest maneuvers is deception – understandably since he is the "*father of lies*" (John 8:44). Emotions can deceive us, and the devil knows it. If he can lead us to listen to our emotions more than to God's word of truth, then Satan can deceive us, ensnare us and destroy us. In the context of controlling anger, Christ's apostle commanded, "... *do not give the devil an opportunity*" (Ephesians 4:27). Anger that is not handled correctly gives our adversary a place to create a stumbling block. Uncontained anger wreaks havoc to oneself and others.

Anger can interfere with having a right relationship with God. "*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). Do people become angry at God? Do they get angry with what God has said? Yes. God's truth is sharp; it cuts hearts. For example, what was the Jews' reaction to Stephen's preaching? "*Now when they heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they began gnashing their teeth at him*" (Acts 7:54). Sounds like an angry response to me. Anger stops a person from listening. Anger causes a person to overreact. Anger makes poor judgment. Anger resists and separates. Thus, misdirected anger will turn a man away from God, from the right decision and the right path, from seeking God's righteousness in order to establish his own, leaving the person lost without God and Christ.