

Choosing a Righteous Response When Your Blood Is Boiling

When my daughters were little, they loved to sing “Puff, the Magic Dragon.” The 1963 hit song was written by Leonard Lipton and Peter Yarrow and was made famous by the trio, Peter, Paul and Mary. The song is about growing older and the loss of innocence and not about drugs, as some have tried to twist its meaning to indicate. Sometimes as a parent, my fiery anger could be seen as smoke coming out of me just like Puff. However, my girls could see that my anger was often justified and that there was always love and forgiveness once the smoke disseminated. Destruction and pain come when anger’s hot coals of fire are never left to cool by love and forgiveness.

God gets angry too. He, too, has used His righteous anger to accomplish what He wants for us in His love and for the Kingdom of God to flourish. And, He too, has led the way in teaching us how to forgive. God’s not an angry God, but an all-forgiving one. Anger’s not a sin unless it’s unjustified and uncontrolled, and God is never out of control, nor does He use His anger without justification. Beauty and healing can come from anger. Volcanic eruptions have multiple consequences. Globally, they’ve caused suffering and death, but they’ve also created some of the most breath-taking beauty in all of nature, leaving mankind with beautiful islands and places for new life.

The most devastating result of anger is that it can lead to separation. It’s why God sent His son, Jesus. God didn’t want us to ever be separated from Him. In the brokenness of sin in this world, God wanted to forgive and to bring healing. When anger spills forth due to substance abuse, moral mistakes or other misguided and evil human choices, serious help often must be sought from professionals, pastors, and trained caregivers. I would encourage anyone who suffers with

uncontrollable anger to get help.

Temporary separation may be necessary. For those who are caught in the way of unrighteous and evil anger, separation may be the only solution until healing can occur. God calls us to never stop praying for those who are caught up in these destructive life choices and painful situations. Often human anger scars can be so profound that we have to reach deep within our souls and allow God to change and heal our hearts. If we don't, then anger coals will continue to burn, and we too could erupt with destructive anger, leading to even more suffering. God's love and forgiveness are the only coolants that can bring beauty from anger's scars.

True change emerges and brings healing when we fully understand and use anger wisely. Remembering that anger's not a tool to inflict pain and suffering but to bring loving discipline allows us to mature and move forward. Bitterness, which will only lead to more suffering, is destroyed. Psalm 9:7-8 says, "But the Lord remains forever; He has established His throne for judgment. He will judge the world in righteousness; He will give judgment to the peoples in uprightness."

The last line of "Puff, the Magic Dragon" says Puff "frolicked in the autumn mist." God wants us to frolic here on earth in the midst of pain and suffering and angry volcanic eruptions.

Next time you feel the fire in your belly, stop and ask God if it's righteous anger or malicious. Then, pray and ask Him how you can relieve your volcanic anger the right way: God's.

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