

How to Eliminate the Cancerous Emotion of Anger

My ability to become angry amazes me.

Someone or something trivial will trigger it. It's my reaction to feeling thwarted in some way, however serious or ridiculous.

I trip over my wife's heels on the way to the closet. *Ugh!* Somebody cuts in front of me on the freeway. *Really?* My schedule or plan gets interrupted or redirected. *You've got to be kidding me.* I get asked to do something I didn't plan on doing. *What?* A project takes way too long because I am not the one in charge of it. *This is ridiculous.* I get a no when I thought for sure I would get a yes to my request. *Unbelievable.*

Sensations, words and feelings seize my body in those moments. Before I even have a second to think about things, there it is. I am "hot" about someone, somebody or something.

Anger in this sense is not bad, not a sin and functioning the way it should. I am being alerted to an obstruction of my will. The problem is that all anger contains some level of malice. It's this aspect of anger that can act like an aggressive cancer and spread quickly because it includes an intent to harm.

All anger is harmful, which is why we don't like it when we know people are angry with us. At some level they want some kind of correction or harm to befall us. Again, the abiding and unseen presence of anger in any relationship is a cancer and, once spotted, has to be radiated quickly.

In history's greatest message ever given on life and relationships, Jesus Himself chooses to address the issue of

anger as the No. 1 personal issue men must be aware of and address internally as it arises (Matt. 5:21-22). More specifically, He teaches men to recognize it and place limits on it in their lives where it exists at the attitude level versus the action level.

This is a consistent theme of Scripture because it is the one emotion behind so much pain and evil. Men are called by the Bible to learn how to “lay aside anger” (Col. 3:8) because to retain and cultivate it is to give the devil a perfect entry point in your life to start wreaking havoc in your relationships (Eph. 4:26-27).

Evil suggestions are welcomed by an angry man more eagerly than one who is settled within. Our anger attracts his presence, as he also knows anger leads to contempt and contempt seeks to degrade, exclude, push away and isolate others. If anger is the knife that can cut into healthy relationships, contempt is the powerful hand driving it deep into the soul of another.

Cutting words, phrases, gestures, looks or acts that are intended to harm scar relationships. In our culture men do not have to act outwardly mad to be mean. Few men physically murder others, but millions are killing the souls of others through anger, contempt and verbal stabbings.

To eliminate the cancer of anger and contempt, here are a few suggestions:

- Treasure the preciousness of people around you.
- See people as God’s creations designed for eternal purposes.
- See yourself in others so that you can be kind to others.
- Seek personal transformations that improve relationships.
- Personally connect to God’s love for you so that you can

give away that same love in your relationships.

- Intervene and interject God's truth into moments of anger. A good first step is to memorize James 1:19-20 and speak it when you feel anger rising.
- Meet weekly with a group of men to process your "stuff," ask for prayer and be accountable to love people.
- Talk to God daily and on a moment-by-moment basis to aspirate negative feelings and thoughts you may have toward others.

Anger, like cancer, has to be aggressively isolated, treated and eliminated. You won't have your hair fall out, but hopefully your pride will wither. Remember, all men will be triggered and experience anger. But receiving, indulging, retaining and expressing it is a choice.

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