

What Can the Right Kind of Anger Do for You?

“When He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, ‘Stretch your hand forward.’ He stretched it out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other. Then the Pharisees went out and immediately took counsel with the Herodians against Him, how to kill Him” (Mark 3:5-6, MEV).

Anger is like gunpowder. Whether it is good or bad depends on how you use it. It can blast away at injustice, or it can kill and maim the innocent.

Clearly, both forms of anger were present in the synagogue when Jesus healed the man with the shriveled hand. Jesus was angry, and His opponents were mad enough to kill.

The teachers of the Law (that is, the Pharisees) had criticized Jesus for forgiving a paralytic’s sins (Mark 2:6-7), for eating with sinners and tax collectors at Levi’s house (Mark 2:15-16), and for His disciples plucking grain on the Sabbath (Mark 2:23). Now they dared Him to heal on the Sabbath.

Jesus was fed up with their insensitivity to those in spiritual and physical need, with their callous indifference and judgmental disposition.

Is it ever right to be angry? Yes! We have the Lord’s own example! He looked around with anger and was deeply distressed!

What can the right kind of anger do for you?

It will stir you from apathy so you fight injustice.

William Wilberforce of England lived in a day when slave

trading was an accepted practice. His lifetime of effort succeeded in banishing this evil from Great Britain. His righteous anger moved an entire nation to ignore no longer this terrible treatment of human beings. Surely you also can find a cause that remedies an injustice!

What makes you angry? Do you remain apathetic when someone is mistreated? Are you angry at the human trafficking that takes place all over the world? At the pornographic industry that wrecks multiplied millions of lives? At the unprincipled greedy who exploit the poor and the defenseless? At abusers who prey upon and damage children? The list is almost endless when it comes to injustice.

The human emotion of anger is meant to stir us to take action. Individually, you cannot tackle all the ills and wrongs in society, but you can do at least one thing. Get angry in the right way about something that God wants corrected.

Then release your anger in a way that heals rather than destroys. That's what Jesus did. He didn't become an angry person. He used anger rather than let anger use Him.

Anger can fill you with energy to do the right thing. Let it be your servant and not your master.

On the other hand, destructive anger kills. You see that with the Pharisees and Herodians. They were not natural allies. They spanned opposite ends of the religious and political spectrum. The Pharisees loathed the government of Herod. The Herodians broke the rules of religious tradition left and right. However, the Pharisees and Herodians found common ground against Jesus. Their anger overrode all other passions.

The wrong kind of anger leads to destructive alliances. Its goal is not to remedy, not to help, not to heal; its goal is to destroy, to get even and to punish.

The apostle Paul tells us, "In your anger, do not sin" (Eph.

4:26). Constructive anger never sins. It always does the right thing in the right way with the right spirit.

A Prayer: Lord Jesus, help me to “look around” and see what You would have me be angry about. Deliver me from apathy. Rid me of anger that destroys and fill me with anger that brings good. {eo}

*Excerpted from Dr. Wood's book Fearless: How Jesus Changes Everything, available from Vital Resources. **George O. Wood** is the general superintendent of the Assemblies of God. For the original article, visit .*