

God's Foolproof Anger Management Strategy

Anger is a common problem, and we all have opportunities to get angry. But when we get hurt and don't deal with our anger, we hang on to it and become bitter, hard-hearted and miserable.

Living in anger is like banging your head against the wall, so to speak, because it keeps you stuck, doing something that is never going to work. The truth is, giving it to God and trusting Him to be your vindicator is actually easier than continuing to live with it.

Uncontrolled anger hinders our prayers, makes us miserable, causes mental illness and can even make us physically sick. These are just a few problems anger causes.

The good news is God wants to be our vindicator (Job 19:25) and we can make the choice to release the offenses to Him and trust Him to make wrong things right. I know it's not easy, and God may not move as quickly as you'd like Him to or do things the way you'd like Him to do them. But He will vindicate you if you will trust Him and do things His way because He doesn't like it when people mistreat His children!

Facing My Anger Problem

My dad was an angry person, and he was very abusive. When I left home at the age of 18, I thought I would be free of the pain and anger I had experienced most of my life because I was leaving it behind me.

It took a long time for me to realize that although I had left that situation, I actually took the problem with me. It was etched in my soul—in my thinking, my emotions, the way I talked and how I dealt with relationships. So I spent years

after that experiencing all kinds of problems, expressing destructive, dysfunctional behaviors that I blamed on everything and everybody else.

Instead of taking responsibility for my anger and the hurt in my soul, I would say things like, "I wouldn't be angry if Dave would pay more attention to me," or "I wouldn't be angry if my boss paid me more to do this job." Whatever my problem was, it was somebody else's fault.

Thank God, I eventually learned that I needed to let Jesus deal with what was going on inside of me so I could experience the freedom He wanted me to have (John 10:10).

God's Anger Management Strategy

The best thing we can do when we're struggling with anger is go to God immediately. Don't think about what someone did to you over and over or talk about it repeatedly. Instead, make the choice to give it to God by asking for His help right away.

Ephesians 4:26-27 (NLT) says, "'Don't sin by letting anger control you.' Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil."

I used to think that just having the feeling of anger was wrong, but these verses show us that it's not the emotion itself that is sinful but what we choose to do with it. The temptation to act in anger is not sin, and there is great victory when we face it and exercise self-control with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Turn it over to Him instead of trying to defend yourself, get revenge, hate people or hold on to your anger.

You may be thinking, "But Joyce, you don't understand what they did to me. It's so hard to forgive—I just can't do it!" Believe me, I do understand how hard it can be. But God never

tells us to do something without giving us the ability to do it, and you *can* release your anger to Him and forgive if you will trust Him to help you.

God's Word has the answers we need to successfully defeat anger. So I want to share several scriptures you can study to help you manage anger God's way:

- Romans 12:21 says, "Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good." When you fight evil with evil, you'll never win, but if you fight evil with good, you will win every time!
- Ecclesiastes 7:9 gives this instruction: "Control your temper, for anger labels you a fool." People who are offended and stay angry become filled with bitterness and resentment, letting the enemy steal the best God has for them.
- James 1:19-20 says, "You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires."

Make a determined decision to do what the Word says, but don't strive to do it in your own strength. Spend time with God, studying Scriptures about anger, forgiveness and love. Write down verses that remind you to be slow to get angry and to overcome evil with good. Speak them out loud as declarations of your faith in God to help you. He loves you and has a good plan for you. All things are possible with God (Matt. 19:26) and in Christ, you don't have to live an angry life!