

HDC ONLINE ANGER MANAGEMENT CLASS—LESSON ONE “DEFINING & UNDERSTANDING ANGER”

INTRO: It's pretty fair to say that it is a standard observation that the world is getting angrier – but the truth is that taking the emotional temperature of an entire era or season is a difficult endeavor. University of California Irvine professor, Raymond Novaco, recently said this about the current condition of our culture in this pandemic era: “We’re living, in effect, in a big anger incubator!”

Anger is like the red warning light that comes on the dashboard of your car. It is a **secondary emotion** telling us there's a problem somewhere else. There's something wrong under the emotional hood of our life. There is something wrong under the spiritual hood of our life. There is something wrong under the relational hood of our life. Anger is a secondary emotion; it's not the primary one. We spend too much time trying to answer, "How can I get rid of this anger?" when we should be asking ourselves, "**What's going on inside that's making me get angry?**" Anger is the signal telling us there's a problem somewhere else. To fix it, we need to identify the root reason for the anger.

Let's make this concept very practical so you can see how it works. Here's a few statements from people struggling with issues in this pandemic season:

➔ *I worked hard on a special event that I had to cancel because of COVID-19. How do I manage my disappointment? You see ,if this person doesn't have the spiritual tools and emotional intelligence to handle disappointment well, it will fuel anger. PRIMARY EMOTION—DISAPPOINTMENT. SECONDARY EMOTION: ANGER.*

➔ *I'm harboring a lot of frustration toward family and friends about everything from political differences to flouting social-distancing rules. How do I deal with it? Again, if this person doesn't have the spiritual tools and emotional intelligence to handle frustration and expectations well, it will fuel anger. PRIMARY EMOTION—FRUSTRATION. SECONDARY EMOTION: ANGER.*

Another way of looking at this...the Anger Iceberg:



I think you get the idea of how this works (and we will come back to this), so now I want to back up a little bit and do a little foundational work on anger—get ready to fill in some blanks in your notes as well...

HUMAN ANGER

In human terms anger is usually considered as a negative and destructive attribute. Webster defines anger:

“Anger is a strong feeling of displeasure and antagonism, indignation or an automatic reaction to any real or imagined insult, frustration, or injustice, producing emotional agitation seeking expression.”

Other similar definitions are offered by various writers on the subject of anger:

- “Anger is a strong emotion of displeasure that occurs when a need or expectation is not met.”
- “Anger involves the emotions, the body, the mind, and the will, all of which are stimulated by some event in the individual’s life. Typically, anger is a cluster of emotions involving such feelings as disappointment, hurt, rejection, embarrassment, and other similar feelings.”

THE BIBLE ON ANGER

James 1:19-22 *My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, **20** because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. **21** Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. **22** Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.*

WHY MY VICTORY OVER ANGER MATTERS—WHAT'S AT STAKE?

→ I Can _____ The Righteous Lifestyle God Desires

James 1:19-20 *My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, **20** because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.*

→ Actually, my sinful anger grieves God!

Ephesians 4:30-31 *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **31** Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.*

→ I Can Greatly Damage My Testimony To My _____

Philippians 2:14-16 *Do everything without grumbling or arguing, **15** so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky **16** as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain.*

→ I Can Deeply _____ My Closest Relationships

Proverbs 29:22 *An angry person stirs up conflict, and a hot-tempered person commits many sins.*

Ephesians 6:4 *Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.*

Colossians 3:19 *Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.*

Colossians 3:21 *Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.*

BEFORE THE SUN GOES DOWN...A POPULAR VERSE ON ANGER

Ephesians 4:26-27 *In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 and do not give the devil a foothold.*

A few key observations can be made based on this biblical text:

1. Human anger is _____ and not necessarily _____.

Human beings were created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27) and given emotions such as anger. It can be a useful reaction when properly controlled and thus not sinful in itself.

2. Human anger can be _____.

Like other emotions, if not controlled within Biblical guidelines, anger can be destructive in varying degrees. Righteous anger can become unrighteous anger in two primary ways: _____ and _____. These two opposites, blowing up or clamming up, are destructive ways of solving problems. When blowing up, emotional outbursts are vented on others. When internalized, bodily tensions are released within oneself, which can lead to health issues. In both cases the emotional energies of anger are wasted.

3. Human anger often results from _____.

Although God's anger is righteous indignation, man's anger is often righteous indignation "in his own eyes". Man is imperfect, his judgment is limited, and conclusions are made without all the facts. Often, due to self-interest and feeling threatened, we misperceive the actions of others and jump to unjustified conclusions.

4. Human anger often leads to _____.

Sin resulting from anger can be expressed in a variety of ways as seen throughout the Bible: vengeance, bitterness, hatred, rage, revenge, verbal abuse, and physical abuse, just to name a few!

5. Human anger can be _____.

It is fair to say that God would not have instructed us to control our anger if it were not possible to do so. There are numerous passages of Scripture that shows not only is this possible; but it is desirable and these Scriptures will instruct us on how this can be accomplished.

➔ I want to finish up this first session with a vital issue—the heart of the matter. Quite literally, the heart of the matter is a matter of the heart!

If we want, in a God-honoring way, to overcome our destructive anger issues and behavior (which is sin), then we need to **first** come to terms with the heart of the matter.

Proverbs 4:23 *Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.*

We need to guard our hearts because:

Jeremiah 17:9 *The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?*

Luke 6:43-45 *No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. 44 Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars. 45 A good man brings good things out of the*

good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.

Matthew 15:17-20 “Don’t you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? **18** But the things that come out of a person’s mouth come from the heart, and these defile them. **19** For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. **20** These are what defile a person; but eating with unwashed hands does not defile them.”

A New Heart--When we truly trust Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior we are a new person with a new heart (2 Corinthians 5:17) and “alive spiritually” (Ephesians 2:4-5):

2 Corinthians 5:17 **17** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

Ephesians 2:1-5 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, **2** in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. **3** All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. **4** But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, **5** made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

But to keep growing spiritually and to conquer old sinful habit patterns (i.e. anger) we need:

1. A Heart That Is Fertile Soil—Where God Can _____ and _____

Matthew 13:13-16 This is why I speak to them in parables: “Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand.” **14** In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: “You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. **15** For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.” **16** But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear.

Psalms 139:23-24 Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. **24** See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

2. A Heart That Sorrows—If I Want True, Lasting _____

2 Corinthians 7:8-11 *Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while— 9 Yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. 10 Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. 11 See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter.*

Homework: *So, what do you really want to see happen in your life regarding anger? What changes would you like to see take place? Why? Write your answers down to these questions here and then sometime in the near future you will be able to look back at your answers here and evaluate your progress.*

If you have any questions about his content or series feel free to email me at: tim@highdesertchurch.com

In our next session, Session 2, we will look at what fuels our anger—the primary emotions or situations that fuel anger. We will also look at anger triggers—what are the specific triggers in your life and what to do about them. See you then!