

Temper and Anger – KRC – 3rd December 2006

When we first think of anger what springs to mind? Anyone but ourselves, someone we work with? Someone who has been angry with us? Someone famous? Our culture is full of temper and anger. Gordon Ramsey is a famous chef because he has a temper and that's funny to watch on TV! We see it sell and we see it all the time wherever we are.

We have to come face to face with the fact that anger can be expressed internally as well as externally. It's not just the shouting, it's the inner voice of frustration and bitterness as well that is temper. We have to ask questions of ourselves – **BRITISH**

ASSOCIATION OF ANGER MANAGEMENT LEAFLET:

You may answer, yes, no or sometimes to the following questions...

1. Do you have a tendency to criticise others?
2. Do you keep things inside until you finally explode with anger?
3. Do you get upset when others disagree with you?
4. When you become angry, do you withdraw from people?
5. Do you have a tendency to take your anger out on someone other than the person you're angry with?
6. When a problem arises between you and someone else, do you discuss it without losing control of your emotions?
7. Are you satisfied with the way you settle differences with others?
8. Do you become depressed easily?
9. Do you often act politely even though you're fuming?
10. Do you tend to feel very guilty or bad after getting angry?

More than 5 yes answers – oops! You have an anger problem to deal with

More than 5 no answers – you have a cool head

More than 5 sometimes answers – indicates you suffer from potentially toxic passive anger!

Why are we getting angry?

1. We are hurt – physically or emotionally

2. We are frustrated – e.g. when nothing goes to plan

We have to be honest, when we think temper, we don't think of ourselves, well I don't, but I should do, I get hurt and I get frustrated and so.... As Christians, are we people that have got it sorted? No. We need to look at what the bible says on this and what we can do, looking at particular areas:

- What does the bible say? What are the root causes of it and how do we get perspective?
- Is it ok to be angry? What about being angry with God? Is temper sometimes a good thing?
- How do we look forward and change? How do we let God work in us?
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First of all lets actually realise what a serious issue this is in our country....

Anger Statistics from The Sunday Times Magazine - July, 16 2006

- 45% of us regularly lose our temper at work
- 64% of Britons working in an office have had office rage.
- 1 in 20 of us has had a fight with the person living next door.
- More than 80% of drivers say they have been involved in road rage incidents
- 50% of us have reacted to computer problems by hitting our PC, hurling parts of it around, screaming or abusing our colleagues.
- 65% of people are more likely to express anger over the phone compared to 26% in writing and 9% face to face.
- 53% of consumers felt their blood pressure rose the moment they heard the words "You are being held in a queue."

It's a serious problem in our culture, so we need to look to God's word as our mirror of who we should be and how we should act.

What does the bible say?

Looking at three areas in proverbs, we can begin to see what God is saying:

1. We need the right attitude...

“The Lord detests the thoughts of the wicked but **those of the pure are pleasing to him.**” Proverbs 15:26

“An upright man **gives thoughts to his ways.**” Proverbs 21:29

“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be **transformed by the renewing of your mind.**” Romans 12:2

2. The right heart...

“Guard your **heart** for it is the wellspring of life” Proverbs 4:23

We need to watch what goes in and what goes out and pray like Paul in **Philemon v 20: “Refresh my heart in Christ.”** **Guard** your heart; nothing worth having comes without a fight! Guarding it in prayer will expose temper and anger and we will be refreshed in Christ! What I mean by this is: The body is like a machine, you need good food, exercise and sleep to get good results, the same is true of the spiritual, we need to see what we are feeding our hearts i.e. what do read, watch, who do we hang out with?

And out of the heart flows...

3. The right speech...

In this we need self-control:

“A fool gives full vent to his **anger**, but a wise man keeps himself under control.”

Proverbs 29:11

“Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks **self-control**.” Proverbs

25:28

And we need patience...

“Do not say, “I’ll pay you back for this wrong!” **Wait for the Lord and he will**

deliver you.” Proverbs 20: 22

How counter cultural is that and how radical! Weight that verse up against the sayings of our time: He’s going to pay for that; Sleep with one eye open; You better watch your back

There is a good story to illustrate how much our words affect other people...

There once was a little girl who had a bad temper. Her mother gave her a bag of nails and told her that every time she lost her temper, she must hammer a nail into the back of the fence. The first day the girl had driven 37 nails into the fence. Over the next few weeks, as she learned to control her anger, the number of nails hammered daily gradually dwindled down. She discovered it was easier to hold her temper than to drive those nails into the fence. Finally the day came when the girl didn’t lose her temper at all. She told her mother about it and the mother suggested that the girl now pull out one nail for each day that she was able to hold her temper.

Well...the days passed and the young girl was finally able to tell her mother that all the nails were gone. The mother took her daughter by the hand and led her to the fence. She said, "You’ve done well, my daughter, but look at the holes in the

fence. The fence will never be the same. You know, when you say things in anger, or in gossip. . . they leave a scar just like the nail holes in the fence. Likewise, you can put a knife in a person and draw it out. It won't matter how many times you say I'm sorry, the wound is still there. A verbal wound is as bad as a physical one. Physical wounds heal and bruises disappear. Words spoken out of anger or malice stay forever imbedded in our heart and mind. Be careful of what you say and how you say it. You never know how what you say will affect someone's life!

We need the right attitude...

The right heart...

The right speech...x2

What are the root causes of it and how do we get perspective?

So we see we can call it what we like – anger, temper, having a bad day, but it is sin, it is not a quality that God wants us to have so we need to find the root cause of it and get it out, How? By allowing God to work in us and making the choice to say: God change me! We need perspective to be able to step back from the problems we face and see them in the light of God's love, grace and power. To look and see how big he is and how small I am!

We need to look at the fruit of what God wants us to produce in our lives:

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control It's not the way of the world is it?

The opposite of those could be:

Hate, sadness, anxiety, impatience, unhelpfulness, bad, unfaithful, harsh and no self-control!

If you type into **Google** the word temper you get 19 million pages to view, the word gentleness...3,600. We see the difference between the way of this world and the higher way of living in God's love and through the power of his spirit. Once we see what God has said we need to pray: **Father, change me from the inside out!**

We need to:

1. Look inside which is hard to do
2. We need to overcome and repent of sin and wrong feelings and understand them
3. We need to turn around, learning to control temper
4. We need to be changed by God's love and power.

Is temper sometimes a good thing? Is it ok to be angry with God? We need to ask these questions...

Sometimes do we need to be more angry as Christians? In the sense of feeling God's heart towards sin. Am I disappointed at God's law being broken everywhere I look? Are we too passive and apathetic towards sin? If so, why? If I am angry how do I channel that anger and disappointment into prayer and positive action?

What about being angry with God? When you read the Psalms, it sometimes seems like the writer feels angry at God, almost betrayed? "**How long oh Lord will you hide your face from me?**" This is looking at anger as a healthy emotion as its honesty before God. This is the only time we need more anger as we pour out our hearts

before him, I'm sure we have all felt abandoned by God? We have felt hurt and confused.

In the book '**Wild at Heart**', American author **John Eldridge** says this:

“Many people feel abandoned or betrayed by God. They thought that becoming a Christian would somehow end their troubles, or at least reduce them considerably. No one ever told them they were being moved to the front lines, and they seem genuinely shocked at the fact that they've been shot at.”

We all have felt like that at some point, we need to vent our emotions to God. It all comes back to perspective and how great he is. Being angry at God is being honest, which is a good thing. Struggling is ok, things can be hard. It is good to have **authenticity** in our relationship with God.

So we have the bad characteristic of temper and anger in us than we need to deal with and we have the honesty by expressing what we really feel in our relationship with God.

How do we look forward and change? How do we let God work in us?

The bible tells us that we are Christ's ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:20) How do we represent him in this world? How do others see us and remember us? We need to reflect his son in all we do and say. A great example of this is the world cup final:

- Zenidene Zidane**
- **Head butt**
- **Legend**
- **What do we remember him for now? An outburst of anger**
- **All the good work and great play forgot for one rash decision.**

How do people see us, what do they remember? 99% of the time it will be when we slip up, the world is watching, so we should be watching the Father - [John 5](#).

Also we need to be aware of **practical ramifications** like increased blood pressure, bitterness and so on. There are so many negative effects like this and that fact that we hurt other people through what we do is a reason to take stock of how we react and what we do. Don't keep it under wraps, bring it in prayer unwrapped to God

We need less temper, more peace, but how? I would suggest prayer and perspective, counting to 10 slowly and refocusing, but remember its:

- Not me, but him
- Not my strength, but his
- Not my ways, but his ways
- Not my thoughts, but his.

The solution in the world is to let it all out, you will feel better, God says we can give it to him. We are missing **the vital vertical channel**...

Let me explain:

We have what we keep **IN** and then we let it **OUT**, that's it a two-way flow. We miss the most important part the **UP**. Allowing God to minister to us and pour out his Spirit on us afresh!

Let's pray...