

Anger

Is all anger wrong, or a sin?

Ephesians 4:26 says: “Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:”

This verse tells us that there is a kind of anger that is not sin. We are also told that we are not to let the sun go down upon our wrath, or anger.

Deuteronomy 9:8 says: “Also in Horeb ye provoked the LORD to wrath, so that the LORD was angry with you to have destroyed you.” *We find a number of texts that say that God was angry.* Deuteronomy 9:20 And the LORD was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him. 1 Kings 11:9 And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice. 2 Kings 17:18 Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only. Psalms 7:11 God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day. Psalms 85:4, 5 Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease. Wilt thou be angry with us forever? wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations?

*If anger is wrong, sin, then God has a real problem. His anger has even caused Him to destroy people and the world. (i.e. the flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, and others). Does this give us the right to this kind of anger? Romans 12:17-21 says: “Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. **If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.** Dearly beloved, **avenge not yourselves**, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, **Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.** Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” *We are told to let God take care of those who hurt us, we are not to do it ourselves. We are also to do our best to get along with others but the text also suggests that this may not always be possible. But the text does not say that it is wrong for us to feel angry when we have been hurt by someone. We are only told not to let the sun go down on our anger and not to avenge ourselves since that would be sin. In other words, we are to forgive them, regardless of whether they ask our forgiveness, and let God take care of them as he chooses.**

Matthew 5:22 says: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother **without a cause** shall be in danger of the judgment: *This verse indicates that only anger without a cause is wrong, so anger with a cause is not wrong. The problem arises when we allow the anger to cause us to sin by our words and/or actions. One way is when we take vengeance on the one who has provoked us or hold onto the anger for too long. The longer we hold onto anger the greater the chance becomes that it will cause us to do something wrong.*

Let's look at the experience of Moses in the Bible as found in the book of Numbers chapter 20. Moses had been leading the children of Israel through the wilderness for forty years. They were on the verge of entering into the Promised Land. God had shown them for more than forty years how He could and would take care of them but just on the eve of entering the Promised Land they ran out of water again and like always they began to complain. Moses was no longer a young man. He was also very aware that it was due to their unbelief that God could not or would not take care of them. They had spent forty years wandering in the wilderness. Seeing their continued lack of belief in God caused Moses to fear that they would have to spend another forty years wandering in the wilderness. This caused him to get angry. His anger was legitimate. He had good reason to believe that this fear would come to pass. It was what he did while angry that was a sin. God instructed Moses to go and speak to the rock so water would come from it to provide for the people's needs, but because Moses was angry, he allowed his anger to get the best of him and he struck the rock. Not

just once but twice. This disobedience was the sin that Moses committed, not his anger. His anger was legitimate. His disobedience to the command of God was the sin. Our problem comes when we get so caught up in our anger that we allow it to cause us to commit sin. It is very easy for us to sin when we are angry. Anger is simply a feeling, it's what we say and/or do that may be sin. So even though the anger is not sin, we may be sinning in our response to it. We should do our best to make our response, "God forgive them for they don't know what they are doing". We can't use the anger as an excuse for our sinful actions.

Can God be provoked to anger?

Numbers 14:23 Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it: Numbers 16:30 But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD.

Deuteronomy 9:8 Also in Horeb ye provoked the LORD to wrath.

Deuteronomy 9:22 And at Taberah, and at Massah, and at Kibrothhattaavah, ye provoked the LORD to wrath.

It is clear from these texts that God can be provoked to anger. So it is not wrong to be angry when provoked?

What about those who provoke someone to anger?

Luke 17:1, 2 Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

Ephesians 6:4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath:

Colossians 3:21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

We see here that the one doing the provoking to anger is definitely in the wrong. In fact, a woe is pronounced on him.

Yes, anger can become a problem, and cause us to sin, but it is not sin if it is with a cause. But the one who is provoking the anger is always in the wrong, guilty of sin.

In each case, when God was provoked, terrible things happened or were threatened to happen to those provoking Him.

If we understood that to provoke someone to anger was a sin and being angry when there was a cause wasn't, there would be much less anger in this world. When we see someone angry or becoming angry, we need to ask ourselves if there was something we or someone else did to cause it. If we are responsible for it we need to immediately make it right before the anger escalates to the place that they may sin. Very seldom do people becoming angry without a cause. Generally someone or something has provoked them to anger. We need to find out if their anger is legitimate or not before we judge them. And then do our best to help them deal with it.

*Here is the only verse in Scripture where **provoke** is used in a positive way: "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:" Hebrews 10:24*

Conclusion:

Anger is only a sin when it is without cause. Anger, if not controlled, can cause us to sin but the anger is not a sin if there is a cause. If the anger is sin or causes us to sin by our words and/or actions the sin needs to be confessed and forsaken. We also need to seek forgiveness from those we have sinned against.

God Bless,