**MINISTERIAL SPOUSES’ CURRICULUM GUIDE: LECTURES**

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**Lesson 13**

**Dealing with Anger and Forgiveness**

*Be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath.* Ephesians 4:26

Anger is a basic human emotion like joy, sadness, or fear. Some theorists say anger comes from within the individual. Others content that frustration creates anger. Still others believe anger is a learned behavior. Whatever the source, how are we to deal with out anger as Christians?

**Slides #1 & 2**

“Be angry and sin not,” Eph. 4:26 suggests that there is a **right** and **wrong** way to express anger. We need to learn how to deal with our anger appropriately so that we do not sin.

**Slides #3 & 4**

Even saints got angry. Moses sometimes became angry (Ex. 11:8; 32:19). The Bible repeatedly tells of times when God became angry (Ex. 15:7; 22:24; 32:10, 11; Num. 11:1, 10; 12:9; 22:22; 25:2; Ex. 4:14; Deut. 9:20; Joel 7:1).

**Slides #5 & 6**

**The Bible on Anger**

The Word of God has a great deal to say on the subject of anger. Here is a sampling:

Pro. 15:18 “. . . he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.”

Pro. 16:32 “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty.”

Pro. 19:11 “The discretion of a man defereth his anger.”

Pro. 27:4 “Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous.”

Pro. 21:19 “It is better to dwell in the wilderness than with a contentious and angry woman.”

Eccl. 7:9 “Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.”

Eph. 4:26, 27 “Be angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil.”

Eph. 4:31 “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.”

Col. 3:8 “But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, . . . out of your mouth.”

James 1:19; 20 “Wherefore, . . . let every man be . . . slow to wrath; for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”

**Slides #7-9**

**When Anger Becomes Sinful**

When is anger sinful? Anger is sinful when it is accompanied by rage, violence, vengeance, or abusive behavior. Moses sinned when, in anger, he disobeyed God and struck the rock instead of speaking to the rock as God had ordered.

Solomon warns, “Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul” (Pro. 22:24, 25). He further declares, “An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression” (Pro. 29:22).

**Slides #10 & 11**

Although abusive behavior is prevalent in society, **it has no place in a Christian home.** The counsel of the apostle Paul is, “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour (quarrelling), and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph. 4:31, 32). If Christian homes were to live by this rule, peace, harmony, and happiness would flood them.

Husbands and wives ought to make these verses a part of their mission statement and regularly read them until this behavior becomes the norm in their homes. Then, no man deserving of the name “husband” or “Christian” would be abusive to his wife. And likewise, no woman deserving of the name “wife” or “Christian” would be abusive to her husband. Children are not for abusing either. Parents need to learn to discipline with love. The widespread evil of abusing children has led many countries to enact laws. Confess and forsake the behavior as you would any other sin.

Any form of abuse is out of place in the Christian home. No one deserves to be abused. Do not tolerate it. If you are an abuser, or a victim, get help quickly.

**How is the Christian to Deal with Anger?**

**Slide #12**

So you are angry. How do you deal with it?

**First,** admit it; recognize it; verbalize it. Say to yourself, “I am angry because . . .”

**Second,** identify the source. Why am I angry? What is causing the feeling of anger? The one toward whom we may be displaying the angry feelings may not be the cause. There is a root cause somewhere. Retrace your steps. Is there a specific event that caused it?

**Third**, determine if you have a right to be angry. Get all the facts. Jonas was angry because God was merciful (Jonah 3:10 – 4:11). Henry was to pick up his wife, Susan, from the supermarket at 4:00 p.m. He turned up at 5:00 p.m. She was very angry until she learned that the car broken down and he had tried desperately to contact her, but failed.

**Fourth,** ask yourself, “What is the most appropriate way to express this anger?” Moses made the big mistake of expressing his justified anger in an inappropriate way (Num. 20: 7-12). It may be necessary to wait until your anger subsides before expressing yourself.

**Fifth**, deal with the root cause. If it is something that you have control over, correct it. If you need to confront someone else, do so with dignity, professionalism, class, and love.

**Sixth,** ask God to help you to express your anger in the best way. It is sometimes better to suffer an injustice than to inflict upon ourselves the “torture of retaliation.” Jesus, when He was reviled, reviled not again.

**Seventh,** forgive the offender. Jesus is the supreme example of this. On the cross He pleaded for forgiveness for His executioners (Luke 23:34). He admonishes us to do the same (Matt. 6:14, 15; 18:35). Divine help is available for dealing with anger (Phil. 4:13). If a person wants to be helped in overcoming a bad temper and uncontrolled anger, God is ready to help. He did it for Moses who became the meekest of men. He did it for James and John, the Sons of Thunder. He will do it for you.

But it is not enough simply to control our anger; it is also necessary to forgive those who made us angry. Jesus set a high standard for us Christians.

**Slides #13-16**

The disciples wanted some guidelines for forgiveness: How many times should one forgive. Jesus stressed the magnanimity of forgiveness—just keep on forgiving.

Our God is a forgiving and merciful God. He demonstrated this in His trial and on the cross. We rejoice in the assurance of sins forgiven through the blood of Jesus.

**Slides #20 & 21**

Let us truly be ready to forgive others as we expect God to forgive us.