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**Today we can learn HOW to free
ourselves from that bondage by
the power of Jesus Christ!**

Steve Flatt

FREEDOM FROM ANGER



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FREEDOM FROM ANGER

Chapter 1

Did you know that the average man loses his temper six times a week? The average woman only loses her temper three times a week. Women tend to get angrier at people. Men tend to get angrier at things such as flat tires and non-working vending machines. Single people express anger twice as often as married folks, and yet the home is the place where we're most likely to express our anger. Anger is most frequently and intensely expressed toward people that we love, rather than strangers.

We all get angry it is a normal response. God made us with that capacity. Jesus got angry, didn't he? Remember the cleansing of the temple? Three hundred and seventy-five times in the Old Testament, we read that God was angry. Ephesians 4:26 states, "Be angry, and do not sin." In other words, there's a right way and there's a wrong way to get angry. So, some anger isn't wrong.

The issue isn't how do you get rid of all your anger; you're not going to do that. You were made with the capacity to anger at times. The issue is, how can you control your anger so that your anger doesn't control you, so that it doesn't cause you to sin and hurt yourself and other people.

Anger Expressed

1. The Monster.

This is the person who just explodes. He or she is a walking time bomb. They have a hair trigger, and when they get angry, everything breaks loose, yelling, stomping, ranting, raving, throwing and cursing. Does that sound like someone you know?

A Biblical example of the monster-type of anger is Cain, Abel's brother. Genesis 4:5, "So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast." Now listen to verse 8, "Now Cain said to his brother Abel, 'Let's go out to the field.' And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him." You see that's the monster, it's somebody who loses control. Most of the time, those who express monster anger, are immediately sorry and beg for forgiveness, but the damage is done. Does it surprise you that men more than women express their anger in this way?

2. The Mute.

The mute is the exact opposite of the monster. The mute is the silent type. They clam up and they hold it in. Sometimes they even pretend that they're not angry. Have you ever been with a mute, and said "You're angry, aren't you?" They reply, "No, I'm not." "Yes, you are." "No, I'm not." "Yes, you are." "No, I'm not!!" They're concealing their feeling, letting it simmer. I call it the crock pot version of anger. It smolders all day.

This type of anger is not as volatile as the monster, but it's no less destructive to the individual. Someone said, "When you swallow your anger, your stomach keeps score." Folks like this, are susceptible to ulcers, headaches, and hypertension. In fact, Dr. F.I.

McMillan has written a book called, None of These Diseases, in which he lists 51 different types of major illnesses that are caused by bottled-up anger.

A biblical example of this kind of anger is the prophet, Jeremiah. He said, "I never sat in the company of revelers, never made merry with them; I sat alone because your hand was on me and you had filled me with indignation. Why is my pain unending and my wound grievous and incurable?" (Jeremiah 15:17) Poor old Jeremiah is sitting there alone holding it in and it's killing him.

Have you ever heard anyone say, "This just burns me up."? They're speaking more truth than they know. It's not so much what you eat, it's "what's eating you?"

3. The Martyr.

This guy is the pro at pity parties. He's self-punishing and passive. One of the chief characteristics of the martyr is depression. Many people will go to psychologists and say, "Do you know, I'm depressed." Sometimes after talking with the psychologist, the psychologist will say, "Yes, you're depressed, but what you really are experiencing is angry."

A biblical example is the older brother in the parable of the Prodigal Son. Remember his reaction? The elder brother was so angry that he would not go to the party. So, his father went out and pleaded with him. (Luke 15:28) Now if that older brother had been a monster, he would have gone into the party and trashed the place. If he had been a mute, he would have gone into the party and very obviously stood in the corner and sulked. But he was a martyr. He stayed outside in his own pity party so that his father had to come out and plead with him. One of the characteristics of the martyr is to make everyone else around them miserable. They're good at that.

4. The Manipulator.

This is the, "I don't get mad, I get even." This kind of anger is the key to most TV and movie dramas. Someone is offended, they get mad, they decide to get even, you know the story.

On the domestic front, it may happen when the wife intentionally burns the toast, just a little bit. Or, when the husband teases hurtfully and then says sarcastically, "Can't you take a joke?" Now, believe it or not, religious people are particularly susceptible to the manipulation form of anger expression. We don't think it's very spiritual to explode. We know it's not very spiritual to sit around and mope. But if you put a smile on your face, you can stab somebody in the back by manipulation.

A classic biblical example is the Pharisees. "But they were furious and began to plot with each other what they might do to Jesus." (Luke 6:11) See, they're not getting angry, they're going to get even.

If you fall into any one of those forms, I've got great news for you. You weren't born with it, you learned it. You learned that anger response. You learn it from your parents, television, friends, environment or somewhere else. The great news is, that you can unlearn it. You don't have to be any of those four. You can release yourself and free yourself from those types of anger expressions.

Disseminating Anger

1. Understand why.

Proverbs 19:11 says, "A man's wisdom gives him patience" The better I understand myself, the more I'll be able to control my anger. The truth of the matter is, that anger isn't the problem. Anger is a warning light that something else is wrong in my life, and that's why I'm getting angry.

Causes

a. Physical or emotional hurt.

I read an interesting article lately about divorce and those who have gone through the trauma of divorce. It said, "The divorce is far from over for the spouse who lives angrily ever after" and "one-third of those who have been divorced for over 10 years, still feel intense anger." Why? They've been hurt deeply and the deeper the hurt, the more intense the anger.

b. When nothing is going right, everything is going wrong and you have to wait.

Anger comes out of your frustration. The classic example is traffic, isn't it? People do things in traffic they wouldn't do any other time. I've been in heavy congested traffic and seen two people up there jockeying and blowing horns, and I knew them both, and they knew each other, and they're both Christian folks. They were making those faces and yelling and

shaking a fist, and all of a sudden, they get up beside each other and recognize each other, and feel shame. They're embarrassed. Why? They lost their temper out of frustration.

c. Insecurity.

We're angry when we're threatened, afraid and insecure. When somebody takes away my security, I'm like a passive animal that's cornered. I come out with my claws ready.

Understanding yourself is step one. What is it that makes you angry most often? Is it a hurt that you can't get over? Is it an insecurity that happens commonly? Is it a frustrating experience you go through daily? Understand yourself, that's the key.

2. Look to God, not to others, for your self-worth.

A sense of self-worth is essential for controlling your anger because insecure people are easily angered. Confident people are not easily angered. When you've got a good sense of self-worth, you can handle your hurts, your frustrations, your insecurities. "Don't pay attention to everything people say." (Ecclesiastes 7:21) The secret to overcoming a huge amount of anger in life is to develop a God based sense of self-worth, then it doesn't matter what everybody is saying about you.

I love the example of the apostles in Acts 4: 29, when Peter and John were brought before the Sanhedrin, and were threatened by them not to preach any more about Jesus, or else. Peter and John said, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to obey you rather than God, you'll have to choose, but we can't help but speak the things we've seen and heard." See they didn't get mad, they didn't get defensive, they just told the truth. Why? Their self-worth wasn't based upon what the Pharisees thought about them. Their selfworth was based upon what God thought about them.

There's a statement that I really like, "If God likes me, and I like me, and you don't like me, then you're the one with the problem." Isn't that right? It is important that I look to God for my self-worth. That way, the frustrations, the insecurities and the hurts won't bother me as much.

3. Stop and think before reacting.

Our mouths usually run faster than our minds. Have you ever noticed that when you get angry, your sharp tongue is the quickest thing to cut your own throat?

Proverbs 13:16 says, "Sensible people always think before they act." The key word to anger management is the word, "T-H-I-N-K." Start thinking before you start responding. That's why James said in James 1:19, "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger." Do you know why you need to be slow to anger? Just give yourself a little time so that you can think. Thomas Jefferson once said. "When you're angry, count to ten." He also added, "When very angry, count to a hundred." That's good advice it will give you ten good seconds to think. I'll guarantee you, very few times will you come to the conclusion, that the best way for me to respond is to be a monster, a mute, a martyr or a manipulator. THINK!

I know what some of you are thinking. "Oh, yeah Steve, that sounds great, sounds nice, neat, clinical and logical, but you don't understand. When I get mad, I get mad. I can't control it. I lose it. I can't help myself." Yes, you can! Do you hear me? Yes, you can. Don't you dare believe the lie that you can't stop and think before you lose it? In fact, I'll prove it to you.

Have you ever had an argument at home? You're at home arguing with your spouse or maybe your children, (everybody is arguing loudly), all of a sudden, the phone rings. "Hello (softly)." "How are you doing?" "Good, so nice to hear from you!!" Oh, you've never done that, have you? Why the change? Why the drastic change? You changed because you

wanted to. You changed because you chose to. Let's be honest. No one makes you mad, you choose to be mad. I choose my anger. Do you know why? Because the hurt, the frustration, and the insecurity gets up, and I want to do something, so I just get mad.

Let's be honest about it. Sometimes it feels good to be mad, doesn't it? Just kind of vent your spleen. It feels good to be mad. The problem is, in the long run, it hurts you terribly. Proverbs 29:11 says, "A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control." That's so rich, that it's worth repeating. "A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control." You can take two people, can put them in the same environment, same conditions, same circumstances, and same stimulus, one of them will blow the top, and the other will be cool. It's not the circumstance, it's the choice.

Galatians 5:22 lists the beautiful nine-fold fruit of the spirit. The last one is the capstone. It's self-control. When you walk with God's spirit, you've got the blessing of keeping it under control. THINK, before you react.

4. Learn to relax.

Proverbs 14:30 says, "A heart at peace gives life to the body." Have you ever noticed that when you're uptight, you're more inclined to be angry? Temper and tension always go together. Have you ever been late for a morning meeting, you're in a rush and you can't find something you must have? Oh, what will I do? The pressure and frustration elicit my anger. I must learn to relax. Some of you are a walking time bomb because of the tension you feel all the time. Some of you feel so much tension at work that as soon as you come home, you snap your spouse's head off. You blame them for the tension you're under. The following are things to do to control our tension:

- "Be aware that tension is building and seek to diffuse it. You may have to change jobs. You may need to do something totally different, but don't let tension ruin your life."
- Exercise. I know that Paul said bodily exercise profits a little, but this is one of the ways it does profit a little. We are designed to build up stress, but we are designed to relieve it physically. You will relieve it if you exercise.
- Carry around a little pocket New Testament. Open it up read a little something, and pray a one-minute prayer. That will put everything in a better perspective. There's not that much to get uptight over.
- Get a sense of humor. God made us to have a sense of humor. God has a sense of humor. He made you, didn't he? He made me. He's got to have a sense of humor. And now the last thing.
- Continually ask God for help. You cannot have your life filled with the things that God's Spirit gives and still have room for wrongly displayed anger. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." (Galatians 5:22-23)

III. Summary

Here is a real deep metaphor. If you were to go into Wendy's, McDonalds, Burger King or some other fast-food restaurant and take that little mustard packet, tear the corner, set it on the table and smash it, what's going to come out? Whatever is inside. Right? Mustard! Now the world squeezes you with its deadlines and expectations, whatever is inside of you will come out. If you are full of the fruits of the spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control, they will come out!

Listen to this statement, "When you're filled with love, almost nothing will upset you. When you're filled with anger, almost anything will upset you." It's what's on the inside that counts.

That's why we want to be filled with God's spirit so that he'll bear his fruit. Replace the hurt, the insecurity, and the frustration that is causing your anger with Jesus. He can heal.

Amazing Grace Lesson #1199

Questions:

1. God is?

- ☐ Love
 - ☐ Righteous (Just)
 - ☐ Truth
 - ☐ Merciful
 - ☐ Peace
 - ☐ All the above
2. Everyone gets angry as it is a normal reaction.
- ☐ True
 - ☐ False
3. Anger can be expressed by?
- ☐ Exploding either verbally or physically
 - ☐ Pouting giving the silent treatment
 - ☐ Martyr by self-pity
 - ☐ Manipulator by getting even
 - ☐ All the above
4. Anger can be caused by?
- ☐ Frustration
 - ☐ Afraid, threatened and insecurity
 - ☐ Physical or emotional hurt
 - ☐ All the above
5. What is the keyword(s) for anger management?
- ☐ Count to ten
 - ☐ Cry
 - ☐ Laugh or smile
 - ☐ Walk away
 - ☐ All the above
6. One can control anger by
- ☐ Understanding the cause
 - ☒ Thinking before reacting
 - ☐ Look to God not self or others
 - ☐ All the above

Answers to Questions

1. All the Above
2. True
3. All the Above
4. All the Above
5. Walk away

6. All the Above

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