



A Fresh Look at Your Anger and the Anger of God

Often, you may hear that it is OK to be angry because God gets angry, and we are made in His image. Those who agree with that reasoning should realize that God's anger has some other descriptions that they should also portray if they are going to be angry "like God."

God is slow to anger – *emphasis on the slow* – and simultaneously merciful, gracious, compassionate, forgiving, and abundant in loving kindness. Check out the following verses that link God's anger with the above characteristics: Nehemiah 9:17, Psalm 86:15, Psalm 103:8, Nahum 1:3.

Jesus is recorded as being angry, and since He never sinned, His anger would have to be considered righteous. While on earth, His anger is mentioned once (Mark 3:5), when He was angry at the religious leaders' hypocrisy and grieved at their hardness of heart . . . and then He healed a man's withered hand. If you are to be angry "like Jesus," be sure your anger is in response to another's lack of interest in godliness. Being angry "like Jesus" could also be accompanied by sincere grief for those in a particular situation who have rejected Christ. Your anger cannot be "like Jesus" if it is simply a reaction to your own self-interest not being satisfied. If your anger is "like Jesus," then you should also be alert during that time to minister in mercy to meet authentic needs.

In John 2:17, Jesus was motivated by a divine jealousy (zeal) for His Father's house. Whether Jesus was angry (as some believe) or not, His focus was not on Himself but, instead, on the disregard that people had for God the Father.

Just think of all the times Jesus endured the types of things that tend to "infuriate" us. Yet He forgave, was patient, endured suffering, and entrusted Himself to the Father . . . even to an unjust death on the cross for the sins of those who hated Him. Thus, by practicing Christ-like patience, longsuffering endurance, and consistently trusting yourself to the Father, you are positioned to be "angry like Jesus." Just remember that the object of His anger in Mark 3 was not to protect or justify Himself but, instead, occurred because God was not held in high esteem.

Since Scripture says that the "anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God" (James 1:20), what kind of anger would that be? Since you are to be "slow to anger" (James 1:19), unrighteous anger is characterized by a quick temper, which puts it outside of the realm of "being angry like God." In addition, anger that is not accompanied by mercy, grace, compassion, forgiveness, loving kindness, and truth is also unlike God's anger. Anger that surfaces because your self-interests are not realized cannot be "righteous anger." Instead, godliness can be demonstrated in a variety of ways when authentic godly anger is expressed.

After seeing Truth from God's Word, ask yourself, "Should I continue to justify my angry responses or should I, instead, start asking God and others for forgiveness?"

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

Nehemiah 9:17, They refused to obey and were not mindful of the wonders that you performed among them, but they stiffened their neck and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt. But you are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and did not forsake them.

Psalm 86:15, But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

Psalm 103:8, The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

Nahum 1:3, The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, and the LORD will by no means clear the guilty. His way is in whirlwind and storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.

Mark 3:5, And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

John 2:17, His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."

James 1:19-20, Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.