

Reject Anger

Ephesians 4:26-28

The media recently reported a tragic story from Philadelphia in which a confrontation over noise in a movie theater escalated into a violent shooting. Frustrated with a talkative father and son seated near him, the shooter threw popcorn at the son. After an angry exchange of words, he got up to approach the father, who rose to meet him. At that point, the man pulled out a pistol, shot the father, then calmly resumed watching the movie until police arrived. For his impulsive act, the man faced six felony charges, including attempted murder and aggravated assault.

It's startling what destruction a moment of anger can cause. Too often it leads to words and actions that we soon regret...and that carry long-lasting consequences.

Yet anger is also a very common response to a number of situations. There is perhaps no greater example of this than when we've suffered a devastating loss in our lives. Broken relationships can provoke anger toward those we've held closest in our lives. Loss of a job can leave us angry at coworkers, supervisors, or institutions. This anger will only lead to bitterness and pain if it remains unresolved and is allowed to fester.

With all the negative consequences of anger, it's no surprise that the apostle Paul gave us this sober warning in Ephesians 4:26,27.

"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.

Perhaps the most destructive kind of anger occurs when we focus our emotion at God. "Why did God allow this to happen to me? Has He forgotten about me?" These are not uncommon questions when people are visited by a devastating loss. Perhaps you've asked such questions yourself. But if we allow our questions to build into anger, doubt, and bitterness toward God, our very relationship with Him will suffer.

Are you hurting today? Have you suffered loss? Don't let anger toward God or others consume you. Instead, give your burden to the Lord. He knows you're hurting. He understands your loss. As you cling to Him through the pain, He will bring healing and restore your life in ways you cannot yet imagine.

Why is anger, whether directed at God or others, so destructive to our Christian faith and commitment?

Have you allowed anger over a loss to fester in your heart? What steps can you take, both now and in the future, to put anger behind you as you heal from the pain of a loss?