



Whatcha Mad About?

Two men were sitting quietly in a jail cell when one finally broke the silence by asking, "What did you do?" The other man replied, "I shot the General." "How long are you in for," asked the first man?

"Three days," came the reply. "Three days? This is an outrage! I robbed a store and they gave me five years!" said the first man with mounting anger. "Calm down," said the short timer, "they're hanging me on Friday."

All of us, at one time or another, have been angry at someone or something. There are some things worth getting angry about. Abortion laws, injustice towards those who have been violated or abused, biblical heresy, to name a few. But I wonder how much of our anger could be abated if we could just get a good perspective on the situation. Five years isn't so bad if three days and a hanging is another possibility.

It would probably be safe to say that most of what Christians get angry about are really matters born out of our selfishness.

"I didn't get my way at the meeting."

"Nobody appreciates my ministry."

"The pastor (or whoever) didn't acknowledge me last Sunday. They didn't even shake my hand!"

The danger of such petty anger is that it easily can become a pet. We nourish it by constantly rehearsing the event in our mind or by telling it repeatedly to friends. Doing so, we eventually rationalize and justify our reason for being angry.

Unfortunately, it doesn't stop there. Anger gone sour turns into bitterness. Let the warning of Hebrews 12:15 sink in deep.

"Looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;"

Notice that the bitter person doesn't go it alone. Others will be affected by our bitter disposition.

Parents, don't be deceived, petty anger left simmering on the back burner isn't going unnoticed by your children. The aroma is filling your home. They smell something is wrong. What's worse is that they may

get used to it and think it's the norm for Christian behavior.

So, how can we deal with such anger? It's actually quite simple. The forest fire of anger towards others can quickly be quenched by a bucket full of the grace of forgiveness. That's the way God did it. Angry at sin. Enemy of sinners. Grace and forgiveness applied through Jesus His Son. The fire is out. The matter is closed. We should do no less!

Perhaps a straight command from the scriptures on what we are to do with the bitterness born from anger would be of help.

These words are not intended to be taken as a suggestion or even an option. To read them and then to disregard their personal application to our lives would only add to our sin. Read them carefully and thoughtfully.

"Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you."
(Ephesians 4:31–32 NKJV)

That's the antidote for bitterness. Take it in large doses!

Just some Food For Thought...

~ Pastor Frank

