

How Do I Avoid Sinning When I Am Angry?

Proverbs 14:29 says, “He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.”

We all have things buried in our personalities. Some of us respond calmly to most situations that confront us. But there are those among us who explode with anger at the slightest provocation. Therefore, the degree to which irritation is tolerated varies from person to person.

The Greek philosopher Socrates saw a direct correlation between right behavior and right understanding. Socrates can be faulted for missing the affective or emotional dimension to our behavior, but he was correct to see a link between our thoughts and actions, and, we might add, our minds and feelings as well.

I think that one of the problems we see with anger among Christians is the problem of instability – we say that we believe one thing, but we practice something quite different than what we say we believe. For example, I have a friend that believes what I believe, but he goes to a church that doesn't teach or believe what we each believe. Therefore, he is unstable. Yet he doesn't believe that he is unstable, but his actions prove otherwise.

Taking this rational approach in mind, there are three practical steps we can take to avoid sinning when we are angry:

First, we need to recognize that all anger is rooted in some kind of pain, be it physical or emotional. Typically, we move from pain to anger and often this anger only intensifies. But this cycle can be stopped if we pause to consider what makes us mad. We can also look for what is hurting the other person and address the pain so that anger does not become destructive.

Second, we can take care not to let the pain caused by others make us fractious with our families. If we have had a bad day at work, for example, we should do our best not to bring it home with us. If we have a short temper with our families because of problems elsewhere, we have sinfully expressed our anger.

Third, Scriptures that need to be considered: Ecclesiastes 7:1-14; Matthew 5:22; Ephesians 4:14-16, 21-32; James 1:2-8.

Jerry W. Arnold
All Rights Reserved