

Anger issues in the church: A case study on Samson

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Biblical text- Ephesians 4:26-31.

Introduction

When a person becomes a Christian, his conduct and personality should undergo certain changes. One of these changes has to do with emotions i.e. temper. A Christian should react in a Christian way. He should not lose his temper. Handling anger properly is a critical life skill for Christians. Anger can cripple communication between two people and rip apart families and relationships in churches. God's Word not only teaches how to deal with anger but also how to overcome sinful anger.

The case of Samson

- Some see Samson making poor choices in women. Others see a wild man slaying a thousand men with the jawbone of a donkey. Still others imagine a blinded, bitter Samson ending his life in a last fit of vengeance. But when you get by the mystique and fascination of the legend of Samson, you find a man of great physical strength, but also great weakness when it came to controlling his emotions.

- Samson's life includes one stumble after another. He became too friendly and too familiar with the Philistines. He consorted with a prostitute in Gaza, barely escaping a threat to kill him. To the human eye, it may have looked as if Samson was veering out of control here, thwarting the work and the will of the Lord. Samson's actions were certainly in conflict with the revealed will of God. But God had not lost control.
- Samson was utterly undisciplined. He could not control his eyes. He could not control his appetite. He could not control his emotions. He could not control his anger. An example starts out as a lark. Samson tells a group of Philistines for fun that he thinks there is no way they will figure out the answer to his riddle, but they outsmarted him. And what began as a contest of wits among friends turned quickly into a serious conflict, partly because Samson's pride was wounded. He responded in anger as Judges 14:19 tells us what happened. "Then the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon him. He went down to the town of Ashkelon, killed thirty men, took their belongings, and gave their clothing to the men who had solved his riddle. But Samson was furious about what had happened, and he went back home to live with his father and mother."

Lessons learnt from believer's perspective

1. Righteous Anger:

The biblical Christ get angry at sin, even to the sins of His disciples (Matthew 16:21-23). Jesus is perfectly righteous, and holy and cannot endure the presence of transgression without responding in wrath because His anger is always righteous (Romans 1:18). James also gives us excellent instruction when it comes to righteous indignation (James 1:19-20). Our outrage as Christians should lead to bringing others into a loving relationship with Christ.

2. Ungodly Anger

Anger can become sinful when motivated by pride (James 1:20) or allowed to linger (Ephesians 4:26-27), and is unproductive and distorts the purposes of God (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Ephesians 4:15-19 helps Christians understand they are to speak the truth in love to build one another up not use their speech to tear one another down. Anger becomes sin when it is allowed to boil over unconstrained resulting in hurt being multiplied and leaving destruction in its wake (Proverbs 29:11).

3. Handling Anger Biblically

To manage our anger biblically, we must recognize our mismanagement of ungodly anger as sin (Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9). Such a confession should be to God and specific to those who have been hurt by our anger not excusing it, nor shifting blame to the victim.

To handle anger correctly because someone has hurt us, we need to see the Lord amid such situations. Genesis 50:20 help Bible readers understand nothing that happens in our lives is a surprise to a faithful God who redeems all situations for the joy of His people. The Lord is a good God (Psalm 145:8-9, 17). Reflecting on these biblical truths will move our hearts to alter how we react to hurtful people and situations.

4. Anger and Biblical Ethics

Every Christian, at some point in their lives, is going to get angry. The Bible does not minimize that reality but also teaches that the Christian is not to sin in anger (Ephesians 4:26).

Every time Christians get angry, we need to stop, pray, and check ourselves to ensure we are upset at what God hates. For example, we might hate thieves, but we pass from righteous anger at the exploitation of the victims to sinful anger if we have thoughts of destroying those who engage in such behaviour.

One key to handle anger biblically is to return good for evil (Genesis 50:21; Romans 12:21). Instead of holding onto anger, pray for the person who angers you. The key is to convert your anger into love for others because of the grace of God. This is one key where we can change our feelings towards another by doing a loving deed. One example of this is praying for those who upset us and asking the Lord to change our hearts first and then to change the person who has hurt us.

Conclusion

By recognizing what causes you to get angry, you can grow in grace and prevent future outbursts of unrighteous anger. We all need one another. I need you, and you need me in our local churches. So, let's keep the lines of communication open, share openly and honestly with one another and aim to grow together in grace in community with one another.