

Pleasant Valley
Church of Christ

3317 Amidon
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(316) 838-4195
www.letjesusleadus.org

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Classes 9:30 am
Worship 10:30 am
Evening 6:00 pm

Wednesday

Classes 7:30 pm

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Wings



*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)*

January 25, 2009

How to manage anger

by David King

"Be angry, and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord" (Psa. 4:4-5).

"Be angry, and do not sin"; do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil" (Eph. 4:26-27).

Contrary to popular belief, the Bible does not condemn anger. Anger is a perfectly normal human emotion that has a legitimate role in our lives. Under the right circumstances, anger can even be a positive motivator. Much of the progress that is accomplished by those who fight for social or moral issues is driven by a righteous indignation that seeks to oppose evil and defend good. Moses was often angry trying to keep the Israelites faithful to the Lord (Ex. 16:20; Num. 16:15); Jesus was angry at the hypocrisy of His enemies (Mk. 3:5); anger is even attributed to God (Ex. 4:14; Josh. 23:16). Parents raising children are quite familiar with this normal reaction to wrong-doing.

What the Bible does condemn is inappropriate expressions of anger. When we allow our anger to flare out in an uncontrolled display of rage, either verbal or physical, we have crossed the line into sin. In those passages where the Bible condemns anger, the context often makes it clear that this out-of-control anger is the issue (for example, "outbursts of wrath," 2 Cor. 12:20; Gal. 5:20).

So as our opening texts describe, we should recognize that anger has its place ("be angry") but we must take care to keep it under control ("do not sin"). That is our challenge.

How do we manage our anger? How can we accept the reality of anger in our emotional makeup, yet prevent it from doing harm?

The first task, of course, is to learn to control your anger, to resist the urge to react instantly. Look again at our opening passage in Psalm 4. The injunction to "be angry and do not sin" is followed by the command to "be still." When you feel anger coming on, assume that anything you do at that moment will be wrong. Just be still and give yourself time to think about it and determine a more measured response ("meditate on your bed"). You'll be much happier with the end result.

As part of the thinking process, target the issue, not the person. In many cases it is not people with whom you are angry as much as it is impersonal events over which you have little control. Lashing out at others when things go wrong is pointless and destructive. Even when people are the source of your frustration, look at the situation as a problem to solve, not an enemy to destroy.

Finally, deal with the anger, then move on. Paul's advice to "do not let the sun go down on your wrath" is not intended as a literal deadline, but a reminder that allowing unresolved anger to fester in your soul will turn you into a bitter, miserable person. At some point, you have let it go. Where possible, take action to resolve the issue. Sometimes your only recourse may be to forgive someone unconditionally in your heart, and let a matter drop. It's not ideal, but it's better than letting a simmering anger poison your spirit.