

Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



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When You're Angry

Responding out of anger to the insults of others is almost always counter-productive.

An incident in the life of Moses provides a more rational approach to anger management.

“Then Moses was very angry, and said to the Lord, ‘Do not respect their offering. I have not taken one donkey from them, nor have I hurt one of them’” (Num. 16:15).

This chapter tells the story of the rebellion of Korah and his cohorts, Dathan and Abiram. These rebels accused Moses and Aaron of exalting themselves above the people, and demanded an equal role in the leadership of the nation. Moses first tried to reason with Korah, reminding him that as a fellow Levite, he already held an exalted position among the people; why was he demanding more? (v. 8-11). Apparently, his words fell on deaf ears. Next, he summoned Dathan and Abiram (who were Reubenites, not Levites) for a meeting. But they refused his invitation, accusing Moses of “acting like a prince over us” (v. 12-14).

Our interest in this article is Moses' response to this final act of defiance: He was “very angry.” Remember, this is the same man of whom it was said previously that he was “very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the

earth” (Num. 12:3). But even the most humble man has his limits, and Moses had just been pushed to his.

If you have ever felt “very angry” over a personal insult, you can relate to Moses' state of mind here. He had sacrificed so much of his life for these people, and to have these arrogant upstarts challenge his leadership with such outrageous charges was more than he could bear. Moses was ready to explode.

But he didn't explode. Instead, he employed a very simple strategy to keep his anger under control: *He took the matter to God.* Granted, his words to God might sound a little harsh (is it our place to demand of God whose offering He should not accept?) and self-serving (God already knew Moses' integrity). But God can handle the blubberings of someone who is struggling to keep his anger corked. The fact that Moses went to the Lord before responding to his critics shows great wisdom on his part.

Anger is a legitimate human emotion. It can even be a motivation for accomplishing great good, if kept under control and channeled into a proper

response. But when we're angry, we usually don't think straight. We tend to respond irrationally, saying or doing something stupid that only makes matters worse. Moses knew himself well enough to realize that if he followed the impulse of his heart, he would probably regret it (not to mention, a blow-up would play into the hands of his critics). So he first vented his feelings to God. He got the anger off his chest, without doing any damage to himself or others.

The example of Moses provides a practical lesson in anger management for us today. When we are so mad at the attacks of others that we are tempted to lash out, we first should take our frustrations to God. We can say to God whatever we feel, and He'll patiently listen. Once we have it out of our system, then we are in a better frame of mind to craft an appropriate — and measured — response to our enemy.

Moses stayed firmly in control of himself and the situation, while his challengers all came to a gruesome end. We can win, too, if we learn to take our anger to God first.

— David King