

“CHARITY...IS NOT EASILY PROVOKED.” 1 Corinthians 13:5.

Sermon to the Westboro Baptist Church, February 16, 2020 (Second of Two Parts)

*1 Corinthians 13:1 ¶ Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. 4 ¶ Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up, 5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; 6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; 7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. 8 ¶ Charity never faileth.*

**Psalm 37:8:** “Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.” In that very famous Chapter 37 in Psalms, which could be called “Do not fret about God’s providences relating to the wicked,” this unequivocal verse appears. In Spurgeon’s Treasury of David on this verse, he says: “Ver. 8. Cease from anger and forsake wrath. Especially anger against the arrangements of Providence, and jealousies of the temporary pleasures of those who are so soon to be banished from all comfort. Anger anywhere is madness, here it is aggravated insanity. Yet since anger will try to keep us company, we must resolvedly forsake it. Fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. By no reasonings and under no circumstances be led into such a course. Fretfulness lies upon the verge of great sin. Many who have indulged a murmuring disposition have at last come to sin, in order to gain their fancied rights. Beware of carping at others, study to be yourself found in the right way; and as you would dread outward sin, tremble at inward repining.” And in his “Hints to the Village Preacher,” he writes this outline for a sermon:

A SERMON FOR THE FRETFUL.

1. Cease from present anger. It is madness, it is sin; it shuts out our prayers; it will grow into malice; it may lead to worse.
2. Forsake it for the future. Repent of it, watch temper, discipline thy passions, etc.
3. Avoid all kindred feelings of fretfulness, impatience, envy, etc., for they lead to evil.”

Other Bible verses which help amplify this subject:

**Proverbs 14:17** *He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated.*

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

**Proverbs 16:32:** *He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.* Poole: “because he is more like to God, more wise to foresee and to prevent mischief, both to himself and others, which oft cometh from rash anger.”

**Proverbs 19: 11:** The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.

**Titus 1:7:** *For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;*

**James 1:19:** *Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:*

**Genesis 49:5:** *Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. 6 O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall. 7 Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.*

**2 Kings 5:11:** But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.

**Psalms 106:33:** *Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.*

Last week, it was my privilege to offer some words of exhortation about *what* it means when it says Charity is not easily provoked, by describing *what* this angry spirit which is contrary to Christian charity consists of. I remind you that we are instructed to take up our cross and follow after our Lord Jesus Christ. **Matthew 11:27:** *“All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. 28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”* **John 10:** *“27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”* We are to ever have him before us in our minds as to what he has said, what he did including in his lifetime on the earth, and why he did it. He is the prime example of how we should live out charity and in particular, today, how charity is not easily provoked to anger. Last week, I told you there never was so much bitterness and fierceness of anger among men one to another, and so much hostility and malice, for any one thing, as there has been for well-doing. History gives no accounts of any such cruelties as those practiced toward God’s people on account of their profession and practice of religion. And how annoyed were the scribes and Pharisees with Christ for doing the will of his Father in what he did and said while on earth! I remind you regularly that we have three decades experience on the streets of this nation witnessing the constant sinful anger towards the Lord for his goodwill towards them in causing his servants at Westboro Baptist Church to preach His gospel to them. I also remind you of your own pride and selfishness, which fruits include your being easily provoked to anger by the display of the sovereign pleasure in God’s day-to-day providence, which comes in part from your failure to thoroughly love and praise His sovereignty.

Today, I want to exhort further on this doctrine, that the spirit of charity, or Christian love, is the opposite of an angry or wrathful spirit or disposition, by describing *how* charity is contrary to this angry sinful spirit and offer some helpful practical applications for our daily walk as children of light (**Ephesians 5:8**).

Christian charity or love, which is the sum of the Christian spirit, is directly, and in itself, contrary to the anger that is sinful; and, the fruits of charity which are mentioned in the context of **1 Corinthians 13:4-8**, are all contrary to it.

Christian love is contrary to anger which is undue in its nature, and that tends to revenge, and so implies ill-will; for the nature of love is goodwill. It tends to prevent persons from being angry without just cause, and will be far from disposing anyone to be angry for but little faults. Love is backward to anger, and will not yield to it on trivial occasions, much less where there is no cause for being angry. It is a malignant and evil, and not a loving spirit, which disposes persons to be angry without cause. Love to God is opposite to a disposition in men to be angry at others' faults chiefly as they themselves are offended and injured by them: it rather disposes them to look at them chiefly as committed against God. If love be in exercise, it will tend to keep down the quick-tempered passions, and hold them in subjection, so that reason and the spirit of love may regulate them and keep them from being immoderate in degree, or of long continuance.

All the fruits of this charity which are mentioned in the context are also contrary to it. For illustration purposes I will talk about two of these fruits, as they may stand for all, that is, those virtues that are contrary to pride and selfishness.

Pride is one chief cause of undue anger. It is because men are proud, and exalt themselves in their own hearts, that they are revengeful, and are apt to be excited, and to make great things out of little ones that may be against themselves. They even treat as vices things that are in themselves virtues, when they think their honor is touched, or when their will is crossed. And it is pride that makes men so unreasonable and rash in their anger, and raises it to such a high degree, and continues it so long, and often keeps it up in the form of habitual malice. But, as I have previously preached a sermon on how charity is utterly opposed to pride, I refer you to that sermon of September 15, 2019 ("Charity Vaunteth Not Itself, is Not Puffed Up, Doth Not Behave Itself Unseemly. 1 Corinthians 13:4-5").

Selfishness is another chief cause of anger. Because men are selfish and seek their own, that they are malicious and revengeful against all that oppose or interfere with their own interests. If men sought not chiefly their own private and selfish interests, but the glory of God and the common good, then their spirit would be a great deal more stirred up in God's cause than in their own; and they would not be prone to hasty, rash, inconsiderate, immoderate, and long-continued wrath, with any who might have injured or provoked them; but they would in a great measure forget themselves for God's sake, and from their zeal for the honor of Christ. The end they would aim at, would be, not making themselves great, or getting their own will, but the glory of God and the good of their fellow-beings. But love, as we have seen, is opposed to all selfishness. For more on this topic, please see my sermon of December 1, 2019 ("Charity Seeketh Not Her Own, 1 Corinthians 13:5(b)").

You can access those sermons on the World Wide Web at [www.godhatesfags.com](http://www.godhatesfags.com), under "Sermons."

In applying this doctrine, it is necessary that we examine our own consciences. If faithfully searched it can best tell us whether we are, or have been persons of such an angry spirit and wrathful disposition as has been described in this two-part sermon; whether we are frequently angry, or indulge in ill-will, or allow the continuance of anger. Have we not often been angry? And if so, is there not reason to think that that anger has been undue, and without just cause, and thus sinful? God does not call Christians into his kingdom that they may indulge greatly in fretfulness, and have their minds commonly stirred up and disordered with anger. And has not most of the anger you have cherished been chiefly, if not entirely, on your own account? If we get angry let's do it for the cause of God and truth in the earth and for our duty for the cause of the honor to God, and not our private interests. Opposition to sin should be our primary cause and our concern, even if it personally affects us.

And ask, still further, what good has been obtained by your anger, and what have you aimed at in it? Or have you even thought of these things? Examine yourselves as to this matter, and ask what has been the nature of your anger? Has it not been of the nature of ill-will, and malice, and bitterness of heart — an anger arising from proud and selfish principles, because your interest, or your opinion, or your cause was touched? Make sure your anger will be like that Christian zeal that does not disturb charity, or embitter the feelings, or lead to unkindness or revenge in the conduct? Don't let the sun go down upon your wrath. (Ephesians 4:26). Has it not gone down again and again, though month after month, and year after year, have passed? Obedience to this injunction from the Holy Spirit is absolutely critical to your health personally and your family's and your neighbors' and to this church. Families are societies closely united; and their members are in the nearest relation, and under the greatest obligations to peace, and harmony, and love. Many a time have you not been fretful, and angry, and impatient, and irritable, and unkind to those whom God has made in so great a measure dependent on you, and who are so easily made happy or unhappy by what you do or say — by your kindness or unkindness? And what kind of anger have you indulged in the family? Has it not often been unreasonable and sinful, not only in its nature, but in its occasions, where those with whom you were angry were not in fault, or when the fault was trifling or unintended, or where, perhaps, you were yourself in part to blame for it? And even where there might have been just cause, has not your wrath been continued, and led you to be sullen, or severe, to an extent that your own conscience disapproved? And have you not been angry with your neighbors who live by you, and with whom you have to do daily? And on trifling occasions, and for little things, have you not allowed yourself in anger toward them? In all these points it becomes us to examine ourselves, and know what manner of spirit we are of, and wherein we come short of the spirit of Christ. And if the family is tightly knit, how much more the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have heard frequently from this pulpit the vital sermons on this subject from such places like **1 Corinthians 12:20-27** ending with, "*[n]ow ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*" And **Ephesians 2:19-22**, ending with, "*[i]n whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*" And, **Colossians Chapter 2 (2-19)** where the church at Laodicea is described as "*being knit together in love,*" and concluding with these words: "*And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.*" How vital then a proper spirit in us opposite to undue and sinful and long-lived anger.

This subject from the Holy Spirit of truth dissuades from, and warns against, all undue and sinful anger. — The heart of man is exceeding prone to undue and sinful anger, being naturally full of pride and selfishness; and we live in a world that is full of occasions that tend to stir up this corruption that is within us, so that we cannot expect to live in any tolerable measure as Christians would do, in this respect, without constant watchfulness and prayer. **1 Peter 4:7**: “*But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.*” And we should not only watch against the exercises, but fight against the principle of anger, and seek earnestly to have *that* mortified in our hearts, by the establishment and increase of the spirit of divine love and humility in our souls. And to this end, several things may be considered.

Consider frequently your own failings, by which you have given both God and man occasion to be displeased with you. All your lifetime you have come short of God’s requirements (**Romans 3:23**), and thus justly incurred his dreadful wrath; and constantly you have occasion to pray God that he will not be angry with you, but will show you mercy. And your failings have also been numerous toward your fellowmen, and have often given them occasion to be angry with you. Your faults are as great, perhaps, as theirs: and this thought should lead you not to spend so much of your time in fretting at the motes in their eyes, but rather to occupy it in pulling the beams out of your own. (**Matthew 7:3-5**). Very often those that are most ready to be angry with others, and to carry their resentments highest for their faults, are equally or still more guilty of the same faults. If others, then, provoke us, instead of being angry with them, let our first thoughts be turned to ourselves, and let it put us on self-reflection, and lead us to inquire whether we have not been guilty of the very same things that excite our anger, or even of worse.

And consider also how such undue anger destroys the comfort of him that indulges it. It troubles the soul in which it is, as a storm troubles the ocean. Such anger is inconsistent with a man’s enjoying himself, or having any true peace or self-respect in his own spirit. Men of an angry and wrathful temper, whose minds are always in a fret, are the most miserable sort of men, and live a most miserable life; so that a regard to our own happiness should lead us to shun all undue and sinful anger. And it affects you adversely, physically and emotionally. Attached is a graphic of how excessive anger adversely impacts your health in a severe manner. I recently went to a continuing legal education class on the effects of this anger on effectively representing your clients. It’s a real problem because it causes changes in your brain and in your body, which results in bad judgment and malpractice, and you become ineffective in your assistance. They call it the “fight or flight response.” These conclusions are supported by the science and there is a lot of research available, including for example, on the internet. I put these words into Google: “the effects of anger on health,” and it brought up 131 million pages. As God put it to Jonah at **Jonah 4:9**: “*And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry...*”. Jonah responded: “*I do well to be angry, even unto death.*” Be very careful because you will get what you ask for if you don’t abandon your anger, friends. See the attached which illustrates the deadly health impact of anger.

How much such a spirit unfits persons for the duties of religion. All undue anger indisposes us for the pious exercises and the active duties of religion. It puts the soul far from that sweet and excellent frame of spirit in which we most enjoy communion with God, and which makes truth and ordinances most profitable to us. And hence it is that God commands us not to approach his altars while we are

at enmity with others, but “*first to be reconciled to our brother, and then come and offer our gift*” (**Matthew 5:24**); and that by the apostle it is said, “*I will, therefore, that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting*” (**1 Timothy 2:8**). And, once more, consider,

Angry men are spoken of in the Bible as unfit for human society. The express direction of God is, “*Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man thou shalt not go: lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul*” (**Proverbs 22:24, 25**). Such a man is accursed, as a pest of society, who disturbs and disquiets it, and puts everything into confusion. “*An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression*” (**Proverbs 29:22**). Everyone is uncomfortable about him; his example is evil, and his conduct disapproved alike by God and men.

Let these considerations, then, prevail with all, and lead them to avoid an angry spirit and temper, and to cultivate the spirit of gentleness, and kindness, and love, which is the spirit of heaven.

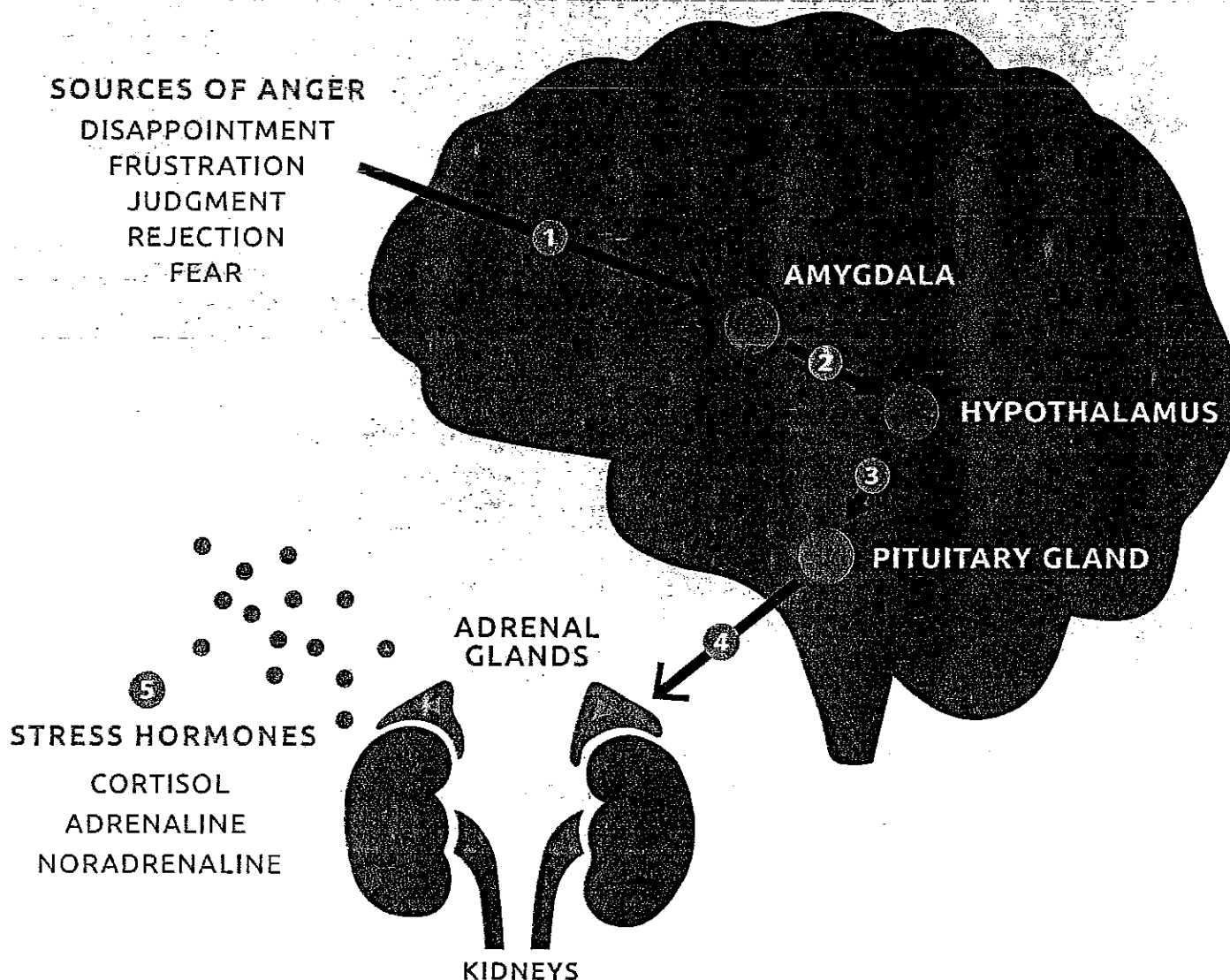
Let me end with where I began last Sunday: This may be the most important sermon that I have delivered to date. Granted, there is not a huge record I am competing against, so don't be too impressed. But on the other hand—be very impressed by this subject. For years (approximately 30, now) while I have had the privilege with most of you here to hold up signs of love and peace to very untoward generations across this country, and witnessed the hateful, violent response to these words of truth from the Bible, I have constantly thought about the provoking that they have engaged in towards us. It is universal and it is unrelenting. Anyone who anywhere in the world holds up signs of Bible truth, knows what I am talking about. What should be our response to these things? I believe this sermon will help us. Our pride and our selfishness cause us endless grief, which results in being easily provoked. I believe this sermon will help us fight against them. But the most important thing is that considering this subject will help us identify how we may avoid doing each other wrong. James identifies the issue in his simplicity: **James 5:9**: “*Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.*” If there is a word in the Bible which is polar opposite from “charity,” it has to be “grudge.”

Ben told me about Richard Baxter's writing called “Anger Management.” My kind parents named me after Baxter, a 17<sup>th</sup> century “English Puritan church leader, poet, hymnodist, theologian and controversialist.” (Wikipedia) I am assuming that he was a controversialist in the best way imaginable, like **Jude 3** (“*Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*”) I believe my parents liked his book, “The Saints Everlasting Rest.” I've attached an abridged version of his writing called “Anger Management” which is on point and helpful.

I love you. Amen.

# HOW ANGER AFFECTS YOUR BRAIN AND BODY

- 1 The first spark of anger activates the amygdala before you're even aware of it.
- 2 The amygdala activates the hypothalamus.
- 3 The hypothalamus signals the pituitary gland by discharging corticotropin-releasing hormone (CRH).
- 4 The pituitary activates the adrenal glands by releasing adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH).
- 5 The adrenal glands secrete stress hormones like cortisol, adrenaline, and noradrenaline.





# HOW ANGER CHANGES YOUR BRAIN

1. Elevated cortisol causes neurons to accept too much calcium through their membrane. A calcium overload can make cells fire too frequently and die.

The hippocampus and prefrontal cortex (PFC) are particularly vulnerable to cortisol and these negative effects.

## PREFRONTAL CORTEX



Elevated cortisol causes a loss of neurons in the prefrontal cortex (PFC). Suppressed activity in the PFC prevents you from using your best judgment - it keeps you from making good decisions and planning for the future.

## HIPPOCAMPUS



Elevated cortisol kills neurons in the hippocampus and disrupts the creation of new ones. Suppressed activity in the hippocampus weakens short-term memory. It also prevents you from forming new memories properly. (This is why you might not remember what you want to say in an argument.)

2. Too much cortisol will decrease serotonin - that's the hormone that makes you happy. A decrease in serotonin can make you feel anger and pain more easily, as well as increase aggressive behavior and lead to depression.



# HOW STRESS HORMONES AFFECT YOUR BODY



## CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM

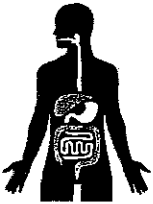
- Heart rate ↑
- Blood pressure ↑
- Arterial tension ↑
- Blood glucose level ↑
- Blood fatty acid level ↑

When these symptoms become chronic, blood vessels become clogged and damaged. This can lead to stroke and heart attack.



## IMMUNE SYSTEM

- Thyroid function ↓
- The number of natural killer cells ↓
- The number of virus-infected cells ↑
- Incidence of cancer ↑



## DIGESTIVE SYSTEM

- Blood flow ↓
- Metabolism ↓
- Dry mouth ↑



- Intraocular pressure ↑
- Eye sight ↓



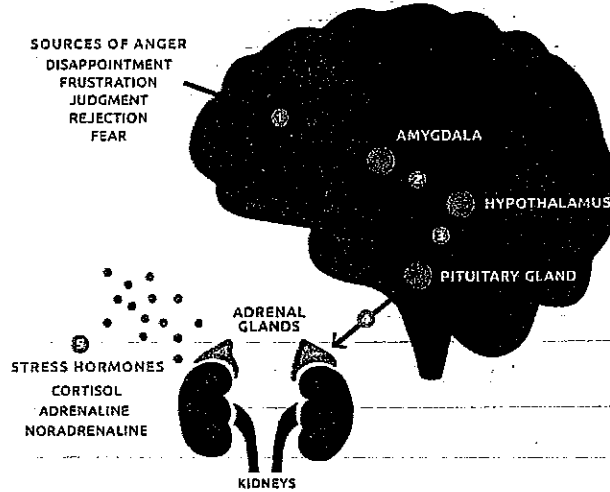
- Migraines ↑
- Headaches ↑



- Bone density ↓

# HOW ANGER AFFECTS YOUR BRAIN AND BODY

- 1 The first spark of anger activates the amygdala before you're even aware of it.
- 2 The amygdala activates the hypothalamus.
- 3 The hypothalamus signals the pituitary gland by discharging corticotropin-releasing hormone (CRH).
- 4 The pituitary activates the adrenal glands by releasing adrenocorticotropic hormone (ACTH).
- 5 The adrenal glands secrete stress hormones like cortisol, adrenaline, and noradrenaline.



## HOW ANGER CHANGES YOUR BRAIN

1. Elevated cortisol causes neurons to accept too much calcium through their membrane. A calcium overload can make cells fire too frequently and die. The hippocampus and prefrontal cortex (PFC) are particularly vulnerable to cortisol and these negative effects.

**PREFRONTAL CORTEX**

High levels of cortisol cause a loss of neurons in the prefrontal cortex (PFC). Suppressed activity in the PFC prevents you from using your best judgment. It keeps you from making good decisions and planning for the future.

**HIPPOCAMPUS**

High levels of cortisol kills neurons in the hippocampus and disrupts the creation of new ones. Suppressed activity in the hippocampus weakens short-term memory. It also prevents you from forming new memories properly. (This is why you might not remember what you want to say in an argument.)

2. Too much cortisol will decrease serotonin – that's the hormone that makes you happy. A decrease in serotonin can make you feel anger and pain more easily, as well as increase aggressive behavior and lead to depression.

## HOW STRESS HORMONES AFFECT YOUR BODY

### CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM



- Heart rate ↑
- Blood pressure ↑
- Arterial tension ↑
- Blood glucose level ↑
- Blood fatty acid level ↑

When these symptoms become chronic, blood vessels become clogged and damaged. This can lead to stroke and heart attack.

### IMMUNE SYSTEM



- Thyroid function ↓
- The number of natural killer cells ↓
- The number of virus-infected cells ↑
- Incidence of cancer ↑



### DIGESTIVE SYSTEM

- Blood flow ↓
- Metabolism ↓
- Dry mouth ↑



- Intraocular pressure ↑
- Eye sight ↓



- Migraines ↑
- Headaches ↑



- Bone density ↓

nicabm  
www.nicabm.com

© 2017 The National Institute for the Clinical Application of Behavioral Medicine

## ANGER MANAGEMENT

Anger is a passionate emotional response to a perceived evil that would cross us or hinder us from something good. It has been given to us by God for our good. It stirs us up to vigorous resistance against anything that opposes God's glory, our salvation, our real good, or the good of our neighbors. Anger is therefore good when it is used to its appointed end, in the right manner and measure. But anger may be sinful.

### *When Anger is Sinful*

1. When it opposes God or good; as in the case of those who become angry with us because we seek to win them to the Lord or separate them from their sins.
2. When it disturbs our reason, and hinders us from thinking rightly.
3. When it causes us to act unbecomingly, so as to use sinful words or actions.
4. When it causes us to wrong one another by our words and deeds, or to treat others in a way in which we would not like to be treated.
5. When it is mistaken with no just cause behind it.
6. When it is greater in measure than that which provoked the anger.
7. When it makes us unfit to do our duty to God or man.
8. When it hinders love, brotherly kindness and the good we might do for others.
9. When it encourages malice, revenge, contentions, division, oppression of those under us, and dishonor to those over us.
10. When it lasts too long, and does not cease when it has accomplished its purpose.
11. When it is used as a means to further our selfish, carnal, and sinful ends. When we are angry because our pride, profit, enjoyment, or fleshly will is crossed.

### *Considerations to Hinder Sinful Anger*

1. *Uncontrolled anger injures humanity and rebels against reason.* It is without reason and against reason. All passions should always be under control of reason. It is madness, and like the crime of drunkenness, to suppress and dethrone our reason.

Sinful anger is temporary madness or drunkenness, since our reason is set aside. Remember that you are a man, and that it is a dishonor to yield to fury like an animal.

2. *God intended to govern our rational powers first, and then our lesser powers through them.* Sinful passion silences our reason, so that we are in no fit state to obey the commands of God.
3. *Sinful passion is a pain and sickness of the mind.* Will you love or cherish your disease or pain? Do you not feel yourself in pain and diseased while it is upon you? No one would want to live continually in that state. In such a state, what good can be accomplished? How can you enjoy life? What comfort is your life to you? If sinful passion is bad over a long period, how can it be good even for a short time? Do not willfully keep so troublesome a sickness in your mind!

4. *Observe also what an enemy it is to your body.* It inflames the blood, stirs up diseases, breeds bitter displeasure in the mind, consumes our strength, and casts many into acute and chronic sickness leading even to death. And how comfortless a death this is!
5. *Observe how unlovely and displeasing you are to those who observe you.* Anger deforms the countenance, and takes away the sweet and pleasant appearance that you have when you express a calm and loving temperament. If you were always like this, would anybody love you? Would they not get out of your way (if they did not lay hands on you), as they would do anything that is wild or mad? You would not want your picture taken while in a state of fury. Your frowns and inflamed blood mar your countenance. Do not love that which makes you so unlovely to others.
6. *You should shun this anger because it hurts others and is an enemy to love and the good of others.* Every time you are angry you are inclined to hurt those that anger you and anyone else in the path of your fury. Anger puts hurtful thoughts in your mind and hurtful words in your mouth, and entices you to strike out or do some other mischief. Nobody loves a hurtful person. Avoid so troublesome a passion.
7. *Take note of the tendency of your anger. You will find that if it is not stopped early, it will lead to the utter ruin of your brother, bloodshed, and your own damnation.* How many thousands has anger murdered or undone! It has caused wars, and fill the world with blood and cruelty! Should your hearts give place to such a fury?
8. *Consider how much sin stems from sinful anger.* It is like drunkenness, in which a man does not have control of himself and so lays himself open to great wickedness. How many oaths and curses does it cause every day! How many rash and sinful actions! What villainy has anger not done! It has slandered, blasphemed, reproached, falsely accused, and injured many thousands. It has murdered and ruined families, cities, and states. It has made parents kill their children, and children dishonor their parents. It has made kings oppress and murder their subjects, and subjects rebel and murder kings. What a world of sin is committed by sinful anger throughout the world! How endless are the illustrations of it. David himself was once drawn by it to intend murdering the whole family of Nabal. All this should make it odious to us.
9. *Anger is a sin that does not leave you to sin alone.* It stirs up others to do the same. Wrath kindles wrath, as fire kindles fire. When you are angry you will make others angry, or discontented, or troubled by your words and deeds. Once you have provoked others to anger, you do not know the extent of the sin it may lead them to. You do not have power to moderate their anger after yours has subsided. It is the devil's bellows to kindle man's corruptions and set hearts, families, and kingdoms aflame.
10. *Notice how unfit it makes you for holy duties; for prayer, meditation, or any communion with God.* This should trouble gracious souls, that anything should make us unfit to speak to God or to be employed in his worship. If indeed you do engage in prayer or other worship in a passion of anger, may not God say as Achish, king of Gath, did of David, "Have I need of mad men?" Anger makes all of us - family, church, or society - unprepared for the worship of God. Is the family prepared for prayer when wrath has muddied and disturbed their minds? It divides Christians and churches, and causes "confusion and every evil work" (James 3:15-16).

11. *It is a great dishonor to the grace of God that any servant of his should have so little self-control.* It causes the world to wonder that grace has no more force or efficacy to rule a raging passion. It is a dishonor to God when we do not possess our souls with more patience, fear of God, or self-control. Do not wrong God by so dishonoring his grace and Spirit!
12. *It is a sin against our consciences.* When one comes to one's self, in a proper frame of mind, the conscience is stricken, and the soul smitten with sorrow over the failure. The realization that we must repent afterwards should make us seek to avoid that which causes so much shame and sorrow.

OBJECTION ONE: But you may say: "I am a hasty choleric nature, and cannot help it."

*Answer:* It is true that your temperament may be prone to anger than other temperaments, but this cannot force you to sinful anger. Reason and will, functioning as they should, can command and master passion. If you realize your own tendency to anger, this very fact should make you even more alert to watchful concerning it.

OBJECTION TWO: "But the provocation was so great that it would have angered anyone in the same circumstances!"

*Answer:* This is a weak argument, that you should think that some provocation can be great enough to overrule a man's reason and allow him to break the laws of God. The provocation which you call so great would have been small or non-existent to a man who had a prepared mind. You should rather say, God's majesty and dreadfulness are so great that I should not even consider offending reason for any provocation. Has not God given us greater cause to obey than man can give us to sin?

OBJECTION THREE: "But it happened so fast that I had no time to deliberate or to prevent it."

*Answer:* Do you not still have reason? Should not your reason be as ready to rule as passion is to rebel? Quench passion as it rises and take time for deliberation.

OBJECTION FOUR: "I am angry for a very short time, and then I am sorry for it when it is over."

*Answer:* But if it is evil, even if it is short, it is still a sin and to be avoided. If you know beforehand that you will be sorry, why will you breed your own sorrow?

OBJECTION FIVE: "Everybody is angry sometimes. Even the best!"

*Answer:* Sin is never better because many commit it. If you observe others ruled by the grace of God, you will find that there are many who are not easily angered nor do they behave themselves furiously, railing, cursing, swearing, or doing wrong to others.

OBJECTION SIX: "I do not allow the sun to go down on my anger, so it is not sinful anger—"Let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (Eph. 4:26)."

*Answer:* The apostle never said that anger is only sinful when it continues after the sun has gone down. Paul told us not to entertain any sinful anger at all. If you should do so, however, quench it quickly and do not continue in it. Do not be angry without a cause, or go beyond the cause. When you are angry, do not sin by acting unlovingly and do not allow any evil words or deeds to spring up. Do not allow your displeasure, even if it is just, to continue. Hasten to be reconciled and to forgive.

#### *PRACTICAL DIRECTIONS AGAINST SINFUL ANGER*

*DIRECTION ONE: The principal help against sinful anger lies in accustoming the soul to right attitudes.*

We must live under the authority of God, with a sense of obedience to him directing our hearts. Our hearts should ever be aware of the mercy of him that forgave us and keeps us, and of the grace that assists us and heals us. Our hearts should also be mindful of the love we owe to God and man. Such a heart is continually fortified and draws its source of preservation from within itself. Just as wrath emerges from within us, so may meekness. The main cause of wrath or meekness lies within.

DIRECTION TWO: *Be careful to keep a humbled soul that does not think too highly of itself, for humility is patient and does not exaggerate injuries.*

A proud man considers things as heinous or intolerable that are said or done against him. He that thinks lowly of himself see things done or said against him as of little significance. He that magnifies himself sees offences against him also magnified. Pride is a very impatient sin: There is no pleasing a proud person, without a great deal of wit, care, and diligence. You must take as much care around him as you do around straw or gunpowder when you are holding a candle.

Proverbs 13:10: "Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom."

Proverbs 28:25: "He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife: but he that putteth his trust in the LORD shall be made fat."

Proverbs 21:24: "Proud and haughty scorner is his name, who dealeth in proud wrath."

Psalms 31:18: "Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous."

Humility, meekness, and patience live and die together!

DIRECTION THREE: *Be careful to avoid a worldly and covetous mind.*

The worldly mind sets such store by earthly things that every loss, opposition, or injury unsettles and inflames its passions. No one can please a covetous man. Every little trespass or crossing of his desires cuts him to the quick and makes him impatient.

DIRECTION FOUR: *Put a stop to your anger early, before it goes too far.*

It is easier to control anger in its beginning. Keep an eye on the first stirrings of your wrath and make it obey you. Your will and reason have great power in the control of anger if you will only use them according to their nature. A spark is easier to quench than a flame, and a serpent is easier to crush before it hatches out.

DIRECTION FIVE: *Take control of your tongue, hands, and countenance, even if you cannot at the moment quiet or command your passion.*

In this way you will avoid the greatest of the sin, and the passion itself will quickly subside because it lacks an outlet. You cannot say that it is not in your power to restrain your tongue or hands if you wish to. You must not only avoid the swearing and cursing which are marks of the profane mind, but you must also avoid multiplying words, contentions, objections, and bitter and cutting speeches, which only tend to stir up the wrath of others. Use the mild and gentle speech which is characteristic of love and tends to cool the heat that has been kindled.

Proverbs 15:1: "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger."

DIRECTION SIX: *In the very least, keep silent until reason has had an opportunity to speak and you have had a chance to think.*

Do not be so hasty as not to consider what you are saying or doing. A little delay will let tempers cool and allow reason to do its work.

Proverbs 25:15: "By long forbearing is a prince persuaded, and a soft tongue breaketh the bone."

Patience will lessen another's anger, as well as your own. He is a madman, not a rational person, who cannot stop to think.

*DIRECTION SEVEN: If you do not find it easy to quiet your anger or restrain yourself, then leave the place and company that have provoked you.*

Then you will not be further inflamed by contentious words, nor exasperate others by your own angry words. When you are alone, the fire will die down.

Proverbs 14:7: "Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge."

You would not stand stirring up a wasp's nest when you had already enraged the wasps.

*DIRECTION EIGHT: Make it your habit to avoid talk and dispute with angry men, so far as you can do so without neglecting your duty.*

Avoid all other occasions and temptations to this sin. A man that is in danger of a fever must avoid that which aggravates it. Do not go near the infected if you fear the plague. Do not stand in the sun if you are too hot already. Keep as far as possible from that which provokes you most.

*DIRECTION NINE: Do not meditate upon past injuries or things that have provoked you when you are alone.*

Do not allow your thoughts to feed upon these things. If you do, you will be like a devil to yourself, and tempt yourself to anger when there is no one else to do it. You will make your solitude as provocative as if you were in the midst of those who provoke you. You will stir up anger in your heart by your own imagination.

*DIRECTION TEN: Keep your minds in lively thoughts of the exemplary meekness and patience of Jesus Christ.*

He invites us to learn of him to be "meek and lowly" (Matthew 11:29).

1 Peter 2: "21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."

Remember that he has pronounced a special blessing on the meek that they might "inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5).

*DIRECTION ELEVEN: Live as in the presence of God; and when your passions grow bold, repress them with the reverend name of God, and remind yourself that God and his holy angels are watching you.*

*DIRECTION TWELVE: Look at others in their passion, and consider how unlovely they make themselves.*

Think of the frowning countenances, flaming eyes, threatening, devouring looks, and harmful tendencies of those controlled by passion, and then consider whether these are desirable examples to follow.

*DIRECTION THIRTEEN: When anger rises, confess your sin without delay to those around. Take the shame to yourself and honor God.*

Accept the shame of the sin of unruly passion, which is a dishonor to God. This is in your power to accomplish if you will, and it will be an excellent means to prevent sinful anger.



When you are tempted to sin in anger, say to those around you: "I feel a sinful anger rising in my heart and am tempted to forget God's presence and act in a way that is not proper for his glory and speak provoking words that I know would be displeasing to him." In confessing your temptation, you will break the force of it, and stop the fire, so that it does not progress. If you stop the progress of your passion in the way, it will be a point of honor with you not to go on in the anger you have just confessed, for your reputation will then be at stake.

This direction must be followed with wisdom, so that the confession itself does not cause others to be hardened and provoked against you, or make you look ridiculous. But with prudence and due caution, this is an excellent remedy to follow, if you are willing to do so.

*DIRECTION FOURTEEN: If you have allowed your passion to break out and to offend or wrong others, by word or deed, freely and speedily confess it to them, and ask them for forgiveness.*

In confessing your fault, you may wish to warn others not to follow your bad example. This will do much to clear your conscience and preserve your brother. It will also help to overcome the effect of your anger, and motivate you to avoid this sin in the future. If you are so proud that you will not do this, do not say that you cannot help your anger, but rather that you are unwilling to do so. A good heart will not think this too difficult a remedy against any sin.

*DIRECTION FIFTEEN: As far as circumstances allow, go immediately to God in prayer for pardon, and grace against this sin.*

Sin will not endure prayer and the presence of God. Tell him how easily your irritable heart is kindled into sinful anger. Ask him to help you by his sufficient grace. Engage Christ, your Master and Advocate, to help you; and then your soul will grow obedient and calm.

Paul prayed three times concerning his thorn in the flesh (2 Corinthians 12:7-9); and Christ prayed in his agony. So you must pray, and pray again and again, until you find God's sufficient grace for you.

*DIRECTION SIXTEEN: Make a covenant with a faithful friend to watch over you and rebuke your passions as soon as they begin to appear. Promise him that you will take it thankfully and in a proper spirit.*

And keep you promise, so that your friend is not discouraged. Either you are tired of your sin and failure and willing to do all you can against it to find the victory, or you are not. If you are willing, you can do this! If you are not willing, do not pretend that you are repentant over your sin and truly want to be delivered when it is not really so. Remember also that the effects of sinful anger make it, not a small sin, but a major one.

Ecclesiastes 7:9: "Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools."

Proverbs 16:32: "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

Proverbs 15:18: "A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife."

Proverbs 19:11: "The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression."