

Malformed vs. Properly Formed Anger



Malformed anger is like a gateway drug that leads to many other stupefying and pernicious sins that are destructive to self and others. Moreover, anger is like a cancer that eats away at the heart, rendering it increasingly evil, dark, loveless, and joyless.

Proverbs 29:22, "An angry man stirs up strife, And a furious man abounds in transgression."

The fact that God says that anger "abounds in transgressions" leads me to liken it to a gateway drug that leads to many other clusters of sins.

Anger, in and of itself, when properly formed is not sinful and is designed by God to serve as an impetus to solving some problem/evil. We can call this properly formed anger. Properly formed anger is temporary and terminates with calmness when the problem is resolved (and even when it cannot be resolved in certain cases).

For example, any moral man who saw another man beating a woman would naturally form a proper anger that would incite him to action to protect her after which the anger would subside. In the case of an evil that continues (like the election of an immoral person), the anger would terminate with calmness once there was nothing more that one could do to resolve the issue.

However, just as there is a properly formed anger, there is malformed anger. We see malformed anger in quick-temperedness. Quick-temperedness is characterized by flying off the handle at minor irritations, instead of being patient and rational. Malformed anger is often very childish, displaying rage for not getting one's way—often over very silly or non-important things.

Malformed anger revolves around egoism/self rather than resolving some outward objective injustice. Besides egoism, the greatest difference between properly formed anger and malformed anger is that the latter never resolves into peace. Not only does malformed anger continue to exist regardless if the “evil” has been resolved, as it grows it finds expression in other objects—both friends and foes alike--all that is needed is the right circumstances, the right match to light the fire.

Malformed anger is like a gateway drug in that it leads to a host of other pathologies: bitterness, gossip, slander, vilification, violence, wishing someone ill, taking pleasure in the misfortune another, and even commit violence and murder.

In malformed anger, the person will even align with someone who is evil simply because that evil person is the enemy of a greater enemy-- "the enemy of my enemy is my friend." We see much of this in politics today. An enormous amount of politics today revolve around malformed hate.

On the international stage, consider the destructiveness of malformed anger in the wars through human history—from religious wars and the two world wars to our current wars.

Consider the perniciousness of anger in how it enables one human being to dehumanize another so as to make it acceptable to do away with him on a personal or national level.

In closing, consider the wise words of Paul,

“Ephesians 4:26 "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath,”

In His Matchless Grace,

Pastor Don