

August 2013: Christians in the World



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ANGER!

August 27, 2013

Even though I KNOW I should not allow others to “get my goat” (or make me angry), it still happens. How can I get through life as a Christian in the World and not live in constant anger? Living in harmony is not an option, it is a commandment for followers of Christ. John 13:34 (NIV) says “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you.”

I have to wonder if Jesus would have slammed the phone down on the telemarketer who did not seem to understand “I am not interested.” Or would He have been tempted to drive into the back of the car of the person who stole my parking spot – even though I had been sitting there with my blinker on. Or refuse to talk to the relative who offended me a decade ago, and I can’t remember why, but it must have been bad. My list could go on.

As a Christian living in the world, is anger a sin? Are we justified in our rage? After all, Moses was angry at the Israelites, the prophets were angry when those they instructed ignored wise counsel, and what about Jesus and the money-changers? Righteous indignation? Getting angry is nothing more than a symptom of something else. What we do with that anger is what can lead to sin.

We need to see what's worth getting mad about and second, what God wants us to do with those feelings.

Trivial or Righteous?

Like the telemarketer or the stolen parking spot, most of what I get angry over are irritants that I internalize as stress. Stress is cumulative. Besides causing gastric ulcers, hypertension and nervousness, pack in enough stress and I can explode, unexpectedly and at the wrong time, kind of like that old saying about the straw that broke the camel’s back. Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes. (Psalm 37:7,NIV) Or how about this one: Do not say, "I'll pay you back for this wrong!" Wait for the LORD, and he will deliver you. (Proverbs 20:22, NIV) If we truly believe that God is in control, we can wait for Him to work. We don't need to jump in, thinking God's off somewhere taking care of the missionaries or preachers.

Unfortunate Results

I have little tolerance for what I believe is injustice. I need to ask the Lord for patience and strength or I will end up exploding at the wrong time and to the wrong person, perhaps forever destroying a relationship or Christian witness. Proverbs 14:17 says, "A quick-tempered man does foolish things." Proverbs 16:32 states: "Better a patient man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city." James 1:19-20: "Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires." (NIV)

Righteous Indignation

Is anger ever a good thing? I have to say yes, if it results in behavior that makes changes of the good. When Jesus got angry at the moneychangers in the temple it was because they were exploiting both the people and the God they were trying to serve. Jesus shared with them the truth, but they refused to listen. (Kind of like the telemarketer? Hmm...perhaps not...) Reasons for true righteous anger are all around us. Look at abortion, human slavery, selling illegal drugs to our children, child abuse, murder. I can go on and on. Just turn on the news. Rather than growing an ulcer or spewing rage all over the wrong person, Christians in the world can band together and take action. We can volunteer and donate to organizations. In Darlington, S.C., where I live, we have a free medical clinic and a food pantry that are always begging for donations or workers. Maybe we need a neighborhood watch to protect our kids. And we can pray.

Don't Be Someone's Footstool

How are we to respond to personal attacks, to the betrayals, and injuries that hurt us so deeply? "But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." (Matthew 5:39, (NIV) Jesus also told his followers to be as "shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves." (Matthew 10:16, NIV). We are to protect ourselves without stooping to the level of our attackers. An angry outburst accomplishes little, besides satisfying our emotions. It also gratifies those who believe all Christians are hypocrites. Unfortunately, in today's world, someone will always be trying to take advantage of others. Be shrewd yet innocent, and then you will be prepared to deal with the insult calmly. May God bless your week. Please feel free to post below how you handle anger. Your story may help someone else.

For more information on Christians and anger, you may want to review the following:

http://www.joycemeyer.org/articles/ea.aspx?article=dealing_with_anger_gods_way

http://www.focusonthefamily.com/lifechallenges/emotional_health/changing_an_angry_spirit/when_your_anger_gets_the_best_of_you.aspx

http://www.inplainsite.org/html/the_christian_and_anger.html

Comments have been closed on this blog. To correspond with Regina, e-mail her at reginasmeltzer@gmail.com. She's waiting to hear from you!

Self-Confidence!

August 19, 2013

I tried to knit a baby blanket for a friend's first child. The desire was there, and I practiced the various knit and purl moves I would need until I could do them well. The longer the blanket got (great progress) the narrower it became (what a mess). I threw it away, mired in defeat and self-loathing. Everyone could knit. Why not me? Every time I saw someone knit, or saw skeins of yarn in a store, the negative "self-talk" came back. You are so unworthy. It is hard to be self-confident even with things you know when that 'inner you' continually points out your lack of worth.

If we are to reach our highest potential for God, we need to understand our worth and value to our Creator. In spite of this, there are people who continue to undermine their own self-worth. They remain dissatisfied with who they are, and continually measure their worth according to the abilities of others in comparison to their own.

My mother has a wonderful recipe for a seven-minute frosting. I tried for years to make that frosting, only to repeatedly pour it down the drain. One year for Christmas my husband gave me a stand mixer to replace my old worn-out hand mixer. Guess what? It wasn't me after all, it was the mixer. My hand mixer simply did not have enough power to whip the egg whites sufficiently to make the icing. Now I am a pro!

This week, do these things and let me know the outcome:

- * Identify one thing would you like to become more skilled at.
- * Pray about it. Does it still feel right?
- * Talk to someone who has that skill and learn how long you should expect to be a novice.
- * Decide right now what you will do when your first attempts are less than you desire. I plan to share my failure with two others: "See, I actually tried!" My self-talk will be a pat on the back!
- * Journal your progress, giving God the glory for all accomplishment.

My lack of self-confidence comes with relationships. I assume people do not like me, rather than assuming they do. My relationship cup is half-empty rather than half-full. My task for this week is to get out of my comfort zone and speak to at least four women that are not in my normal network.

I will let you know the results. Let me know yours too!

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