

# Introduction to Biblical Counseling

## Correcting Unhealthy Anger

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### A. God-designed emotions are a gift.

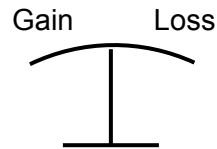
1. They were designed by God at creation and they were declared “good.”
  - a. Gen. 1:31, “Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.”
2. They add color to life like the multi-colored rainbow.
3. They can make life rich and full, but...

#### B. God-designed emotions can be used in an unhealthy manner. // One such emotion is anger.

1. God designed the emotion of anger.
2. Anger is the strongest of all human passions. It is the one emotion that speaks up for its needs whether legitimate or not.
3. Anger in and of itself is not bad.
  - a. Eph. 4:26, “Be angry, and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath” (NKJV).
    - 1) “Anger” is the Greek word, “orge” which refers to internal agitation that tends to be more abiding, it’s a stirring, a churning which if not dealt with will often result with a possible goal of taking revenge.
    - 2) “Thumos” is the second Greek word for anger which results in quick outbursts of rage, a temper that erupts like a volcano then quickly subsides after the damage is done. It is more sudden in its rise than “orge”. Of the 18 times it is found in the New Testament, ten are in Revelation and seven of the ten refer to God’s rage. God never gave us permission to go into a volcanic rage and erupt all over people inflicting great pain and destruction.

- b. It is how anger (orge) is handled and expressed that makes it wrong.
4. Even God expresses this emotion.
    - a. God warns Israel that if they afflict any widow or orphan and they cry out to Him, He will surely hear their cry and “My anger will be kindled, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless” (Ex. 22:22-24).
    - b. Of the 455 times the word, “anger” is used in the Old Testament, 375 times it refers to God’s anger, leaving only 80 times referring to man.
  5. God-designed emotions can be misused in unhealthy ways, especially in relationships with others.
- C. Our goal is to survey seven unhealthy uses of anger, how to correct them and how to respond to them. // You cannot change the angry person but you do have to learn to respond to them.**
1. First we will describe the unhealthy uses of anger.
  2. Next, we will look at the one who is expressing the anger and what he needs to do to correct it.
  3. Finally, we will suggest some healthy responses toward the angry person.
- D. Why is it important to know the reason a person is using inappropriate anger, even though you may not be able to stop its use? // Simple.**
1. All behavior is reward based. // One of the reasons the angry pattern may continue is because its recipients tend to reward the inappropriate behavior. The anger works for them.
    - a. The recipient of this anger can become an “egg walker,” who takes the responsibility to control the other person’s anger.
      - 1) This is one form of rewarding the angry person. Egg walkers assume responsibility to prevent or control the other person’s anger. It is not in your circle of responsibility to control their anger because their anger is usually not about you. You are only a trigger for their long term bitterness and/or deep need to control which has its source in their fear.
    - b. They become compliant and avoid a responsible reply as a result of fear or to keep the peace.
    - c. This is different than the use of a gentle answer (response) to turn away anger (Prov. 15:1). A gentle response is designed to avoid an escalation of anger in an argument.

2. All behavior has a desire for benefit or gain and a fear of loss.
  - a. We all have imaginary scales in the back of our minds. One side is gain and the other is loss. Most all of our decisions are based on a gain/loss factor.



- 1) CF Deut. 11:27-28, “the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you today; 28) and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known.”
- b. When the gain or benefit of anger is reduced and the loss is increased, the possibility of change increases.
3. When the angry person does not get the intended benefit from his anger, he may consider change. // The change may be to another unhealthy tactic, but at least he knows unhealthy anger does not work and he needs to do something differently.
  - a. ill. If you do not find ice cream in the freezer after repeated attempts, you lose your motivation to go there because the effort is not rewarded.

**E. What are at least seven unhealthy uses of anger? // What is the goal of the use of anger?**

1. To change another’s behavior
2. To control another person
3. To manipulate someone
4. To avoid negative emotions
5. To avoid responsibility
6. To remove an obstacle
7. To exact revenge (payback)

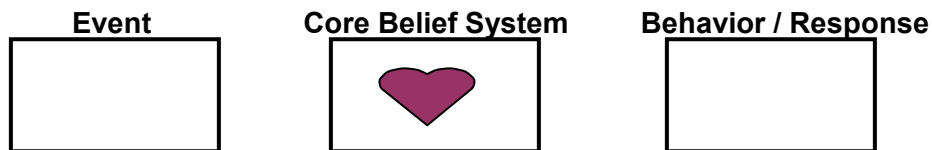
**II. To change another’s behavior**

**A. Description**

1. Parent to child - A parent may use anger to get a child to stop doing something or to get them to do something. The anger is perceived by the parent to be a motivator to the child.

- a. Yelling, screaming, sarcasm, gritting teeth, physical abuse and even emotional abuse are expressions of anger to affect a change.
  - b. This is a very shame-based form of discipline which may get initial compliance, but it will result in long range bitterness and distancing.
2. Spouse relationship - a spouse may attempt to get the other spouse to do (change) or not do something.
- a. Often an angry person will marry a compliant pleaser who may be terrified by anger, and so are the children. The pleaser takes responsibility for the spouse's anger.
    - 1) ill. When a husband/dad comes home, drives in the driveway - everyone in the family tenses up, not knowing what to expect or what mood he is in. Wife can do the same.
  - b. The fearful one walks on eggs in an attempt to appease or to prevent any future angry outbursts.
3. Employer/employee/coworker - Their goal is to get one to do or complete a task.
- a. This is fear management by angry intimidation which can happen in homes, churches, missions, etc.
  - b. The anger is never displayed for the benefit of the employee.
  - c. Production is usually reduced because energy is drained by their fear and their own angry response.
4. Any change brought about by anger is only temporary and sows open rebellion or passive-aggressive anger.

**B. How can the angry person change? // All long term change must start with a change in the core belief system God calls the heart.**



1. Remember, it is in God's circle of responsibility, not yours, to ultimately change someone. But the angry person has a core belief that he can, should change them.



- a. Phil. 2:12-13, “So, then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”
  - b. Phil. 1:6, “ For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”
  - c. John 16:8, “And when He (Holy Spirit) has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and judgment.”
  - d. God never gives you or me the responsibility, power or ability to do what is uniquely in His circle of responsibility.
2. Understand you can have an influence (using healthy tools), but God alone is the one to affect a lasting change. “A soft answer turns away wrath but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Prov. 15:1)!
- a. The apostle Paul was aware of his inability to change others. He did not demand a lifestyle change of the Roman believers but instead earnestly exhorted them.
    - 1) “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God (spelled out in the previous eleven chapters), to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship” (Rom. 12:1 NAS).
    - 2) He then takes the next 21 verses and explains how to live like a “living sacrifice.”
    - 3) Note: he could have ordered them to do it but he chose to urge them because he knew that long-term change must ultimately be from the inside out (core belief system), not outside in (behavioral modification).
      - a) This is the reason legalism does not work long term. (Gal. 3:1-3)
  - b. Paul even had the authority to command a change but chose to appeal rather than demand. This is illustrated in his letter to Philemon who was urged to accept Onesimus, a runaway slave, back as a brother in Christ, fully forgiven for his sin.
    - 1) Philemon 1:8,9, “Therefore, though I might be very bold in Christ to command you what is fitting, yet for love’s sake I rather appeal to you-- being such a one as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ” (NKJV).

- c. In young children internal control is learned from having outside structure first. But this control of a child must not be done through anger. The anger creates a fear and the fear blocks learning. If the goal is for them to learn, it can't be done by anger.
3. Realize your unhealthy anger never produces godly character in anyone or improves relationships or quality of life. // If godly character is the goal, it will never be produced by anger. It becomes emotion-control instead of godly self-control through his Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:23).
    - a. You may get immediate compliance, but you will reap long range rebellion and/or alienation, to say nothing of loss of respect. In marriage, it will result in distancing and ultimately divorce.
    - b. James 1:19,20, "So then, my brethren, let every man (parent, spouse, kid, boss, employee) be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath (*orge*, an abiding angry attitude) (Why?) For the wrath (abiding anger) does not produce (work out) the righteousness of God" (in another person; or the righteous life that God desires). (NKJV)
      - 1) Often when you are in an angry state of mind, God is factored out of your thinking anyway and the Evil One is now unconsciously factored in. As a result we do the next dumb thing. Anger can be a dumbing emotion.
        - a) Eph. 4:26,27, "Be angry and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place (opportunity) to the devil." (through your anger) (NKJV)
      - 2) Satan often trailer hitched onto your anger to kill, steal or destroy another person.
        - a) "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).
      - 3) You may think you are just trying to change someone, but Satan's agenda is so much more destructive than what you intended or imagined.
        - a) Daily, we see the results of unhealthy anger in ways the angry person never intended.
        - b) ill: stubbornness, family misery, rebellion, divorce, etc.
      - 4) James describes the ultimate source of the destructive use of the tongue.
        - a) James 3:6, "and the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature (existence) and it is set on fire by hell."

- b) "course" cycles of life. It destroys a person at every stage of his life.
  - c) Remember, the angrier we get, the dumber we act. Anger is dumbing. Usually the next thing we do after we get angry is not a real smart action and results in a lot of feelings of shame afterwards.
    - (1) ill: Wife kills two small children because husband is having an affair.
4. Realize the change attempted to be made by using anger is usually based on selfish motives. // Why?
- a. Unhealthy anger is a selfish effort to shape, mold and conform another into what we think they should look or act like, instead of God's image and reflecting His character.
    - 1) Remember, anger-based changes are not under the influence of God's Holy Spirit but selfish flesh-based changes inflicting a deep sense of bitterness.
      - a) Gal. 5:19-20, "Now the works of the flesh are evident... (20) outbursts of wrath..." (*thumoi*)
    - 2) These changes are rarely permanent because they are out of fear, not a change in the core belief system.
  - b. Remember, it's God's responsibility to change someone.
  - c. Anger does not produce this righteousness.
    - 1) Therefore, if righteousness is not being produced then what is? Rebellion, bitter compliance, resentment? A task can be accomplished through anger, but the fruit of the anger will be relational pain for generations as seen in guilt, shame, fear.
    - 2) Religious appearing parents who are using anger to change behavior are, in reality, in major denial and deception of their own personal issues.
      - a) Rarely is the issue causing the anger the real issue. The issue is not the issue.
5. Verbally acknowledge to those who have been the recipients of your anger-change pattern that you were wrong for your unhealthy use of anger. // State, "I was wrong."
6. Ask for their forgiveness and express your regret.

7. Inform them they will be treated with respect and dignity and self control from now on.
8. Affirm your desire to be a godly influence in their lives and that you purpose to learn how to communicate in a healthier manner.
  - a. Eph 4:29, 31, "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. (31) Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice."
  - b. Col. 4:6, "Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one."
9. Purpose in their presence to change your own heart (core belief system) first.
  - a. The beam/ speck analogy in Matt. 7:3-5, explains the basis to change your self first.
10. Purpose in your heart to discover where the long term anger is coming from.

### **C. How to respond to those who use anger to try to change others**

1. Stop reinforcing (rewarding) their anger by any actual or perceived benefits. // People who use anger to change other's behavior, opinion, or personality, may have been rewarded by them in the past or they saw it work in their family of origin.
  - a. Unrewarded behavior tends to lose power.
    - 1) ill. When a child throws a tantrum you may inquire, "Done yet?" You may need to explain to onlookers, "We are having a learning activity." Tantrums lose their value when they are not rewarded.
    - 2) Pouting should not be rewarded with begging from you. Express once or twice you would like to talk about it, then, confidently go on about your business with the commitment to talk when they're ready.
  - b. Caving in to anger now will only cause you to crumble inside later.
    - 1) Temporary peace is usually delayed warfare.
  - c. We have seen people stop rewarding an angry person's immature behavior and it drives them crazy. They even complain that their mate or family members are no "fun" because they do not get hooked into the dance of anger - a dysfunctional communication game.
2. Start responding with a soft, firm voice with respect.



- a. Prov. 15:1, “A soft (gentle) answer (response) turns away wrath (anger). But a harsh word (response) stirs up anger” (NKJV).
    - 1) Strong emotion only stimulates strong emotion not solutions.
  - b. Prov. 25:15b, “By long forbearance a ruler is persuaded, and a gentle tongue (voice) breaks a bone” (NKJV).
    - 1) “gentle” (lit. soft) voice can usually be influential. It can accomplish far more than harsh words and a loss of temper. The figure of speech, break a bone, means that a soft, firmly spoken word can accomplish many difficult things (TBKC - O.T. p. 960)
  - c. I Peter 2:23, “...when He (Jesus) was reviled (verbally assaulted), (He) did not revile in return” (retaliate) (NKJV)
    - 1) Why? It did not accomplish His godly goals.
  - d. I Peter 3:9, “Do not return evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you have been called to do this that you may inherit a blessing” (NKJV).
    - 1) Reduce the fuel in the fire of the conflict to avoid escalation on your part.
    - 2) Prov. 26:20, “When there is no wood, the fire goes out...”
3. Choose to act or respond in a Christ like manner. //Remember that another’s anger does not stop (or change) you from acting and responding in a Christ-like manner. “You made me” statements are lies. That is a victim’s perspective not a godly perspective.
- a. It is always appropriate to act Christ like when the other person acts like the Devil incarnate.
    - 1) This is the example Christ endeavored to portray and leave us an example to follow (I Peter 2:21).
  - b. Be yourself in Christ or let Christ be Himself in you.
4. Make appropriate changes in yourself when and where legitimate.
- a. Matt. 7:3-5 (log/beam analogy)
  - b. Stop “eye rolling,” hands on hips, deep sighs, disgust, disrespect.
5. If their anger is designed to threaten you with loss, ask yourself, “In the light of eternity how significant is that loss? Is he legally able to do this?”

6. Remind yourself, their anger is not from God but from their own selfishness, energized by the Evil One and this is a spiritual battle. Therefore, arm yourself with God's armor (Eph. 6:10-18).

a. Warning, do not inform them of this insight. It is God's responsibility to do so.

### III. To Control

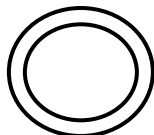
#### A. Description

1. One who uses anger to control another is often fear-based themselves.
  - a. Their managing emotion is fear - fear of failure, rejection and/or abandonment or re-feeling or experiencing a past hurt.
  - b. That is the reason fear-based controlling people are not very loving. Why? As love pushes out fear (1 John 4:18), fear pushes out love. Worried, fearful, anxious people have difficulty expressing love. Fear wraps you up in yourself. Love wraps you up in others (1 Cor. 13).
2. The anger designed to control may come from one who has experienced loss or pain in the past and does not want to re-feel this pain or re-experience this loss again. // The fear based anger is a defense mechanism. He is totally managed by fear which God describes as sin and not by faith.
  - a. Rom. 14:23, "...for whatever is not from faith is sin" (NKJV)
    - 1) "not from" (ek, "out of"); context, a stronger believer causing a weaker believer to sin. It is a strong/weak issue.
    - 2) Ill: "No woman will control me like my mom controlled my dad."
  - b. Whatever unhealthy tool we use to protect ourselves will ultimately destroy us and/or our relationships. Self protective games lead to relational loss.
3. Angry controllers usually control emotionally sensitive or weaker persons who are emotionally dependent on the controller.
  - a. Those who are weak are in reality being destroyed inside. Part of that which is being destroyed was the work of God in their lives (CF Rom.14:20).
    - 1) Rom. 14:20, "Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense."
    - 2) Gal. 5:15, "But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!"

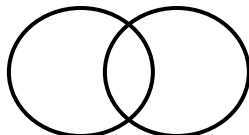
- a) Cannibals ate their enemies to get their power.
- b. Often the controller lacks fundamental character strength. So he tries to “borrow strength” (Covey, 7 Habits, 1989). In reality he is sucking strength from his perceived position, authority, physical stature, size, symbols or achievements. He then uses force and anger to control his mate to get things done (Healing the Hurts, p. 91).
4. The anger level is in direct proportion to the need to control. // The need to control is in direct proportion to the intensity of the fear and feelings of inadequacy.
  - a. Fear = anger = control = distancing (separation/divorce)
5. Control-based people are emotionally between the ages of 3 - 7. They grew up physically but stayed stuck at an early age emotionally. Controlling others seems easier than personal change. It feels much more comfortable.
  - a. Often the vow to be in control was made early in life when they were hurt for not being in control.
6. Their deepest fear may be that of the fear of abandonment which is a childhood emotion, rarely an adult emotion. // Why?
  - a. Adults know and feel secure when they believe what God says, “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Heb. 13:5b).
  - b. Heb. 13:5b is a partial quote of Deut. 31:6 God speaking to Israel through Moses, “Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you” (NKJV).
  - c. But there is a lie that they can be or are abandoned which is usually a lie.
7. People, instead of God, are given the responsibility to provide for their security. People become their security blanket.
  - a. This is typically called co-dependency or relational addiction.

b. Drawing

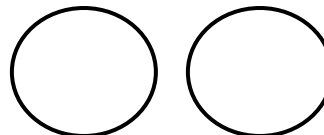
Marriage Relationship



Co-Dependent  
UNHEALTHY

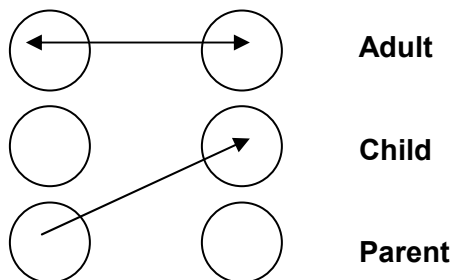


Inter-Dependent  
HEALTHY



Independent  
UNHEALTHY

8. They tend to be opinionated because acknowledging other's opinions could mean a loss of their control. // They are never wrong because that would give others power, thus loss of control.
- They will cut off the other's sentences.
  - No one is to open the mail but them.
  - Only one person is to answer the phone.
  - They blame shift to others.
  - You must agree with them or get cut off with a sharp tone of voice.
  - It's their way or the highway.
9. Often the marriage reflects a parent-child relationship, instead of an adult-to-adult relationship.



10. Control of people, places and things is a substitute for having self-control empowered by the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23).
- Diotrephes is a New Testament example of a fear-based, angry controller (3 John 1:9-10).
    - He loved preeminence - power.
    - He rejected others who threatened his power (ie. John).
    - He used malicious words.
    - He avoided outsiders.
    - He controlled others association with outsiders by using threats of expulsion.
    - He put people out of the church who did not agree with him.
11. The anger is frightening to others so they cave in to the angry controller.

- a. They comply on the outside but become bitter on the inside and begin to distance themselves emotionally to prevent further hurts.
12. Angry controllers tend to be authoritarian and as a result they tend to use excessive control. // The function of “Lording it over another” is strictly forbidden by God. They are sucking strength out of the other person to bolster their feelings of weakness and inadequacy.
- a. I Peter 5:2,3, “shepherd the flock of God among you, not under compulsion, but voluntarily , according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness... (3) nor as being lords (masters) over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock” (NKJV).
  - b. Matt. 20:25-28, “But Jesus called them to Himself, and said, AYou know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wished to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (NKJV).

### **B. How can an angry controller break his fear-based sinful pattern?**

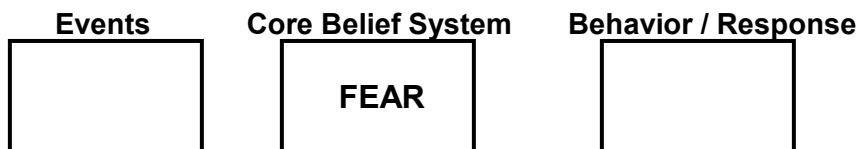
1. Honestly admit you are a fear-based controller.
  - a. God will only give you grace for acknowledging the truth (John 1:14).
  - b. Avoiding facing the fear is one source of a mental breakdown, which in reality is a coping breakdown.
  - c. You can't fix what you don't own. You can only heal what you feel.
2. Feel the fear and discover where the fear is coming from. // How?
  - a. Ask God to take you back to that point or event where it was developed in order to heal it.
    - 1) Psalm 139:23, 24, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.”
  - b. Get the hurtful memory healed biblically.
  - c. Refer to tape on Emotional Freedom - How to End the Control of Negative Emotions.
3. Admit to yourself that God not people, places and things must be the source of your ultimate security.

- a. Ps. 73:25, "Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides you" (NKJV).
4. Release all others from the imposed responsibility you have placed on them to make you secure or happy.
  - a. Mates, kids, friends, church members, employees.
5. Allow yourself to learn that childhood pains of life are not as shattering to you as you fear them to be.
  - a. II Cor. 1:4, "...who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."
6. Convert your immature fear into healthy, mature faith, ie: grow up!
  - a. This will involve putting away your childish perspective of life.
    - 1) I Cor. 13:11, "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things."
    - b. "Kiss the monster of fear on the nose and watch him flee." (*Adult Children: Secrets of Dysfunctional Families* John & Linda Friel)
7. Remember, comfort zones are defined by your fear, not your faith.
  - a. God may be using people, places and things to get you out of a prison of fear into a place of faith.
    - 1) Heb. 11:6, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him..."
  - b. Jesus was always testing His disciples to get them to think and act outside of their comfort zones.
    - 1) Jesus tested Phillip at the feeding of the 5,000. "But this He (Jesus) said to test him (Phillip), for He Himself knew what He would do" (John 6:6 NKJV).
    - 2) God tested Israel (Deut. 8:2, 16; Judges 2:22).
8. Go to those you have wounded emotionally by your controlling anger and tell them that:
  - a. Your fear was about you alone and not them. // It's your own problem, not theirs. It has always been your own problem, not theirs.

- b. Confess you were wrong to attempt to control them by emotionally hurting them through your anger. "I was wrong."
    - 1) Matt. 5:23-24, "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, (24) leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."
    - 2) James 5:16, "Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."
  - c. Ask for their forgiveness with honest sincerity.
    - 1) 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (NKJV).
  - d. Reassure them you now purpose to change yourself and treat others with love and respect.
9. Purpose to grow up in Christ spiritually and be a mature person of faith, not fear.
- a. 2 Peter 1:5-9, "But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins" (NKJV).

### C. How to respond to an angry controller

1. Remind yourself, the angry controller is acting out his fear, not faith. He may use Scripture to control you but it is usually an abuse of Scripture (i.e. submission, authority).



2. Stop trying to fix him or her. // There is nothing you can do to fix his fear. It was there before you (birth family issue). You are not the solution. You can support his/her efforts to get help, but you are not the problem or solution.

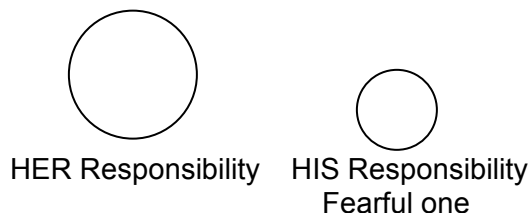
Core Belief System
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Lies:

“I can fix him”; “I will love him to change”.

- a. They will do everything possible to get you to think you are the responsible one and blame you for things that make them feel fearful and angry.

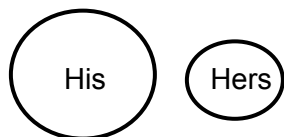
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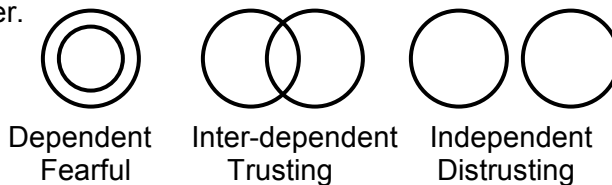
- b. Their fear and shame is so high that they are almost petrified to admit any responsibility for anything primarily because of their fear of failure, rejection, shame or loss of respect.
3. Do not *reward* the angry controller with your own compliant fear. Compliance only feeds their fear. Compliance actually fuels abuse. (In abusive relationships the abuse only gets worse.)
- a. Not complying will also increase their fear and anger. It could drive them to get appropriate help that will locate the source of fear and work it out biblically. Usually, however, they get more hurtful and subtle in their emotional abuse.
- b. A separation may be necessary until the fear based person gets appropriate help and has sustained a long term change. I Cor. 7:10-11 gives the believer three options:
- 1) 1 Corinthians 7:10-11, “Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband. But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife” (NKJV).
- 2) Stay with no change, leave and remain single or leave and be reconciled.
- c. God has called you to peace.
- 1) I Cor. 7:15, “But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace.”
4. Do not accept on yourself the responsibility he blame-shifted on to you. It is not your fault.



- a. His goal is to decrease his responsibility and increase yours so that it is always your fault. They want to keep you in a position of dependence on them.



- b. This pattern is often rooted in the fear of failure and/or fear of abandonment.
5. View the angry controller as one who is emotionally wounded and very immature. // They can be very successful in many other areas of their life but not in close relationships.
- a. They can function well professionally but not intimately on a heart-to-heart basis.
- 1) ill.; a medical doctor can be an excellent physician but fearful and controlling at home.
6. Get appropriate support for yourself. // You need to have someone outside of the relationship to give you reality checks, comfort and support.
- a. Gal. 6:2, "Bear (lift) one another's burdens (crushing overloads) and so fulfill the law of Christ" (NKJV).
- b. Procuring appropriate support may be difficult because people tend to minimize emotional abuse and they do not know what to say or do for you.
7. Make a shift in your heart from your pattern of getting your emotional needs met from an angry controller to getting your total acceptance from your personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- a. Most people being controlled by anger are in an emotionally dependent relationship and are afraid of being rejected by the emotionally handicapped angry controller.



- b. Controllers are like broken emotional cisterns.
- 1) God illustrated this with Israel. "For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns - broken cisterns that hold not water" (Jeremiah 2:13).

- 2) They have replaced the true God for false idols. They have abandoned their natural spring for large pits dug in the rock, covered with plaster. The water was brackish; the cisterns could develop cracks and not hold water.
- c. Jesus dealt with the woman at the well with her empty love bucket. He told her she could fill that hole in her soul from the inside out not the outside in.
  - 1) John 4:1-26
- 8. Only assume what is in your own circle of responsibility.
  - a. Rom. 12:18, "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men."
  - b. Refer to *You Can Work It Out*.
    - 1) Identify what is actually happening
    - 2) Assign responsibility for each part
    - 3) Assume what is in your circle of responsibility
    - 4) Fulfill what is in your circle of responsibility

#### IV. To Manipulate

##### A. Description

- 1. Anger as a tool of manipulation combines both the desire to change and the desire to control others. Its goal to get you to do something you would not normally do for whatever reason.
- 2. Angry manipulation usually has an evil intent based on selfishness.
  - a. The apostle Paul explained spiritual manipulation to the Galatians who were being manipulated into pride-based perfectionism, even declared the death of Christ unnecessary. Their eyes were diverted from the cross to the law.
  - b. Gal. 3:1-3, "You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you (manipulated you) with an evil eye, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? This is the only thing I want to find out from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" (NKJV).
    - 1) "evil eye": an eye of disapproval or rejection.

- c. The perfectionist is controlled by guilt, shame and three fears: discovery, rejection and abandonment.



3. It is selfish to use anger to manage, control or shrewdly influence others to get someone to do what they want him to do their way and for their benefit.
  - a. The needs of the one being manipulated are totally irrelevant. They don't see the needs of others. They may hear but don't listen.
  - b. God is factored out of the manipulators thinking. Why? God does not manipulate. He guides and leads by His Holy Spirit.
    - 1) Rom. 8:14, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God" (NKJV).
  - c. God even warns us of the use of cunning craftiness to manipulate.
    - 1) Eph 4:14, "As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming" (NASB).
4. Manipulation avoids an open, honest discussion but instead uses strong emotion to bring about a selfish compliance.
  - a. Threats of rejection (followed by abandonment)
  - b. Guilt trips (usually false guilt)
  - c. Shaming
  - d. Withdrawing (disconnecting)
  - e. Withholding (to punish), doesn't call or talk, silent treatment

## **B. How to correct your use of angry manipulation**

1. Admit to yourself you use angry manipulation to get your own selfish way.
  - a. You can't fix what you don't own.

- b. As long as you think what you are doing is right, you will not change. You have to change the core beliefs.
  - 1) Prov. 14:12, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death."
- 2. Ask God to reveal the deeper need behind your manipulation.
  - a. Fear of being alone
  - b. Fear of not being needed
  - c. Loss of worth and value
- 3. Acknowledge to yourself that manipulation is an evil tactic that needs to be renounced and repented of. It is not an entitlement or right he has.
  - a. Satan used evil to manipulate Eve to sin in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:1-7).
  - b. Satan reduced the wrong and highlighted the personal benefit.
- 4. Admit to yourself that it is a form of emotional abuse designed to accomplish your own selfish ends.
  - a. Understand you have deceived yourself into thinking that everything you did was for someone else's benefit.
    - 1) Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (NKJV).
- 5. Confess your sin of manipulation to those you have hurt and ask for their forgiveness (1 John 1:9).
- 6. Ask God to reveal to you what need you are attempting to meet through your anger and discover how to meet that need if it is legitimate (i.e., security).
  - a. Phil. 4:19, "And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."
- 7. Replace angry manipulation with honest, open discussion based on mutual respect and not subtle, angry manipulation.
  - a. Rom. 12:10, "Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another."
  - b. Eph. 5:21, "submitting to one another in the fear of God."

8. If this is a life long pattern, ask God to show you where you learned it and forgive those who either taught it to you or set you up to practice it as a means of getting your own way. Forgive those who set you up to do it. Then renounce the practice as sin and repent from it.
9. Affirm to others that your new desire for them is to be led by God's Spirit, not your angry manipulation.
  - a. "Will it work for you?"
10. Request their prayer and make yourself accountable to them.
11. Ask them to make you aware of any other manipulating patterns.

### **C. How to respond to an angry manipulator**

1. Do not reward angry manipulation with compliant behavior. Manipulation does not work if there are no responders.
  - a. Usually complying or rewarding the manipulator is done out of fear, guilt or ignorance or a desire for peace at any cost.
  - b. They know you are afraid and are playing on your fear. That's evil!
    - 1) Prov. 29:25, "The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trust in the Lord shall be safe."
    - 2) John 12:4-5, "But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, (5)'Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?'" (Judas wanted to manipulate Jesus with guilt.)
  - c. They get in touch with your fear or guilt and move you to do things their way out of their selfishness. They may threaten:
    - 1) Divorce (emotional divorce/live in the same house but no communication)
    - 2) Cut off money
    - 3) Withhold sex
    - 4) Withhold custody of children
    - 5) Abandonment, physically, emotionally
    - 6) Withhold communication
  - d. They will use guilt whether it is true guilt or false guilt. Both feel the same and must be tested by truth.
    - 1) 1 John 4:1, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (NKJV).

2. Purpose within yourself to stop being led by their angry outbursts or subtle anger and choose instead be led by God's Spirit. You may need to do this by disconnecting your own "hot buttons" (i.e., fear, guilt, shame).
  - a. Rom. 8:14, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God" (NKJV).
  - b. Emotionally dependent people are the easiest ones manipulated by an angry manipulator who may also use fear, guilt and shame.
3. In gentle firmness ask them point blank, "Is there something you are wanting me to do?" Assure them you will seriously consider their request.
  - a. Often this approach is met with denial of the manipulation and further blame shifting.
  - b. But it does bring the issue to the forefront which is the last thing they want to take place. Remember, God only gives grace for the truth (1 John 1:14).
4. Determine to do the next right thing regardless of their immature behavioral response.
  - a. Romans 12:18, "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men."
  - b. You may have to live with a loss when you do the right thing (Matthew 10:34-37). Jesus always did the right thing and was killed.
5. Forgive them (Eph. 4:32).
  - a. Forgiveness and trust are two separate issues.
    - 1) Forgiveness you must grant, trust they must earn.
      - a) Proverbs 18:19, "A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city. And contentions are like the bars of a castle."
    - 2) Forgiveness does not automatically restore relationships.
      - a) Jesus forgave those who were killing Him but there was no restoration of any kind of relationship (Luke 23:34).
      - b) The Apostle Paul said that in the end times people are going to be irreconcilable or they just will not change (2Tim. 3:3).

- b. You will need to allow them to rebuild trust by taking baby steps. Trust is earned not demanded. Demanded trust is usually devoid of change and is motivated by fear of consequences resulting in more manipulation.
  - 1) If you are being shamed by someone telling you that you don't trust them, be honest and tell them you don't. However, tell them you are open to allow them to restore the trust. Spell out in detail what they need to do.

## V. To Avoid Negative Emotions

### A. Description

1. What are the negative emotions someone may want to avoid by shifting to anger?
  - a. Guilt - true or false guilt (guilt means, "I am worthy of blame.")
    - 1) True guilt and false guilt feel the same.
  - b. Shame: It is a feeling that something is bad within me, not that I just did something bad.
  - c. Fear
    - 1) of failure
    - 2) of loss
    - 3) of abandonment
2. Anger is used to avoid specific feelings. // They were a decoy.
  - a. If a spouse confronts their mate for something they have done wrong rather than the guilty mate acknowledge the wrong and apologize, the offender will get angry to avoid the feeling of guilt (blame and face their responsibility). Often this is associated with blame shifting. It is like the guilty party sees their dirty face in the mirror then washes the mirror.
    - 1) King David expressed anger to avoid his feelings of guilt when he was confronted by Nathan the prophet. David had spent the past year covering up his murder of Uriah and adultery with Bathsheba.
    - 2) 2 Samuel 12:5-7, "Then David's anger burned greatly against the man (who took the poor man's lamb), and he said to Nathan, 'As the Lord lives, surely the man who has done this deserves to die. And he must make restitution for the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing and had no compassion.' Nathan then said to David, 'You are the man! Thus says the Lord God of Israel, It is I who anointed you king over Israel and it is I who delivered you from the hand of Saul.'"

- b. Children often get angry when confronted for their wrong behavior and when they are feeling guilty for it.
- c. A person who is fear-based quite often shifts into anger in order to avoid feeling the fear. Control is the result of fear.
  - 1) Fear-based anger is usually at the root of domestic violence.
  - 2) The fearful person only feels the fear for a moment then shifts into anger to avoid the feeling of fear or to protect himself. Plus, they now don't have to face the problem or do anything about it because anger not fear is the surface issue.
- d. A person can shift from a fear of failing to anger in order to change, control or manipulate a person who could cause them to fail or get in touch with their feelings of inadequacy.
- 3. Anger is more acceptable than guilt, shame or fear. Anger hides (masks) the other emotions.
  - a. If a person is afraid, the emotion you are more likely to see is anger.

**B. How to correct the use of anger to avoid negative emotions within yourself.**

- 1. Recognize that God is using three negative emotions (guilt, shame, fear) to reveal a need (wound) in you that He wants to meet (heal) for your benefit and His glory.
  - a. Matt. 5:16, "Let your light (life) so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven" (NKJV).
  - b. Rev. 3:18, "I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see."
- 2. As far as guilt is concerned, if it is legitimate and you are worthy of blame, acknowledge your sin ("I was wrong God") and ask for forgiveness (I John 1:9).
  - a. If the assertion is not true, acknowledge the other person's position and state you have a different one. Ask for permission to clarify or explain. Not asking their permission reduces their openness to receive it.
    - 1) Avoid giving unasked for advice or explanations.
- 3. As for shame, when a person shames you inappropriately, clearly state you do not accept that shame.



- a. If you are worthy of shame for your behavior, acknowledge it, ask for forgiveness and state you are going to purpose in your heart not to do that again.
  - b. I Cor. 6:5, "I say this to your shame."
4. Often our current guilt, shame or fear has a long term history. Allow God to use those negative emotions to reveal the past history that feeds the current emotion. You may need to identify those who wounded you and forgive them for it (refer to Emotional Freedom material).
  5. Many anger-based arguments are attempts to avoid feeling negative emotions, (failure, inadequacy, guilt, shame, fear of...).

**C. How can you respond to one who uses anger to avoid his negative emotions?**

1. Do not reward their immature behavior by responding in an immature way.
  - a. Immaturity is not an antidote to immaturity.
  - b. Stay in charge of your own emotions. The ninth fruit of the Holy Spirit is self-control in spite of any person place or thing (Gal. 5:22-23).
  - c. Do not run from their anger. You may have to leave the room stating your commitment to return and talk in a calm respectful fashion.) Don't stuff your response to it and do not attempt to explain yourself without assurances of mutual respect during the discussion.
2. Softly inform them you are willing to discuss the issue when it can be done in a mutually respectful way. Reassure them you do want to work on the issue and bring it to a mutually satisfying end.
3. Do not view the offender's issue as only anger. His anger may be a smoke screen for guilt, shame or fear. Target your prayers to their need of dealing with the guilt, shame or fear behind the anger. Controllers control to hide their fear and shift to anger to control.
4. Stay focused on the issue and do not be distracted by their anger which is designed to distract you from the issue.
  - a. Often a person will state that they can't tell someone something because they will go ballistic or shift blame back on them.
  - b. The fear of this "ballistic" response may have been rewarded with compliance in the past so it is continued to be used. When the ballistic person realizes it did not distract you from the issue, he will either change tactics or begin to reason with you as he sees you are still accepting of him or you are remaining

calm, cool and controlled by God's Spirit. You have successfully disconnected your hot button of fear of their ballistic response.

## VI. Anger to Avoid Responsibility

### A. Description

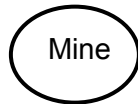
1. Responsibility can feel like a mine field filled with potential failure, feelings of inadequacy, rejection and loss of self esteem, ready to blow up in your face.
2. Few people want to take full responsibility for their own actions. The function of blame shifting of responsibility began immediately after the first sin by Adam and Eve. Adam attempted to avoid responsibility for his sin by telling God:
  - a. Gen. 3:12, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate."
  - b. "God, it's your fault for giving her to me. It's her fault for giving me the fruit."
  - c. Note: there was no previous human pattern of blame shifting for Adam to follow. The only thing different was the presence of sin in his life. Sin by definition means to "miss the mark." No one wants to admit they failed and lose value in someone else's eyes. Blame shifting is totally fear and sin motivated.
  - d. Blame shifting is like seeing yourself in the mirror then washing the mirror.
3. Anger is another way to avoid responsibility which comes from the presence of sin in one's life. He is playing the part of the fool.
  - a. Prov. 19:3, "The foolishness of a man twists his (own) way and his heart frets (blame shifts in anger) against the Lord."
    - 1) The history of Israel repeatedly documented the pattern of sinning and blaming someone else to avoid personal responsibility. Gideon blames God for the consequence of the nation's sin.
    - 2) Gideon speaking, "...O my lord, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us and where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, 'Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?' But now the Lord has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites" (Judges 6:13).
4. Anger causes the recipient to back off, react to the strong emotion and avoid returning to the issue at hand, i.e., the offender's offense and responsibility.

- a. Children are masters at this. Tantrums are usually thrown to get adults to abandon a responsible decision they have made and to get the parents to change their minds because of the anger display, not because it is the right thing to do.
- b. Adults also use anger when confronted with a responsibility they should do or have failed to do.
- c. People are intimidated by the angry person, therefore, they back off and conclude it just is not worth the conflict. Remember, anger stimulates fear and fear stimulates a fight or flight response resulting in separation and ultimately divorce.

**B. How can you break the habit of using anger as a tool to avoid responsibility?**

1. Honestly acknowledge to yourself how you are using anger to avoid personal responsibility.
  - a. Ask yourself what particular responsibility I am seeking to avoid?
  - b. Ask yourself why fulfilling or failing to fulfill facing this responsibility is such a major problem to you.
  - c. What other negative emotions are behind my fear and failure to be responsible?
    - 1) fear of failure
    - 2) feelings of inadequacy
    - 3) loss of pride (value)
    - 4) feelings of shame or guilt
    - 5) losing power and control
    - 6) feeling the shame
    - 7) fear of changing
2. Assign to yourself what is your legitimate responsibility in the conflict.
  - a. Honestly declare to yourself and others, if necessary, what you are now going to be responsible for.
  - b. If you were wrong, state, "I was wrong for \_\_\_\_\_. Would you forgive me?"
3. Purpose to assume what is your responsibility without griping, whining, pouting, yelling, throwing a tantrum, sarcasm or any other form of immature behavior.
  - a. Assigning and assuming are two different functions.

- b. You can say, "I know I should do this" but refuse to do it or put off doing it because it is easier not to in the short term.
  - c. You can assign a child to clean up his room, but he doesn't assume the responsibility to do it.
    - 1) His failure to clean it enables him to be irresponsible and you to avoid your parental responsibility to train the child to be responsible.
  - d. You can assign a husband to lay down his life for his wife or a wife to respect her husband, but that does not mean they will assume the responsibility assigned by God to do it (Eph. 5:33).
4. Purpose to fulfill what is in your circle of responsibility.



- a. God only gives you grace for what is in your circle to fulfill (2 Cor. 12:9; Eph. 4:7).
    - 1) II Cor. 12:9, "And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in your weakness,' therefore, I will most gladly boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."
    - 2) Eph. 4:7, "But to each one of us, grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift."
  - b. God only gives you power to do what He has asked you to do or fulfill (Phil. 2:13).
  - c. God only blesses the doers or fulfillers of His word and your own responsibility (James 1:25).
5. Ask forgiveness from those you have failed by not performing your responsibility.
- a. Use the simple phrase, "I was wrong for ...." No excuses or defense. Remember, defenders are losers. Rarely do defenders score (or change).
6. Ask for or seek appropriate help to accomplish a responsibility that may be difficult to perform.
- a. To be a husband, father, wife, mother
  - b. To accomplish a particular task or develop a particular character quality.
  - c. Remember, humility is the front door to abundant grace (1 Peter 5:5).

7. End today pride-based blame shifting. Step up to the plate yourself and assign, assume and fulfill your responsibilities.

### **C. How to respond to an angry, irresponsible person**

1. Do not reward his wrong behavior with passive compliance couched in denial. You are only postponing the inevitable day when it will have to be faced.
  - a. Fear of confrontation is understandable. Ask yourself, "What do I fear that prevents me from demonstrating responsible behavior in the light of his anger?"
2. Refuse to accept responsibility that is not yours. Refuse to accept their blame, shame or guilt trips.
  - a. You can silently pray, "Father, you know this responsibility is not mine. I will rest in the fact you are a righteous judge (1 Peter 2:23) and know the truth. I, therefore, will not allow his/her attempts to shift blame to be a hot button for me. My response will be calm and respectful."
3. Remember, the angry person has a choice to be bitter, angry and irresponsible or remain calm and be responsible. He is not a victim.
4. Stay focused on the issue or areas of responsibility.
  - a. If a child throws a tantrum to avoid his responsibility, after it's over he still has to clean up his room. Return and focus on the responsibility.
  - b. If an adult gets angry to avoid responsibility, after he calms down, calmly confront him with his responsibility.
5. Do not respond in anger to his anger. Not only is it wrong, but you lose power yourself and transfer the control to a child or an adult that is acting like a child.
  - a. Prov. 16:32, "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city" (NKJV).
  - b. Conquering oneself (CF Prov. 14:17, 29; 25:28; 29:11) is of greater virtue than conquering a city" (TBKC, p. 943).
6. Remember, this conflict is a spiritual battle because the sin of the flesh is behind the anger (Gal. 5:20) and irresponsibility.
7. Remember, God will only hold you responsible for your own circle of responsibility.

- a. 2 Cor. 5:10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (NKJV).
- 8. Continue to be faithful in your own circle of responsibility.
  - a. Eph. 6:13b, "having done all (that you can do), to stand..." (NKJV).
  - b. II Tim. 3:7,8, "I have fought the good fight..."

## **VII. To Remove an Obstacle**

### **A. Description**

1. When the will is blocked, anger can be an automatic emotional response to get the energy to remove the obstacle.
  - a. If a door doesn't open, you may get angry to get the energy to make it open.
  - b. If a person doesn't do what you ask them to, you may get angry in an effort to get them to do it (change, control).
    - 1) ill. A child may not clean up his room until he is confronted by your anger. He may have been trained by you not to do anything until the parent gets angry.
    - 2) You may get angry at a mate who is preventing you from doing something you want to do.
2. The goal of this anger is to remove the obstacle in order to accomplish a specific goal or meet a specific need.
  - a. The obstacle can be a person, place, thing or circumstance.
  - b. The will has hit a brick wall and anger is going to punch a hole through it.
3. This anger may be exhibited to get your own selfish way. Or, to gain something they feel they are entitled to.
  - a. This person will remain angry until they get their way.
    - 1) Pout, punish, withhold, shame, etc.
  - b. They can even withdraw in anger in order to get their way.
    - 1) Silent treatments are either an effort to avoid further conflict or to inflict emotional pain through rejection or abandonment.

4. Do not confuse determination with anger.
  - a. Determination is the result of high energy under the control of patience, a fruit of the Holy Spirit.
    - 1) Gal. 6:9, "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we will reap if we do not lose heart" (NKJV).
  - b. But anger as a result of a blocked will, has factored God out and now the flesh is activated to accomplish the goal (Gal. 5:20).

### **B. How to correct a habit of using anger to get your own way**

1. Admit to yourself and those you have done this to, that you have used anger selfishly to get your own way.
  - a. Admission of your anger needs to be followed by the statement, "I was wrong for..." and a request to be forgiven.
2. Test the source of your own emotion of anger. How?
  - a. Get off to a quiet place and let yourself feel the anger.
  - b. Ask God to take you back to the source of this anger. "Search me, O God, and know my heart...see if there is any wicked way (way of pain) in me..." (Psalm 139:23-24).
    - 1) Is it a learned pattern from home (dad, mom, etc.)?
    - 2) Is it a developed pattern in your own life that was rewarded at home?
      - a) ill. spoiled children were rewarded by immature adults.
    - 3) Is this coming from a fear of failure, not being in control or just pure selfishness?
  - c. Honestly face the anger's source and deal with it in a biblical fashion.
    - 1) No grace apart from honesty (John 1:14).
3. Consider the possibility of a spiritual source of the blockage or obstacle.
  - a. From God.
    - 1) Balaam's donkey (Numb. 22:22-30).
    - 2) Apostle Paul (Acts 16:6, 7) "Forbidden by the Spirit."

- 3) God blinded the eyes of the unbelieving Jews (John 12:40).
- b. From Satan
  - 1) Paul's thorn (2 Cor. 12:7) "a messenger of Satan"
  - 2) Paul wanted to come to Thessalonica (2 Thess. 2:18) "...we wanted to come to you, even I Paul, time and time again, but Satan hindered us."
  - 3) Paul was hindered much from coming to Rome (Rom. 15:22).
4. Ask what need do I have that is getting blocked from being fulfilled?
  - a. Is there another way of getting that need met within God's boundaries?
  - b. Was it just a source of pleasure that was blocked?
  - c. Is it a delayed gratification issue?
5. Ask, "Is this blockage an opportunity to build endurance in me?"
  - a. Patience (endurance) is my emotional pain threshold. Will this delay of gratification expand my emotional pain threshold?
  - b. James 1:2-4
6. Do I need to learn to rejoice in all things (2 Thess. 5:16) and/or learn to give thanks in all things? (2 Thess. 5:18).

### **C. How to respond to those who uses anger to get their way**

1. Don't reward the angry person with passive compliance. It will only further enable him to develop a pattern of getting his selfish way.
  - a. ill. What should a wife do when her husband's parents have pornography all over the house in plain view of the children? She needs to be a responsible adult and refuse to go until it has been removed. There is a higher law than the husband's. Pornography is a form of sexual abuse and is never condoned by God.
2. Refuse to engage yourself with the angry person.
  - a. Excuse yourself from their presence with a commitment to discuss it when calmer spirits are in charge.
    - 1) Prov. 20:3, "It is honorable for a man to stop striving, since any fool can start a quarrel."



- 2) Prov. 21:23, "Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles."
- b. Explain you do want to discuss this but not in this manner. This is setting an appropriate boundary because God has called us to relational peace (I Cor. 7:15).
- c. Don't shame or name call, just use a soft, firm voice.
  - 1) Prov. 10:19b, "He who restrains his lips is wise."
  - 2) Prov. 15:1, "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."
  - 3) Prov. 21:23, "Whoever guards his mouth and tongue, keeps his soul from troubles."
3. Avoid attempting to explain yourself or your position in the face of anger.
  - a. Prov. 17:27, "He who has knowledge spares his words, and a man of understanding is a calm spirit."
  - b. If strong emotion is fully activated, the mind is usually shut down (Prov. 20:3).
4. Do not use anger to respond to anger.
  - a. It is never productive.
    - 1) James 1:20, "For the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God."
  - b. There is no power when you are out of control.
    - 1) Prov. 25:28, "Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down without walls" (NKJV). They only make themselves vulnerable to further attack.
  - c. Slow, controlled response reflects wisdom and understanding of what is really taking place.
    - 1) Prov. 14:29, "He who is slow to wrath has understanding. But he who is impulsive (short of spirit) exalts folly" (NKJV).
    - 2) Prov. 16:32, "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city."

### **VIII. To Exact Revenge (Payback)**

## A. Description

1. Revenge is a need to satisfy one's internal justice system by paying back an offense.
  - a. This need to satisfy justice is imprinted in every heart by God at birth.
    - 1) Romans 1:18-20, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19) because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 20) For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse."
  - b. Every known culture has revenge laws or practices, even without any contact with Judeo-Christian literature.
  - c. Every internal judicial system, however, is greatly flawed.
2. Revenge is a form of inflicting pain to satisfy your own internal judicial system.
3. Revenge is repayment for an actual or perceived loss. It is a perceived entitlement.
  - a. It is re-payment for inflicted pain either physical and/or emotional to oneself.
4. Anger is an emotion that can inflict desired emotional pain and injury in others.
  - a. Anger itself can be a form of punishment.
  - b. Passive anger is subtle acts of revenge.
  - c. Overt anger is outward acts of revenge.
5. One can even mood alter with this use of anger and get an adrenaline rush. He will look for offenses as an excuse to feel the rush of anger and causing others pain.
  - a. "How sweet is revenge," but it soon turns to bitterness and/or other losses.
    - 1) Saul's revenge on the Philistines (I Sam 15:24).
    - 2) Israel's revenge on the tribe of Benjamin (Judges 20).

## B. How to correct the use of anger to exact revenge

1. Honestly admit to yourself how deeply you were hurt.
  - a. Acknowledge the losses, hurts
  - b. It's ok to say, "Ouch." Jesus did so in the garden and on the cross.
    - 1) Garden: Mark 14:33-36, "And He took Peter, James and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed. 34) Then He said to them, 'My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch.' 35) He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. 36) And He said, 'Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will.'"
    - 2) Cross: Mark 15:34, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
      - a) "Why," literally, "for what reason" - the cry of emotions.
      - b) "Have you forsaken me," literally, "did you abandon me" - again the cry of emotions.
      - c) "Jesus experienced the unfathomable horror of separation from God, who could not look upon sin" (Hab. 1:13) (TBKC p. 189).  
"Abandonment by God was in a judicial not relational sense." Jesus was "bearing the curse of sin and God's judgment on sin" (CF Deut. 21:22-23; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13).
  - c. The emotion of anger is not in itself wrong but how it is expressed can be sin.
    - 1) Eph. 4:26, "Be angry and do not sin."
      - a) The Greek word *parorgismos* is a strengthening form of *orge*. It means greatly provoked to anger. It implies there was a just reason to be greatly provoked (Eph. 4:6). This is a quote from Ps. 4:4 when the corresponding Hebrew word signifies "to quiver" with strong emotion. It is okay to feel this strong emotion, but then process it in a healthy biblical way.
2. Understand that your thoughts of revenge have usually factored God out of the equation or the scheme of justice.
  - a. When emotion rules, the Spirit is quenched. The Evil One takes over and he begins his agenda to kill, steal or destroy (John 10:10).
  - b. When the apostle Paul was hurt by Alexander the coppersmith, Paul said, "May the Lord repay him according to his works" (**2Tim. 4:14**).

3. Purpose to factor God back into your pain.
4. Acknowledge to yourself that revenge is legitimate, then, affirm to yourself that God is the only legitimate revenge taker, not you.
  - a. God is the ultimate one responsible for taking revenge when you have been mistreated or hurt.
    - 1) Rom. 12:19, "Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord."
  - b. God has promised to avenge His people. If it does not happen in time, it will happen in eternity or both.
    - 1) I Peter 4:5, "They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead."
    - 2) II Peter 2:3, "By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and the destruction does not slumber."
  - c. God has delegated some of that revenge to civil government.
    - 1) Rom. 13:4, "For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil."
    - 2) It is in God's circle of responsibility to do on a governmental level what is not permissible on a personal level (i.e. capital punishment).
5. Realize that anger as a form of revenge only perpetuates the cycle of bitterness and the loss of quality of life for yourself and others.
  - a. The sweet taste of revenge often turns to bitter pain.
    - 1) ill. Woman killed her two children to get back at her husband who she thought was having an affair.
    - 2) Heb. 12:15, "...looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble and by this many become defiled." The writer was referring to Deut. 29:18 where an old covenant apostate was called a Aroot...that produces such bitter poison", i.e., a godless "profane, unholy, desecrated" person like Esau. Readers are warned not to yield to temporary pressures or pleasures and forfeit their inheritance. Loss of all rewards.

6. Choose not to allow yourself to be overcome by evil by giving into the temptation to retaliate, but choose rather to overcome their evil with good responses.
  - a. Rom. 12:21, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."
7. Transfer the one who offended you over to the Lord Jesus.
  - a. The word *forgive* is made up of two words, "to send," "away." Take them and their sin and send them away to Jesus, and have Him nail their sin to the cross (Col. 2:14).
  - b. Forgiveness only makes sense in the light of Christ's death on the cross - the ultimate payment for sin.
    - 1) II Cor. 5:21, "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."
8. Ask God to forgive you for your own anger, bitterness and resentment.
  - a. 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"(NKJV).
  - b. Take back the power and control (ground) of your life from the Evil One (Eph 4:27).
9. (Hardest part) Accept on yourself the consequences of the loss you experienced from their sin.
  - a. You will live with the loss, either in blessing and freedom or bitterness and bondage. Your choice.
10. Purpose to convert every loss to a benefit both for you and for others.
  - a. Gen. 50:20, "But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive."

### **C. How to respond to a vengeful person**

1. Before you do anything, recall our Lord's pattern of response to unjust treatment.
  - a. I Peter 2:21-23, "For this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow in His steps. (Then Peter quotes from Isa. 53:7) Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth. (Peter continues with his commentary.) Who, when He was reviled (verbally abused) did not revile in return; when He suffered (physical abuse) He did not threaten (in return) but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously."

- 1) Note: Jesus was innocent. He was declared innocent seven times, then killed. Fairness?
  - 2) One of the reasons He suffered was to give you an example to follow when you are hurt. Keep committing yourself to the Father who is a righteous judge.
    - a) "Example" literally "underwriting" only here in N.T. Refers to a writing or drawing that a student reproduced or traced over. The reproduction would be an exact, not similar, reproduction. Jesus has been an exact role model to follow.
  - 3) What did Jesus do when He was hurt? "He kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously." It means He kept on repeatedly entrusting his fate, reputation, losses and revenge to Him who knows how to judge based on righteousness and to exact the revenge for it for eternity. Jesus did not do this once. He had to keep doing it, just like you do.
2. A hard to accept concept. You were called (lit. called out) to suffer for doing good. Remember, the world system hates God because their behavior is basically evil. Good exposes the evil. People love darkness, evil and hate truth, light (John 3:19). You were singled out of a line-up of society to hurt when you did good things. For you it is a sign of your sonship with God. For them, it is a sign of their condemnation if there is no repentance for their sin.
    - a. Phil. 1:29, "For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake."
    - b. Your godly response will be a sign to those who do this, that if they (unbelievers) do not repent they will be destroyed. To believers, if they do not repent they will experience the result of loss of rewards for eternity (Phil. 1:28).
  3. Transfer the vengeful person over to the Lord Jesus Christ for the purpose of being judged based on pure righteousness.
    - a. The word, forgive means "to send away."
    - b. Picture a destination in your mind (Jesus jail concept).
  4. If appropriate, acknowledge where you were wrong and if possible make restitution.
    - a. Don't say, "I'm sorry." Say instead, "I was wrong for..." If you feel you must say, "I'm sorry," state it after you state you were wrong.

- b. Confession is not being sorry. That is sadness for your sin. When we confess our sin to God, He does not just want us to say, "I'm sorry." He wants you to name the action as wrong and call it what He calls it. That is the essence of confession, agreeing with God! Plus, you often do not have the emotions behind the words, "I'm sorry" and that gets translated as insincerity and is rejected.
  
- 5. Realize the one acting out of revenge has given themselves over to the Evil One and that now you are not in combat with a flesh and blood person but Satan himself or his principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this age, and spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (Eph. 6:12).
  
- 6. Bless the avenger.
  - a. I Peter 3:9, "...not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing (while) knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing."
    - 1) The word, "blessing" means "to speak well of someone." It's different from "blessed" (fortunate or privileged). You are to speak well of them both to God and to others.
      - a) To God - "Pray for those who persecute you" (Matt. 5:44).
      - b) To others - Paul, "When we are cursed, we bless" (1 Cor. 4:22).
  - b. God will turn their revenge into a blessing or benefit for you, either in time and/or in eternity.
    - 1) Our loss pales into insignificance in the light of eternity.
      - a) Heb. 12:2, "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."
      - 2) Jesus was able to handle the pain He experienced in time because of joy (not revenge) that He looked forward to in eternity.
  
- 7. Stay in your circle of responsibility.
  - a. Identify what is in your circle of responsibility.
    - 1) Romans 12:18, "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men."
  - b. There is where your power and blessing is located.

- 1) Matthew 5:10, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
- c. God only rewards "*doers*" of His Word, not the "*knowers*" who fail to do it.
  - 1) James 1:25, "But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does."

## **Success Keys**

1. Use negative anger to determine personal needs.
2. Change yourself, not others.
3. Control yourself, not others.
4. Stop manipulating others to get your needs met.
5. Face your negative emotions head on.
6. Accept your own responsibility.
7. Remove obstacles God's way.
8. Permit God to exact revenge.

### **IX. Props**

- A. Red flashing light**
- B. Hula Hoops**
- C. Yellow caution tape**