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When Good Men Get Angry

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God's anger is always justified and perfectly expressed. Why? Because He's able to determine when a wrong has been committed. James said, "The anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God." (1:20). God never gets angry about a perceived injustice. He never rages because of imaginary evil. But we do. We get angry at perceived wrongs more often than real ones. That's a reason we should slowly lose our cool.

Jesus Got Angry

When we look at Jesus, even when wronged, He seldom got angry. However, there are four instances in the gospels where He got mad—the two cleansings of the temple at the beginning and end of his ministry (John 2:13-25; Matthew 21:12-17), when the disciples prevented children from coming to Him (Mark 10:14), when the religious leaders said it was unlawful to heal on a Sabbath (Mk3:5)

Jesus Wedded Anger With Compassion

Make no mistake about, Jesus lost His cool and felt intense anger toward the hard-hearted Pharisees. Yet, in that same verse Mark notes He felt "sympathy" for the religious leaders.

I'm curious, how often when mad do you feel compassion for the person who wronged you? For most of us, compassion and anger seldom coexist. Yet, the Lord's compassion tempered His anger. He genuinely understood and cared for the people who repeatedly disrespected and slandered Him . . . the people who angered Him.

Jesus Trusted His Father to Right All Wrongs

But there's another reason Jesus maintained His cool when wronged. In 1 Peter 2:23 we read, "When they hurled their insults at Him, He didn't retaliate; when He suffered, He made no threats. Instead, He entrusted Himself to Him who judges justly." Instead of threatening those who crucified and mocked Him, Jesus trusted His Father to right all wrongs. Too often I get angry because of insignificant wrongs. In those moments I take it upon myself to confront the offender and right the wrong . . . . *Like the person who darts into the parking spot I had been waiting for; or closes the restaurant ten minutes early when my family and I had driven across town to arrive before ten; or drives slowly in the left lane of a freeway*

Process Anger Quickly

All of these, and countless other offenses, are irrelevant. Even the serious offenses we suffer could best be handled by walking away and letting God set things right. But whether we walk away or confront, we need to process our anger quickly. Paul said we shouldn't even let the sun set on it. Why? Because unprocessed anger doesn't just go

away. It festers and infects our mind with bitterness, rage and hatred. The devil delights in using our ill-will to accomplish his ill-will (Ephesians 4:27-28).

All of this puts us in a tight spot. I see clearly that anger is an issue that requires maturity to manage. The key is to focus on Jesus and follow his lead when wronged.