

May 1, 2016

## ***Prepared for Works of Service***

***"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do"***

Ephesians 2:10

***"...to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."***

Ephesians 4:11-13

***"In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold."***

Ephesians 4:26-27

***"My dear brothers, take note of this: 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."***

James 1:19-20

One of the greatest obstacles to our effective service to others is our own anger. When we feel threatened, whether the threat is real or perceived; our first tendency is to react with anger. Our anger is always the product of some level of fear and is always intended to protect us from a real or perceived threat. Our anger is never righteous.

In contrast, the Father, and Jesus got angry, but not in response to fear or threat. God was angry with Israel for forty years as they wandered in the wilderness because they rejected him. Jesus was angry when he drove the money changers from the Temple in Jerusalem because they sought to profit through their 'religion'. God's anger is the product of his righteous indignation at those who rejected him. Ours is not.

Our anger, because it is not righteous, is nearly always going to result in us sinning. Because we believe we are being threatened and must protect ourselves, we tend to become violent in our anger. More than once in Scripture we are commanded to get rid of our anger. Paul told the Ephesian believers ***"Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice."***



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So, how do we manage, control and eventually 'get rid' of our anger?

Obviously we need to begin by acknowledging the source of our anger which is our own fear which is nearly always some threat to our survival. At least that is how we view the perceived threat. When I have surrendered my very existence to the control of my Father then the things of this life hold no fear for me and I should find it less and less necessary to protect myself. Until I do surrender my survival to God fear and its resulting anger will be a constant problem.

Having surrendered my struggle to survive to God's control I can focus on becoming self-controlled even when I want to be angry. The key to anger management is forethought. If I wait until something triggers my anger, then I will be angry and very likely slip over the edge into rage.

When I have a well thought out plan for managing myself so that I do not let anger control me I am far less likely to act out in anger. To have such a plan I must first realize what anger does in me. When I am angry and filled with rage my reasoning centers are shut down. I am filled with

energy because my fear/anger centers have triggered. In this state I am dangerous to those around me and to myself.

The very best thing I can do when anger finds a foothold in me is get alone. The feet are the most effective anger management tool there is. Walk away and do it at the first signs of anger in yourself. Go to a private place away from people. Plan to stay alone in that place for at least forty-five minutes. Work off the energy burst that anger has triggered, and then, once your capacity to reason has returned, ask yourself what you fear. When you can be honest about your fears then you can return to deal with these fears, but not until then. M