

Anger
How Life Feels - part 8
 Book of Psalms
 June 7, 2020

When we get angry it's good to ask forgiveness. Is that all that's needed? Or is there a much deeper problem in the heart that is being exposed through anger? That's this week's topic.

DAY 1: Getting started with anger

Psalms 4:1 (RSV) Answer me when I call, O God of my right! Thou hast given me room when I was in distress. Be gracious to me, and hear my prayer. ² O men, how long shall my honor suffer shame? How long will you love vain words, and seek after lies? [Selah]

³ *But know that the LORD has set apart the godly for himself; the LORD hears when I call to him.*

⁴ *Be angry, but sin not; commune with your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. [Selah]*

⁵ *Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the LORD.*

⁶ *There are many who say, "O that we might see some good! Lift up the light of thy countenance upon us, O LORD!"*

⁷ *Thou hast put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound.*

⁸ *In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for thou alone, O LORD, makest me dwell in safety.*

1. David is angry at some group of men. Verses 1 and 2 give us indications of his anger. What kinds of "distress" does David point to as reasons for anger? (Verses 1-2)

2. David's character and reputation are being badly slandered. Worse, it appears to David that it is men's pride that is driving this, and are outright lying to tell their devilish story about David.

3. Think of a time when you've been unjustly accused or had your reputation dragged through the mud because of lies. How did you deal with your anger?

4. How does David **begin** to deal with his anger and this awful situation? (Verses 1-3)

5. David talks to God about (1) what is going on around him, (2) what is going on inside him, and (3) God's character. This is a great start!!!

6. Did you notice the repetition of asking God to hear him in verses 1-3? What can you infer by his repeated requests to be heard?

DAY 2: The 5 “S’s”

2 fallacies regarding anger:

1. Our attempts to deal with anger is usually as “effective” as dealing with weeds by clipping them off at ground level! Weed roots produce more weeds.
2. What are the “weeds” of anger? What causes anger?
3. There are two big mistakes we make when dealing with our anger:
 - a. We assume that the reason we are angry is because of what is done to us. “I wouldn’t have been angry if only you hadn’t _____.”
 - b. “My anger has nothing to do with me. If I’m angry it’s because of “you.”

David’s approach:

4. That is not David’s approach, and it shouldn’t be our approach! Let’s see what David does.
Psalm 4:4 Be angry, but sin not; commune with your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. [Selah] ⁵ Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the LORD.

5. David tells us to do five things. We’ll look at each one in some detail. For memory purposes think of 5 “S”s.

- **Sin**—don’t make it worse.
- **Search**
- **Silent**
- **Sacrifice**
- **Shift of trust.**

6. “S” #1. **Do not sin.**

*Psalm 4:4 **In your anger do not sin**; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent. Selah*

- a. There are really two things to catch from this phrase. First, he doesn’t automatically condemn “anger!”
- b. Second, he means, “don’t act out your sin. Don’t make things worse.”

Proverbs 29:11 A fool gives full vent to his anger.

James 1:20 For the anger of man does not accomplish the righteousness of God.

7. What strikes you about anger from today’s devotional?

DAY 3: "S" #2. Search your heart.

Psalm 4:4 In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent. Selah

1. This is the step we usually fail to take. To be fair, we rarely even think this has anything to do with our anger. Why is that?

Our assumption is simple: EVENT→EMOTIONS.

2. All we can see is that a negative event happened and we have negative emotions, like anger. It *seems* that way, it *feels* that way, it *looks* that way, but there is more to our anger than just being the victim of an unwanted EVENT.

3. "S" #2 is the step whereby we can see the "roots" (causes) of our weeds (anger).

Psalms 139:23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

4. David instructs us to do the same thing in Psalm 139. The previous four verses in Psalm 139 were filled with hate and rage. He knows something is not right, not just "out there" with others but "in here," in his heart. But he can't see what specifically about him, is causing the anger

5. What does a "search the heart" step look for? What we can't see about ourselves is a missing piece between "EVENT" and "EMOTION." What we can't see about ourselves is that when every event happens to us we EVALUATE that event in a nanosecond. Here's what's really going on with anger. We can see what the black letters say. We don't see what the red letters say.

EVENT→**EVALUATION** → EMOTION

6. In our house we have a gas fire place. That fire place has provided enjoyable and relaxing heat for almost twenty years in our home. What you might think and see is:

NATURAL GAS→FIRE

7. But most of the time there is *no* fire in our fireplace, even though there is a seemingly inexhaustible supply of gas. Why? Because no match was struck! No spark, no fire.

8. Instead this is how our fireplace works:

NATURAL GAS→**A MATCH**→FIRE

9. Tomorrow we'll look to see what our "match" is that produces our anger.

10. What strikes you about today's devotional?

DAY 4: “S” #2 continued... “Search your heart...”

Psalm 4:4 In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent. Selah

1. For what are we looking when we “search our hearts?” We’re looking for the sin(s) that are driving a much deeper and pernicious problem than “just” our anger.

Isaiah 53:6 “All we like sheep have gone astray. We have all turned to ‘our way.’ And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”

Romans 5:8 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus.

2. In the bible, “sin” is mostly used as a generic term, a condition in which we live and operate more so than a particular “sin.”

3. Allow a brief theological explanation and list of particulars of our sinful condition:

- a. We “naturally” go astray from God. (Like a sheep does from its shepherd).
- b. We naturally choose to go “our way,” meaning living our life how we think we should instead of how God dictates and commands that we should.
- c. We define “satisfaction” or “happiness” as what makes us feel better the quickest ...
- d. ...no matter what God says about what we choose.
- e. Our “center” is “self,” not God.
- f. We relegate God to something like our butler or fire captain or grandfather.
- g. The results of this is what Romans calls “death,” mostly used metaphorically. It moves us in directions that “kill” relationships, causes hurt to others, and brings misery to ourselves (loneliness, emptiness, depression, addictions, etc.)
- h. All the while we believe we’re on a good path, a moral path, a justified path.
- i. Whatever person or event brings us happiness we then believe we are entitled to receiving ... regularly, and deservedly so. We obligate others to come through for us. Expectations of others become “reasonable.”

4. This list of items occurs without hardly even knowing we’re doing this.

And this list becomes the match!

5. When someone or something doesn’t come through for us to “make us” happy we WILL get angry as long as we expect/demand/feel entitled to what they can do for us.

6. And the repetition of this anger will NEVER go away as long as the “MATCH” stays ready to be lit in our heart. Only the gospel of Jesus Christ has the power to deal with that list, our set of matches!

7. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

DAY 5: “S’s” # 3-5. Silent, Sacrifice, Shift

1. “S” #3 is “...and be silent.”

Psalm 4:4 In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent. Selah

2. About what should we be silent? The usual junk that keeps us from seeing ourselves, like our justifications, rationalizations, and excuses. Humbly listen to what God is exposing in you.

3. “S” #4 is “Sacrifice.”

Psalm 4:5 Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the LORD.

4. In Old Testament times people brought an animal to sacrifice for their sins. But in New Testament times Christ’s death on the cross was a once-and-for-all sacrifice for sin!

5. The metaphor is used differently in the New Testament.

Romans 12:1 I appeal to you brothers and sisters by the mercy of God to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God which is your reasonable act of service.

6. Romans 12:1 provides an example of giving a sacrifice of our body—what we watch with our eyes, touch with our hands, where we go with our feet, etc.

7. Usually, the “match” inside us is more hidden. It is related to our “personal” needs, things like attention, appreciation, understanding, love, consideration, security, warmth, etc.

8. It is these we need to offer to God to meet instead of demanding others meet them!

9. “S” #5 is Shift (your source of trust for your needs to be met)

Psalm 4:5 Offer right sacrifices and trust in the LORD.

10. We are to shift our real trust for our needs to be met from people and events to God. We are trusting in the Lord for our well-being.

11. Let’s review our 5 “S’s.”

- **SIN**- don’t make it worse.
- **SEARCH** your hearts;
- Be **SILENT**;
- Offer right **SACRIFICES**;
- **SHIFT** your trust

12. What is your biggest takeaway from today’s devotional?

13. What are your biggest takeaways from this week’s devotionals on anger?