

## PRINCIPLES FOR DEALING WITH ANGER

Anger is a part of our lives which can be controlled and directed. Consider these principles for dealing with anger.

1. Be aware of your emotional reactions. Recognize the emotion and admit to yourself that you are feeling irritated or angry. Do not repress or deny the feeling. Admitting it does not mean that you have to act on it.
2. Try to understand why you are angry. What brought it about? Can you isolate the cause or reason? Is it one that occurs often?
3. Can you create other situations in which anger won't occur? What were you doing that might have contributed to this problem or difficulty? Did you do anything to cause the other person to react in such a way that you became angry?
4. Ask yourself, "Is anger the best response?" You can be rational at this point and discuss this question with yourself. What are the consequences of becoming angry and letting it out? Write down your answer. Can you think of a better response? Write that down. What would be accomplished by kindness, sympathy, and understanding toward the other person? Can you confess your feelings to him?
5. Is your anger the kind that rises too soon? If so, when you start to get angry take some deep breaths or count to ten. Concentrate on the strengths and positive qualities of the other person instead of his defects. Remember that it is possible to control your thoughts. (See Ephesians 4:23; I Peter 1:13.)
6. Do you find yourself being critical of others? What does this do for you? Be less suspicious of the other person. Listen to what he says and feels. Evaluate his comments instead of condemning him. Does your faultfinding or anger come from a desire to make yourself feel better? Are your opinions always accurate or could they be improved? The other person may have something to offer you. Slow down in your speech and reactions toward others. Watch your gestures and expressions which may convey rejection and criticism of the other person. Can you express appreciation and praise in place of criticism?
7. You may have a time when your anger or criticism is legitimate. Plan ahead how you will express it and do it in such a way that the other person can accept what you say. Use timing, tact, and have a desire to help the other person instead of tearing him down.
8. Find a friend with whom you can talk over your feelings and gain some insight from his suggestions. Admit how you feel and ask for his guidance.
9. Spend time praying for the difficulty that you have with your feelings. Openly admit your situation to God. Ask for His help. Understand and memorize the Scriptures that speak of anger and those that speak of how we should behave toward others. Put them into practice.