

## WoH 442

### Anger expressed in different ways – What God Says

**Counsellor:** Hello. I'm a counsellor, and Pedro was my first client for the day. I just asked him, "What would you like to tell me?" And he burst into tears. It was sad to see this 40-year-old man, weeping like a child. I found it hard to understand his words as he sobbed, "I've messed up my life. My wife and my family have left me. I don't know how to fix this."

**Carol:** Here we are back again with you on *Women of Hope*...I'm Carol, and here's Tammy...

**Tammy:** Hello, how are you? I hope you're well and feeling happy. But Pedro wasn't was he!

Let's hear more from our counsellor about how we express anger and how it can affect our lives. Welcome (Name)...

**Counsellor:** Thank you...let me say that Pedro isn't his real name, and I've changed some details for his privacy. Pedro loved his wife and his boys. His family meant a lot to him. But his wife had told him, "Enough is enough. I don't want to live with you anymore. Your anger has made it like living in hell".

**Carol:** Wow – that would be hard for Pedro to hear wouldn't it? I wonder why his wife felt like that? So what exactly went wrong?

**Counsellor:** Pedro has a bad temper. He's often hit his wife and children in a fit of rage. He's also said cruel things when he was angry. They couldn't bear their hurt any longer. We spent a long time talking about how his rage affects his family.

Then there was another angry man - we'll call him Jack. Jack and his wife run their own business, so they have to work together. Jack says his wife is often careless with her work, and at times this has cost them a lot of money. This makes him angry.

But Jack expresses his anger in a very different way...he doesn't shout and hit out at his wife, but will store up his feelings...and keep them all inside.

It's easier to know someone is angry when they yell at you...like Pedro...even though it's not pleasant. Jack's anger however is hidden...he doesn't show it. Everything appears to be normal... Jack is sometimes loving and caring towards his wife. Jack's parents taught him that anger is bad...so he's gone through life hiding his anger...pushing it all down inside.

**Carol:** Jack would be a much easier person to live with than Pedro wouldn't he? It's not nice to be yelled at and beaten.

**Tammy:** No, it's not... I wonder if *you* know how that feels?

**Carol:** But maybe you've lived with someone who hides their emotion, like Jack...that can be really hard too.

**Counsellor:** Yes...when you feel angry, but hide it, you begin to feel bitter and resentful. You become cold, or say nasty words - maybe about something completely different to what first made you angry. Sometimes the feelings burst out, like a dam that's too full, and the anger spills out. Often it hits another person...not the one who you were angry with first. Sometimes this hidden anger causes illness. Jack was suffering from a stomach ulcer and high blood pressure. That didn't help how he felt.

**Tammy:** So anger can be expressed in two different ways?

**Counsellor:** Yes...a person may *blow up* in anger – shout and hit others, *or* they may *hide* their anger and *close up*. They say nothing, and everything appears normal. As you can see both these reactions can cause a lot of harm to our health and our relationships. They can both lead us into wrong actions and thoughts.

**Tammy:** You're with us today on *Women of Hope* and our counsellor is sharing her experience. Today she's talking about the two different ways that most of us express anger – blowing up – or closing up.

**Carol:** Is anger always a bad thing?

**Counsellor:** We *usually* think that anger is a bad emotion don't we? But if we look at some very important changes in our society, we can see that they started when people felt angry about something that wasn't fair. Anger was their driving force...it made them *do* something about the situation. Anger is a powerful emotion, which is often expressed in destructive ways. But when anger is used properly, it can move us into action to change things. It can produce great leaders.

It's what do you do with anger that is either good or bad.

**Carol:** So I wonder how we can deal with our *own* anger?

**Counsellor:** If you have a problem with anger, you need to think about what's *behind* your anger. You need to ask yourself questions, like:

Do I have needs that are not being met?

Am I expecting too much from this person?

Do I feel threatened in some way?

Do I feel insulted and used by others?

Did they mean to hurt me?

**Tammy:** Sometimes when I'm angry, I think it's because something reminds me of other times when I wasn't treated properly. And sometimes it happens when a lot of little things happen at the same time and it's just too much.

**Carol:** That's true, Tammy, so another good question might be, 'Am I really upset about this, or about something else?'

**Counsellor:** Well...the next step is to learn to let out your feelings openly in a safe way...talk about it with a trusted friend or family member.

This may help you to see things more clearly. And then you can attack the *problem* and not the *person*. As far as possible, talk about your *own* feelings clearly and politely.

**Carol:** For example, if my boss gives me too much work, should I say that I find the work too much to do in the time I have?

**Tammy:** That would probably work better than saying, "you are unreasonable"! But I wonder about Pedro?

**Counsellor:** A person like Pedro probably wouldn't be able to stop and think it all through like this. He needs to practice methods to calm down. Are you like Pedro?...you suddenly flare up and feel sorry afterwards?

The first thing is to practice a new way of acting when your body gets aroused. Practice saying to yourself: 'Stop...breathe'. Maybe count while you breathe in and out slowly.

**Carol:** I think Pedro would need to practice that quite a bit when he's NOT angry, to start a new habit.

**Tammy:** That's true, Carol. It sounds funny to practise breathing because we all just breathe without thinking don't we?

**Counsellor:** We need to practice controlling and slowing our breathing. Now here's another idea; you could try to leave the situation when your anger is getting too much. This will give you time to take control of yourself.

Tell the other person that you'll be back to talk about it soon. Then do something to take your thoughts away for a few moments. Maybe wash your face - it's probably become hot and red with anger! Or go for a quick walk to get rid of that extra energy. Give yourself a few minutes for your body to settle and your thoughts to calm, before you do or say anything. When you calm down, you'll probably be able to think more clearly. Then return to the situation and deal with it reasonably.

**Tammy:** So what's the best way to deal with an angry person?

**Counsellor:** It depends; if they're about to hit you, you need to think of your own safety first. And never argue with someone when they're drunk.

**Tammy:** Now *that would be* a waste of time!

**Counselor:** But generally, it's better not to attack back, things will just get worse. It's important to take their feelings seriously. Listen to what they have to say and show that you understand their concern. They might feel hurt or afraid underneath the angry words. Say things like "I can understand why you feel that way".

Don't defend yourself with words till they have settled down enough to hear what you have to say.

Later, you may be able to tell them that their anger is hurting your relationship. If they admit they have a problem with anger, you could suggest that they talk to a counsellor or mental health worker, or a wise person that you both trust, someone who could help them understand it and make changes.

**Carol:** It sounds like *hiding* it, like Jack does, is *not* the best way to deal with anger because it will always find a way out...and that might not be a good way.

I hope any person like Jack works out how to express their anger more honestly.

**Tammy:** And I hope people like Pedro learn how to control those outbursts.

**Counsellor:** I hope so too!

**Tammy:** Thank you for coming to share with us today.

**Counsellor:** You're welcome!

**Carol:** It's good to be with you today on *Women of Hope*. It's been interesting to hear about two different ways that we express anger.

**Tammy:** Yes – we might be a person who gets angry easily and we just 'blow up' and shout at those around us – or worse still hit them.

**Carol:** Or we might be a person who holds our anger in – we 'close up' but eventually it finds its way out in nasty comments or even bitter silence...leaving the other person wondering what they've done wrong.

**Tammy:** Ros has joined us today to tell us what God's word, the Bible has to say about anger. Welcome Ros, it's good to have you here.

**Ros:** Thanks Tammy. As you know, I love being here with you and Carol...and hello to *you* too...I'm glad we can have this time together.

I'm sure you know how it feels to be really angry about something. I do... But what do we do when we get angry? Do we just hit out at the nearest person and hurt them, like we heard about Pedro? Do those around us suffer because of *our* anger? You know, God's word, the Bible says something about this. It says: (Ephesians 4: 26) 'In your anger, do not sin'. What could this mean? Can we be angry without doing wrong? God is the one who gave us the ability to feel different emotions...he made us, and he knows us very well. So he knows that we will sometimes be angry. But when we are angry, we need to stop and think about it. Remember, our counselor said when you feel angry, stop and breathe, and maybe count. Give yourself time to think...then take action. This way you can learn to deal with your anger and not 'sin' by hurting someone else.

Then the Bible also says: (Ephesians 4:26) 'Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry.' What does *this* mean? We don't have to think about the answer to this one for too long do we? This is really good advice – don't let your anger keep going. If you're still angry at the end of the day, how are you going to sleep? Maybe you've left someone else hurting because of your anger...and they won't be able to sleep either! It needs to be sorted out before you finish the day. I don't think this means that it's ok to be angry all day, then sort it out at night, just before you go to bed! And the next day, you can be angry again, then sort it out at the end of the day! That wouldn't be a good way to live would it?

Do you know that the Bible also tells us stories about Jesus that show how *he* felt about many things. He felt happy, he felt sad...he even cried after one of his close friends died. He felt and showed all the same emotions we do – because he came to earth as a human, so he *understands* how we feel about things. Because he was God's son, and lived a perfect life, he didn't do wrong, or make

mistakes...he didn't sin. Let me tell you a story about a day that when Jesus got really angry...

Here's the story from God's word: (John 2: 13 – 17 based on GNT)

It was almost time for the Jewish Passover – when the Jewish people celebrated how God had helped them escape from slavery in Egypt. You might remember hearing about that.

So Jesus and his followers went up to the temple in Jerusalem. In the Temple area Jesus saw merchants selling cattle, sheep, and doves for sacrifices; he also saw dealers at tables exchanging foreign money. Jesus made a whip from some ropes and chased them all out of the Temple. He drove out the sheep and cattle, scattered the money changers' coins over the floor, and turned over their tables. Then, going over to the people who sold doves, he told them, "Get these animals out of here. How *dare* you turn my Father's house into a marketplace!"

Then his disciples remembered this prophecy from the Scriptures: "Passion for God's house will consume me."

**Tammy:** My goodness, you could almost *feel* Jesus' anger in this story couldn't you! I wonder why he was so angry with the people? I guess it was because this was a very sacred place.

**Ros:** Yes...it had been set up for the people to worship his father, God. But the people were using this sacred place to make money for themselves. This was in the outer courtyard where foreigners were invited to come and worship the true God, and now it was a marketplace, there was no space for them to come. And there may have been some cheating going on too – asking very high prices for animals for sacrifices...

Do you think Jesus was right to be angry? ...His followers, when they saw this remembered the prophecy that they had heard from God's word about Jesus... "Passion for God's house will consume me."

When we see something happening that's not right or is unfair, or hurting other people, it's right for us to be angry. Our anger will make us take action and do something about the situation. I hear many reports about things that are happening to women in this world – in all different countries, including my own. This makes me feel angry! It makes me want to help these women who are hurting and abused. This is why I'm involved with *Women of Hope*. I want to help women to know how to live well and to make the most of what they have. I want women, and men, to know more about God's love for them. I want them to know that Jesus suffered too. He gave his life for them and he wants them to learn to trust him.

**Carol:** That's a good thing to do with your anger, Ros- do something to help! You *could* get angry and set out to hurt people, or become bitter and not do anything. Remember what God's word said? 'in your anger do not sin.'

**Ros:** I wonder if there are things in your life that are making *you* angry? God understands and he wants you to come to him and ask for his help...whatever it might be. He says in his word, (James 1:19 GNT) 'Remember this my dear friends! Everyone must be quick to listen, but slow to speak and slow to become angry.'

**Carol:** That's good to remember isn't it. Let's say it again together...  
'Everyone must be quick to listen...but slow to speak...and slow to get angry.'  
If we *all* did that, it would be a much better world wouldn't it!

**Tammy:** We've been hearing from Fran about the Psalms...and how David wrote many of them. Here's a little piece from one of those psalms – where David describes God's character.

The Lord is compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.

God loves you and cares for you. He never loses his temper with you. You can pray to God and ask him to help you in your anger. Or if you're suffering from someone else's anger, ask God to help you to know how to respond to that person.

**Carol:** Before we go today I'd like to read a letter from one of our listeners who learned, because of her faith in God, how to respond to her husband's anger.

This is what she said:

'I (am) a rather new listener of *Women of Hope*.... Your...program...is especially for us as women in need. I find comfort in my situation in that. My husband is not a Christian, so every time I would go to worship God, he closed the door and would not allow me to get back into the house. (So) I had to stay with my next door neighbor for a few days. One day when I was in the congregation with the other believers, he came, pulled me out by my hair and beat me a lot. But I still felt very peaceful in my heart and I did not cry at all. Those things that he has done can never prevent me from worshiping God. He also recognizes that and does not beat me any longer. I did not fight against him because I learnt one lesson "Get rid of bitterness" in your program and received the precious teachings from that. "Instead, be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you" (Ephesians 4,32).

**Tammy:** Dear listener...thank you for your encouragement to all of us. And now we must go. You can contact us too on...we would love to hear from you.

Goodbye for now – God bless you.