

KOINONIA KONNECTION

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THE DEMON OF ANGER

"But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth." -Colossians 3:8

Do you struggle with anger?

I do. In fact, I'm not afraid to tell you that anger is one of the pervasive sins of my life. And so, it's with a very personal interest that I write this brief article for your consideration. In my experience, I've come to realize just how destructive and poisonous sinful anger can be. Sinful anger isn't a "little sin." Many people wouldn't bother to list sinful anger as one of the "biggies." What do I mean by "biggies?" You know, like adultery, addiction, child abuse, and homosexuality. But the fact of the matter is, anger is very much a "biggie." Sinful anger destroys relationships, robs us of spiritual joy, can harm our health, break our mind, and even move us to slander and curse the God who created us. Know for certain that sinful anger is very much a "biggie."

Sinful anger can either be a sporadic experience, or it can come to define a person's very life. In either case, it something that has to be addressed with spiritual force and immediacy. We can't cover all the bases in 1500 words, but let's ask some questions that will hopefully set us in the right direction in battling the "demon" of sinful anger...

WHERE DOES MY ANGER COME FROM?

When, in my title, I speak of the "demon" of anger, I'm not being entirely proverbial. Scripture tells us that sin gains its power not only by our weak and sin-prone flesh, but also by the fact that spiritual powers are prompting us to commit evil (cf. Matt. 4:1; I Thess. 3:5; I Tim. 4:1). Is there always a personalized spiritual power involved in each of

our particular temptations? I really don't know. But I can know this, that when I yield to my sinful anger, I am truly falling into the hands of those powers which have set themselves up in opposition to God. These forces would like nothing better than to see me throw myself into an emotional pattern which does disservice to Christ and robs me of spiritual fruitfulness. Think about that.

WHAT IS MY ANGER BASED UPON?

In other words, what presumption in my thinking gives life and breath to my sinful anger? In short, my sinful anger stems from my basic belief that I am God. I assume that everything and everybody should conform to my expectations and do precisely what I want them to do. When things don't go the way I want, I get angry. When people don't do the things that I want them to do, or react the way I want them to react, I get angry. Rather than considering myself but a servant, whose duty it is to submit joyfully to unwanted providences, I presume that Providence is here to serve my wants and tastes. Rather than being a selfless soul who considers others better than myself (cf. Phil. 2:3), I count myself as better than others, and expect their every action and word to exist for my pleasure alone. I become the center of my personal universe.

WHAT FRUITS DOES MY ANGER BEAR IN MY LIFE?

The text we quoted above is interesting in that I perceive that there exists a relationship among the various vices against which Paul speaks. The list begins with "anger." That is the root emotion to what becomes a terrible, progressive process. From anger comes "wrath," which may also be translated "fierceness." Our anger affects our personality, fires us up and prepares us for mistreatment of others. After fierceness comes "malice," we direct our sinful anger against a particular object, whether this be our circum-

stances, people around us, or God Himself. When our wrath has gained an object, we "slander" (literally "blaspheme" in the Greek). We begin to point the finger of accusation and disdain at something or someone outside of ourselves. And finally, when our wrathful madness has reached its highest pitch, we may even spew forth vile language and "obscene talk" as a medium of our ire.

What can such behavior do but accomplish two things: 1) temporarily drive us from God, and 2) temporarily separate us from the people we love, the objects of our accusation and "vomitous" linguistic practices? In fact, so hot may our anger burn, that we might never return to God's care (this in the case of the unregenerate). Likewise, so hurtful may our anger be toward others that those once close to us may remain permanently distant. And so we see that sinful anger is a relationship assassin.

But let us not forget that there is one other person affected by sinful anger: ourselves. Alienation, emotional instability, unemployment, prison, alcoholism, mental illness, and (most obviously) spiritual destitution are but a few of the fruits of sinful anger in human life. So powerful may such anger become that a person can literally be defined by it. Of such a person we might say, "Such and so is such an angry person." In short, this one has become consumed by, a slave to anger. They have become anger.

WHAT SHOULD MY RESPONSE BE TO SINFUL ANGER?

We should get angry at our sinful anger.

There is an anger which is righteous, by the way. Scripture is ripe with examples of God's anger. When we experience anger at sin, or anger at anything which separates us from God and people, we emulate the righteous anger of which God Himself is the Ultimate Exemplar. So righteous is this kind of anger that we can say the absence of it is sin. The Lord desires me to rage against rage.

How can a person stimulate this "positive" anger? I

would have the reader consider two ways that we might do so. First, consider how sinful anger is totally opposed to what God has created you to be. He has created you not to be a "rage machine," subject to mindless outbursts and explosions of profanity, but rather He has breathed life into you so that you might sing forth His praises and serve as a vessel of peace, wisdom, and encouragement. He has called you to be a son of the light, not a child of darkness. (cf. Eph. 5:8)

Second, think upon how damaging sinful anger can be to those you love. As we have said, sinful anger is nothing less than a relationship-killer. It alienates us, drives people from us, and wields incalculable harm against those that we love. How opposite such fruits are compared to God's expectations for our relationships. Says He, "Encourage one another, and build one another up." (I Thess. 5:11) We have as our task the encouragement of the fainthearted, the helping of the weak, and the practice of Olympic patience (I Thess. 5:14). Nothing could be more opposed to our calling than destructive rage.

HOW CAN I ESCAPE THE POWER OF SINFUL ANGER?

The only way to be delivered from anger's stranglehold is through the power of God. Says the Scripture, "He has delivered us from the domain (rule) of darkness, and transferred us into the Kingdom of His beloved Son." (Col. 1:13) When Christ first entered into our life, we began to taste of this delivering power. But our liberation doesn't end with our rebirth. As God's people, we continue to be the objects of deliverance. Bit by bit, we are liberated from what we were in order to become what we will be. This truth of our salvation is the trumpet of freedom for those who struggle with sinful anger. It means that the conquest of sinful anger lay not in our own efforts or spiritual strength. We may turn to Another, One whose power lay beyond our capacity to imagine (Eph. 3:20), for freedom. God is the Great Liberator. This, we might say, is His great vocation among us: to free us from the shackles of our slavery to sin. Liberation is His joy, His pleasure, His love. It is at the heart of His covenant with us.

Turn, friend, to the Lord if you struggle with this great sin. You cannot deliver yourself. In you is not the power to fight off this horrendous dragon which steals your spiritual usefulness and joy, and separates you from those you love. Cast yourself before Him and pray for deliverance. "The Lord sets the prisoner free." (Psalm 146:7)

Further, fill your mind with passages of God's Word which address anger directly (cf. James 1:20; 1 Timothy 2:8; Col. 3:8, etc.). David affirmed the power of this aspect of fighting sin when he said, "I

have stored up your Word in my heart, that I might not sin against you." (Psalm 119:11) The Spirit of the Lord is the power which will fight anger's hold on you, but don't forget that His Word is the means the Spirit uses to bring changing truth and power to bear. Study! Memorize! Apply!

And may the God of peace sanctify us wholly, driving anger's unpleasant presence from our lives forever. And that, Christian, is precisely what He is doing...and shall do.

-by Edward Ludt

FAMILIES IN FOCUS **CHILDREN TO BE EDUCATED FOR GOD - PART 2**



In the first place, in order to qualify yourselves for instructing and preparing your children for God's service, you diligently study his Word, to ascertain what he requires of them, and frequently pray for the assistance of his Spirit, both for them and yourselves. In the next place, as soon as they arrive at a suitable age, which is much earlier than is generally supposed, you will begin to tell them of your own inability to preserve them from misery, and render them happy either in this world or the next; of their indispensable need of some other friend and protector, of the gracious offers and invitations of their heavenly Father, of the infinite importance of securing his favor, and the inconceivably dreadful consequences of incurring his displeasure. You will also early begin to teach them the language of heaven, the dispositions, employments and enjoyments of its inhabitants, and the qualifications which are necessary to prepare them for it. You will tell them that God is able and willing to impart these qualifications to all who come to him in the name of Christ; that he has already conferred on them ten thousand favors; that he is the greatest, wisest, and best of beings, and that his Son Jesus Christ is the friend of children, and the Saviour of sinners. You will diligently caution them against all those sinful tempers and practices which are inconsistent with the favor of God, labor to form them to his image, and prevent them so far as possible, from asso-

ciating with companions, who might poison their principles, corrupt their morals or weaken their sense of the infinite importance of religion. In a word, you will carefully guard against saying or doing anything which may, either directly or indirectly, lead them to consider religion as an object of secondary importance; on the contrary you will constantly labor to impress upon their minds a conviction, that you consider religion as the great business of life; the favor of God, as the only proper object of pursuit, and the enjoyment of him hereafter, as the only happiness; while everything else is comparatively of no consequence, however important it may otherwise be.

Such, my friends, in brief, is the manner in which we must educate children, if we would educate them for the service of God; and the reasonableness of this, we presume no one will deny. No one would think of qualifying a child for a physician, without giving him some knowledge of diseases and their remedies; or for a counsellor without putting him upon the study of the law; or for a divine, without making him acquainted with theology. Equally necessary is it, if we would educate children for God, thus to attempt to qualify them for his service. And this, we may farther observe, implies three things. It implies:

1. That we pay more attention to the soul than the body. We do not mean that the body is to be neglected; but the soul must be considered as the superior part, and the body merely as its servant. In this respect multitudes of parents fail. They are extremely attentive to the bodies of their children, their health, their beauty, the elegance of their form, and the gracefulness of their deportment; but seem entirely to forget that they have a soul, a mind, a heart, that deserves attention. If the slightest illness affects their children, they are alarmed; but they feel neither concern nor anxiety on account of the diseases of their minds. They would be unspeakably distressed should their children be distorted or deformed, and would use every possible means to correct or remove the deformity; but their minds may be deformed, and their tempers distorted by a thousand evil passions, without giving them any disturbance. They would be extremely mortified to see their children awkward, rude and unpolished in their behavior to their fellow-creatures; but seem to think it of no consequence with how much indecent rudeness and impiety, they treat their Creator. But surely this is not educating children for God. If mankind indeed were mere animals, devoid of reason, such a mode of education would be proper for them; but surely there ought to be some difference between the education of rational and irrational beings.

2. Educating children for the service of God implies, that we pay more attention to the heart or disposition, than to the mind. You will not surely suspect me of thinking that the mind, or, in other words, our rational faculties, should be neglected; or that the cultivation of it is not of very great importance. We only mean to assert that it is of far less importance than the cultivation of the heart. This, few, if any, will deny; for it is evident that, though our minds should be cultivated in the highest possible degree, and stored with every kind of human literature and science; yet if our hearts are neglected, if our passions, appetites and dispositions continue depraved, we can neither feel nor communicate happiness; but shall only be wretched ourselves, and occasion

unhappiness to others, even in this world, much more in the world to come. It is notorious that many of the individuals, whose agency has been productive of the greatest mischief both in the moral and political world, were persons whose mental powers had been carefully cultivated, while their tempers and dispositions were neglected. On the contrary, the most ignorant person, if his heart be right, will be happy himself, both here and hereafter; and may be the means of communicating much happiness and doing much good to others; though not so much, I allow, as he might accomplish with an educated mind. It is therefore evident, that although both are important, yet the cultivation of the heart is more so than that of the understanding. It is highly desirable that our children should possess both the wisdom of the serpent and the harmlessness of the dove; but if they cannot have both, the latter is certainly to be preferred.

But this many parents appear to forget. They are sufficiently attentive to the minds of their children, and spare no pains or expense, to give them the best education in their power to bestow. Every kind of knowledge, and every accomplishment, whether useful or not, which is fashionable, must be acquired by them. But meanwhile their hearts and dispositions are, in a great measure, or entirely, neglected. No means are employed to teach them the most important of all sciences, the knowledge of themselves, of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ, whom to know aright is life eternal. On the contrary, they are suffered to grow up, almost as perfect strangers to the very first principles of the oracles of God, as if there were no such book, or as if they were inhabitants of a heathen country. Surely, my brethren, these things ought not so to be. This cannot be educating children for God.

3. Educating children for the service of God implies, that we educate them for eternity, rather than for time; for a future world, rather than for this. You need not be told, my friends, that a different education is necessary to prepare us for
-continued inside back cover

YOUTH'S CORNER

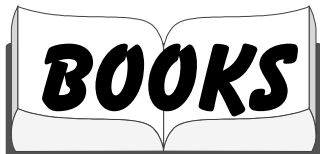
FAITH AND DOUBT MATTHEW 14:22-32

Peter, also called Simon, was one of Jesus' first disciples. He is noted for many things. Peter followed Jesus to become one of His "fishers of men." Peter was the one who denied Jesus three

times before the cock crowed when Jesus was arrested. He is also noted for his great faith followed by doubt. What episode demonstrates Peter's difficulty with faith (1) and what did Jesus say to him about it (2)? Fill in the missing vowels in each word (a,e,i,o,u,y). Then decide which word in each set does not belong. Write those words on the lines provided to answer the question. You can verify your answer by referring to Matthew 14:29-31.

- | | | |
|-------------|---------|------------|
| 1. Sn__w | P__t__r | __c__ |
| 2. w__lk__d | c__ff__ | t__ |
| 3. s__ng | m__s__c | __n |
| 4. c__ts | d__gs | w__t__r |
| 5. r__d | y__ | gr__n |
| 6. __f | st__l | ch__r |
| 7. l__ttl__ | c__r | b__c__cl__ |
| 8. h__y | str__w | f__th |
| 9. wh__ | p__p__r | p__nc__l |
| 10. m__n | st__rs | d__d |
| 11. y__ | tr__s | l__v__s |
| 12. sh__ | s__ck | d__bt |

1. _____
 1 2 3 4
2. " _____
 5 6 7 8
_____?
 9 10 11 12



Coming from a Reformed background that is often very subdued or even silent when it comes to praising God, this book will challenge our caution and reserve with clear exhortations from Scripture. We need to confess that we do not always find it easy to praise God. God deserves our praise. Luther said, "Since we receive everything from God, there is nothing that we can render him but praise, and praise to him alone." The first question of our catechism teaches that man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. In the fall, man questioned God's perfection and ceased praising Him. It is only through the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ that we again learn to praise God. As Christians we have even more reason to be filled with praise. There is no danger of our being over-enthusiastic in our praise of God if it is from our heart. The soul that is in love with Jesus Christ must sing! This book deals with the necessity of praise, the preoccupation of praise, praise in song, in prayer, in trials, in everyday life, in death and in heaven. This call to praise is one all Christians need to take to heart.

Created to Praise
by Derek Prime
Christian Focus
Publications

-submitted by Cope Jonkman



MISSION SPOTLIGHT

FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN (FMSC)

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

- Feeding God's Starving Children Hungry in Body and Spirit

OUR VISION

- With God's help FMSC will reduce the number of starving children throughout the world by helping to instill compassion in a generation that hears and responds to the cries of those in need.

OUR STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

As a Christian Organization:

- We believe that God has directed us to help others in need.
- We believe that every child has a right to be fed a nutritious meal.
- We believe that our lives are enriched when we graciously give our own time and resources to help others in need.
- We believe partnering with other faith based and humanitarian organizations maximizes our ability to feed God's children.

OUR COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

- We will follow Christian principles and values to guide and direct our Organization in fund raising, packaging and distributing food to those in need.
- We encourage people of all beliefs to help us accomplish our mission.
- We will ensure our food ingredients are of the highest nutritional value to meet the needs of starving children.
- We will package our food through the use of volunteers to feed the spirit.
- We will partner with other humanitarian organizations to ensure safe transit and distribution of our food.
- We will distribute nutritious food to starving children throughout the world who are hungry in body and spirit.
- We will promote public trust of our organization through efficient, cost-effective, and compassionate stewardship of our resources.

HISTORY OF FMSC

Feed My Starving Children was founded as a Christian nonprofit organization in 1987 through the efforts of a Minnesota businessman who felt called by God to help feed the starving children of the world during a humanitarian visit to Honduras. He returned to the Twin Cities to develop a method of large-scale relief.

His efforts, energy and resources resulted in the development of a food mixture that would be easy and safe to transport, simple to make with only boiling water, and culturally acceptable worldwide. This basic formula of rice, high protein soy nuggets, vegetables, vitamins and flavoring is still used by FMSC today.

In addition to this formula, FMSC needed to develop a cost-effective means of producing the completed meals in quantities that would make a real difference in alleviating world hunger. Initially, FMSC tested the possibility of using packaging machines, but this solution proved to be expensive and cumbersome. In 1993, a church group stopped by the FMSC facility to see if there might be an opportunity to volunteer with FMSC. That providential meeting gave birth to FMSC's volunteer packing approach.

To distribute the packed meals, the FMSC team began establishing partnerships with major global distribution nonprofits such as Operation Blessing, Salesian Missions and UMCOR. These partnerships allow FMSC to reach desperately needy children in remote parts of the world by leveraging the in-country expertise of these organizations. Through these vital partnerships, orphanages and facilities for handicapped children can provide hot, nutritious meals-and a ray of hope for the future.

Since its inception, FMSC's model of culturally acceptable, nutritious food, combined with volunteer production and distribution through on-the-ground partners has grown exponentially. In 1994, 2,400 volunteers packed 400,000 meals from FMSC's original Brooklyn Park location. In 2005, nearly 75,000 volunteers packed more than 15 million meals at sites in Brooklyn Park, Eagan, and a third mobile packing site that travels to youth conventions and churches. In March 2006, a third permanent site opened in Chanhassen, Minnesota. In 2007, the three sites Twin Cities sites, the newly opened Aurora, IL, site and the nation-wide Mobile Packing sites produced more than 43 million meals with 185,000 volunteers. Feed My Starving Children hopes to produce 100 million meals per year by 2010.

WHERE WE WORK

Feed My Starving Children is providing life-saving meals to people who need it the most - from countries affected by natural disaster to places enduring economic despair. FMSC meals are distributed in over 50 countries around the world through missionary partners at orphanages, schools, clinics, refugee camps and malnourishment centers.

FMSC believes in sustainability - we don't simply send one shipment of food to a country. Instead, we continue to provide our mission partners with the food they need to maintain their feeding programs.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN

Call 763.504.2919 or visit www.fmssc.org

Dear Friends

This spring, I gasped each time I signed the Feed My Starving Children (FMSC) rice bills. The price of each 2,000-pound bag more than doubled - from \$340 to \$700 - which caused our meal price to rise from 15 to 17 cents. Our staff and board of directors spent a lot of time in prayer as we discerned how we'd reach our goal of 55 million meals, as the 2-cent increase created a \$1.2 million dollar deficit.

Our prayers were answered by people like you who generously gave of their time and resources. FMSC staff and board of directors were led to a new topic of discernment - increasing our production goal. Due to the global food crisis, the requests for our food have tripled. To respond to the growing need, we have increased our goal to 70 million meals in 2008.

One country that is in desperate need of this food is Haiti as they recently endured food-related riots. One of our mission partners writes:

The kids are always so happy and grateful when they see the boxes of FMSC food. These meals have been a huge blessing to them, and without it, they would have practically nothing to eat. (Eldon and Donna Bryce, Feed a Child Mission Directors)

As an American, it's hard for me to fathom that a simple box of food could bring smiles to children's faces and that our meals are the the only thing they have to eat. But, the quote above is a reality for so many of our mission partners. Our food is a tangible sign of hope.

In a time when many people in Haiti, Nicaragua, and other developing countries around the world struggle to find even a bag of rice to eat, we ask that you'd join us in our global mission. We can bring smiles to their faces, food to their stomachs, and hope to their futures. And the price tag is relatively small - just 17 cents per meal, with 94% of gifts going to the feeding program. Please prayerfully consider how you will join us in our mission of "Feeding God's Starving Children Hungry in Body and Spirit."

Onward in God's service,
Mark Crea - Executive Director Feed My Starving Children

CHILDREN TO BE EDUCATED FOR GOD (PART 2 CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

different situations. For instance, if a parent designs one of his children for the navy, another for the counting house, a third for the bar, and a fourth for the desk, he will give them in some respects a different education; an education suited to their respective destined employments. So he who educates his children for this world, will,

in many respects, educate them very differently from one who educates them for the next. The first will confine his views to the present life, and be anxious to teach his children only those things which are necessary to qualify them for acquiring riches, or honors, or applauses here. But the other will extend his views to eternity, and be principally, though not entirely concerned, to give his children that knowledge which will be useful to them beyond the grave. Here, again, multi-

tudes fail. How few parents, my friends, educate their children in such a manner as would lead a stranger to conclude that they believed in God, or a future state; that they viewed their children as immortal beings, in a state of probation for eternity, and candidates for everlasting happiness or misery. He would see many anxious for the success of their children here, rising early, and late taking rest, and eating the bread of carefulness, to promote their temporal welfare; while no anxiety is manifested respecting the destiny of their undying souls.

Thus, my friends, have we endeavored to give you a concise view of what is implied in educating children for God. Let it be observed, in addition, that all this must be done in such a manner, as to convince your children, that you are sincere, that you are in earnest, that the promotion of their spiritual and eternal welfare is the great, the absorbing concern of your souls. We proceed now, as was proposed,

II. To consider the reward which God usually bestows on those who thus educate their children for him. Though God is the Creator and sovereign Lord of all things, and might therefore, with the most perfect justice, have required us to obey all his commands without any compensation, yet he has been graciously pleased to attach a reward to the performance of every duty, and of this among the rest. This reward consists,

1. In the pleasure which attends every attempt to educate children for God. However strong parental affection may be, it is rarely, if ever, sufficient to render the various cares, anxieties, and duties which attend a numerous family, delightful or even pleasant. There is reason to believe, that, in many instances, these cares and troubles are productive of fretfulness, impatience, and discontent; and not only embitter the lives, but sour the tempers of parents. Even Christian parents, who do not recollect that they are, or ought to be, educating their children for God, are prone to murmur at the frequent interruption which they meet with in the hours set apart for devotion, and the little time which the cares of their families allow them, for reading, meditation and prayer. But did they realize that they are encountering all these cares and troubles for God, that they are educating his children, and that whatever they do or suffer for then, if performed from right motives, will be considered and rewarded as done for him, how greatly would it lessen their sorrows, and alleviate the cares and perplexities attending a family. How easy would it be to spend wearisome days, and sleepless nights, for their children, could they feel that they are acting and suffering for God; and that he looks on, and approves their conduct. This alone, were there no other, would be a sufficient reward to the Christian for bringing up his children for God.

-Rev. Edward Payson (to be continued)

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For Christ's Crown and Covenant

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