

Fast Fact

A GLANCE AT TRENDS IN OUR SOCIETY

Keeping an Eye on Anger!

Many Scripture passages focus on the topic of anger. Where does anger come from? Counselor Shannon Rainey identifies four internal sources of anger: violated convictions or perceived injustice; unmet desires or blocked goals; threatened sense of self or feelings of personal assault; and rebellion against God.

If you are experiencing anger over *perceived injustice*, ask yourself:

- Does my violated conviction reflect God's laws or my own legalism?
- Am I truly grieved over the affront to God's holiness, or am I more upset by how the sin affects me?
- Does my self-righteousness blind me to the fact that I too am capable of equally heinous sin?

When you are irritated and frustrated by your *unmet desires*, ask:

- What are my unfulfilled desires? Are they legitimate?
- Am I demanding that I get my own way in my own timing?
- Will I trust God with my desires and this situation?

When your anger flares from feeling *personally threatened or disregarded*, ask:

- What do I believe is at stake here?
- Beneath my anger am I really experiencing fear, hurt, or both?
- Am I shifting the blame and directing my anger toward someone who is not responsible for it?

When your anger lingers and you become cynical, harsh with others, and *distant from God*, ask the more difficult question:

- Am I really angry with God, clenching my fist and murmuring against Him? Why?

Adapted from Shannon B. Rainey, "Why Am I So Angry?" Discipleship Journal, May/June 1995. Used by permission.

The following page suggests a graphic illustration of what it's like when anger goes unchecked.

NavTools

HELPING YOU RESPOND BIBLICALLY TO TRENDS IN SOCIETY

Keeping an Eye on Anger

One of the most common expressions of anger comes in the things we say. Here's a “hands-on” illustration kids will love (and the “big kids” in your small-group Bible study will love it, too!).

Get a cheap tube of toothpaste and a small piece of cardboard. Ask for a volunteer to squeeze the contents of the toothpaste out of the tube and onto the cardboard. (Let it be messy!) When the tube is empty, tell the volunteer to put the toothpaste back into the tube.

After a few moments, explain how our angry words are like the toothpaste. Once they leave our mouths, it's impossible to put them back in again. Pray that God would give us the grace to keep the “caps” on our mouths.

