

# Using Anger's Energy To Solve Problems

by Bill Goode, Executive Director, NANC

Uncontrolled anger is especially dangerous because often it is considered to be an acceptable sin. Statements like "I had a right to..." and "You should have seen what she did" are all too common in Christian homes.

Uncontrolled anger does harm in many ways. Because of uncontrolled anger, spouses forget the kind moments and remember instead the harsh cutting words. When this problem is not handled, parents often neglect their goals with their children. In addition, communication is hampered, churches' ministries are hindered, and testimonies are rendered less effective.

I will not endeavor to repeat Jay Adam's pamphlet on "What to Do When Anger Gets the Upper Hand" or material from Wayne Mack's Homework Manuals. Instead, after showing our counselees what sinful anger is and that it can and must be handled, we need to consider six steps to using the energy of anger constructively to solve problems.

## 1. Recognize, Admit, and Confess the Sin of Uncontrolled Anger.

"He that covereth his sin shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh shall have mercy (Prov. 28:13)." Confession speaks of "agreeing with God" that the person had no excuse. He failed to utilize the grace God wanted to give. He was not "victimized" by a perpetrator or by circumstances, but chose satan's example rather than the example of the Savior.

Confession must be made to God and the appropriate people.

## 2. See God in the Trial.

Hebrews 12:5 tells the believer there are two things he must never do in trial: never give up, and never count trial a commonplace thing. Paul in Romans 8:28 says, "We know that God causes all things (not everything but this, or most things, but God causes all

things) to work together for good to those who love God..." James 1:2-4 teaches that we should face trials with joy since God wants to use trial to "complete" or "fulfill" us.

Although the counselee may not be emotionally joyful, remind him that he is more than his emotions! Teach him to use his mind and will to respond in a way that pleases the Savior.

In Genesis 50:20 Joseph told his brothers concerning their wrong to him, "You meant evil against me but

Joseph correctly answered, "Do not be afraid; for am I in God's place?" (Gen. 50:19). God alone can rightly exercise vengeance.

## 4. Return Good for What You Think Is Evil.

In discussing Romans 12:17-21 in his booklet *Overcoming Evil With Good*, Jay Adams says that the word "overcome" is a battlefield term. That means that instead of being passive, the believer must get out of the trenches and aggressively win. The energy of anger must be used to return good for evil.

## 5. Communicate to Solve the Problem.

The counselee must be helped to learn to use the four rules of communication to solve problems. Detailed study of these are found in chapter three of *Christian Living in the Home* by Jay Adams and in unit four of *Strengthening Your Marriage* by Wayne Mack.

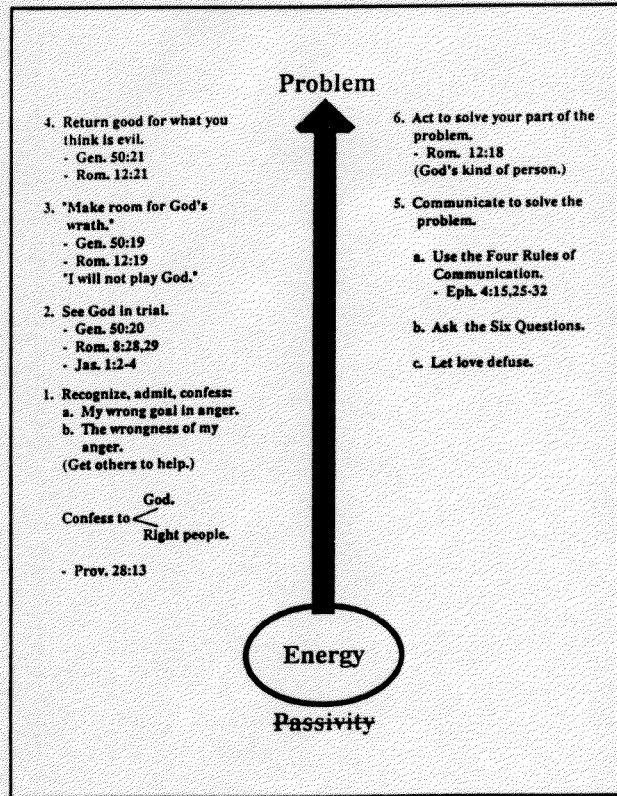
He also needs to be taught to ask himself six questions before bringing up a sticky problem:

- 1) Should love hide it?
- 2) Is the timing right?
- 3) Do I have the facts?
- 4) Is my attitude right?
- 5) Are my words loving?
- 6) Have I prayed about it?

## 6. Act to Solve Your Part of the Problem.

Paul in Romans 12:18 says, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, be at peace with all men." It may not be possible because not all men are peaceable, but the believer is responsible for his side of the issue. Praying is not enough. Changing thoughts, though essential, still is not enough. Believers must act.

God's grace is sufficient. Even habits of anger can be changed. John the apostle, who began as a "son of thunder" and wanted to call down judgment from heaven became the apostle of love. The God-given energy of anger can be properly channeled to solve problems.



God meant it for good..." In order to use that energy of anger productively we must see the bigger picture of God wanting to use the trial to complete or fulfill us (Jas. 1:4) and to make us more like Christ (Rom 8:28,29a).

## 3. Make Room for God's Wrath.

God alone has the right, the knowledge, and authority to handle vengeance. In Romans 12:19 Paul commands, "Make room for (God's) wrath..." When Joseph's brothers sent a message to him asking him not to kill them now that their father was dead,