

## Evergreen Baptist Church Men's Ministry

### Study Guide for Chapter 9 in *Hazards of Being a Man* “Unresolved Anger”

For Tuesday, April 1, 2008, and Saturday, April 5, 2008  
(Tuesday from 7:30-9:30 P.M.; Saturday from 8:00-10:00 A.M.)

The following questions are designed to help you prepare for the Men's Meeting, even if you do not have the book.

1. The chapter opens with Pastor Miller's recollection from his days in college when an upperclassman in the cafeteria line in front of him got angry with the server because he could not have sausage and pancakes, eventually yelling at the hapless counter man in his fury. Have you ever experienced such an incident? Why do some men seem to fly off the handle so easily at even the slightest provocation?

2. It is interesting to note what is listed first when the Apostle Paul instructs us in Colossians 3 to demonstrate the changes that have come about in our life as a result of becoming a new man in Christ. “But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.” (Verse 8) The Amplified Version adds an interesting point in its translation of verse 7: “Among whom you also once walked, when you were living in and addicted to [such practices].” Verse 8 in the Amplified reads: “But now put away and rid yourselves [completely] of all these things: anger, rage, bad feeling toward others, curses and slander, and foulmouthed abuse and shameful utterances from your lips!”

- a. Why do you think that the Lord would put anger first in this list?
- b. What do you see as the relationship between anger and wrath (rage) and also malice (bad feeling toward others)?
- c. How does anger relate to cursing, slander and foulmouthed abuse and shameful utterances?
- d. How can we become addicted to anger? How can such an addiction to anger be broken?
- e. What kind of impact would it have in our society if we were to actually put this into practice and we became men who could properly express the emotion of anger?

3. This is another masculine hazard that does not lack for Scriptural examples of men who did not handle it properly. Pastor Miller points to King David's lasting anger with Shimei as one example. (See 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 16:5-10; 19:18-23 and 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 2:1-4, 8-9.) Jonah chapter 4 tells us the story of an angry prophet.

- a. Why was Jonah angry? Was this a proper reason to be angry?
  - b. How did Jonah improperly handle and display his anger?
  - c. Anger is an emotion that God frequently displays, so it cannot be sinful in and of itself. What does this chapter teach us about God's proper use of anger?
  - d. What were the consequences of Jonah's improper expression of his anger?
  - e. What other Biblical men do you think displayed anger improperly? What does it tell you when you see so many angry men in Scripture?
4. What is your reaction to these quotes from chapter 9? Do you agree or disagree with Pastor Miller's statement, and why?
- a. "Men are notorious for failing to deal properly with our anger. Sometimes we let it build up to a boiling point like the pressure mounting inside an active volcano. And like a volcano, we will eventually erupt. When this happens, victims in the vicinity get caught in the path of destruction. Other times we get angry for the right reasons, but we participate in an unhealthy outlet for our emotions. We lock on to an addiction or vice that becomes our default response to angry feelings. Or perhaps we direct good, healthy anger toward an innocent and unsuspecting scapegoat."
  - b. "[S]ometimes we react in anger when we feel afraid or cornered. A predator-prey principle says that cornered prey will die unless it becomes the predator. A man who feels trapped – financially, occupationally, or relationally – may turn from prey to predator and go on the attack with his anger. Other times men grow angry because we feel we've been robbed of something to which we're entitled."
  - c. "Resolved, righteous anger is biblical and good. Unresolved and unrighteous anger is not. Men must strive to be angry over the right things and avoid getting angry over the wrong things. Furthermore, we must manage our righteous anger biblically so that it does not turn into bitterness and sin."
  - d. "The real problem with a man and his anger is mismanagement. I mismanaged my anger by letting it control me. David mismanaged his anger by failing to resolve it. But other types of mismanagement exist. Most men are guilty of one or more of the following types of anger mismanagement. **Absent Anger.** Some men never get angry. Never allowing themselves to get angry is actually a mismanagement of anger. .... [T]he opposite of sinful anger is not the absence of anger. All anger is not sin. .... In Ephesians 4:26 Paul tells believers to be angry but cautions us not to sin in our anger. .... We should be angry about the things God is angry about, but we must learn to manage our anger, not avoid it. **Impulsive Anger.** Some men get angry too fast. James 1:19 tells believers to be slow to anger. Those with impulsive anger cannot control it; instead it controls them. They have a short fuse.... Impulsiveness precludes discernment, which is necessary to be righteously angry. .... [S]ome men become angry too quickly because

they can't control their emotions. **Explosive Anger.** Some men express their anger in an unhealthy manner. When the apostle Paul wrote about anger in Ephesians 4:26, he warned against sinning in anger. We sometimes tend to make foolish decisions during the heat of our anger, such as planting our fist into a wall, a dashboard, or a family member. Sometimes we use explosive language when we get angry. .... **Unresolved Anger.** Some men fail to resolve their anger, and unresolved anger can lead to resentment. The final admonition in Ephesians 4:26 is 'do not let the sun go down on the cause of your anger.' Here Paul instructed believers to quickly resolve their anger. Yet many men can harbor anger against a relative, friend, or co-worker for years, sometimes leading to addictions and substance abuse. .... [W]e allow anger to eat away at us. .... We resent people who have more than us; we resent people who have less than us; we resent people who cut us off in traffic; we resent our parents...kids...spouse. We've mastered the ability to harbor unresolved anger. **Misdirected Anger.** Some men misdirect their anger toward innocent victims. This proverbial 'kick the dog' response in which we take our emotions out on the wrong person is unhealthy. .... Jesus said in Matthew 18:15: 'If your brother sins, go and show him his fault when the two of you are alone. If he listens to you, you have regained your brother.' In the same way, if I am angry with someone, I should go to that person with my complaint and seek to resolve it immediately. .... Most of the time we will find that, like Jonah, our anger is unwarranted and unprofitable. We're burning emotional calories – and often hurting other people – for no good reason.”

- e. “Do I have to forgive a person who has wronged me if he does not ask for my forgiveness? .... When someone asks for our forgiveness, we should forgive that person for his or her sake; when a person doesn't ask for forgiveness, we should forgive him or her for our own sake. .... Withholding forgiveness will harm us more than it will harm the other person. Harboring anger, bitterness, and unforgiveness can eat away at us inside.”

5. Pastor Miller uses the example of Jesus cleansing the Temple in John 2:14-17 as an example of a proper expression of anger, gives us four measures of why it was done correctly: “1. *He was angry about the things God is angry about.* .... There was nothing selfish or self-seeking in Jesus' outburst. He was coming to the defense of God's house, which was being abused and misused. 2. *He was angry at the time of the abuses.* He addressed the issue at once instead of letting His anger to simmer for days. .... He became angry there, and He left His anger there. 3. *Jesus communicated His anger in no uncertain terms.* He used words and actions to express His anger clearly to the people who were causing it. And not only did they know He was angry, they knew why He was angry. 4. *He allowed Himself to have emotions, but He controlled them.* Instead of erupting uncontrollably, He took time to patiently thread together a whip of cords. And the text does not say that He struck anyone with the whip He made; no one was injured when He drove the merchants from the area. Rather, the whip was used to move the animals from the vicinity and perhaps to gain the attention of the people. It worked. .... Like Jesus' anger, our emotion of anger will be obvious, yet we must not allow this emotion to run wild.” Another example of a man properly expressing his emotion of anger might be displayed by Jacob

in Genesis 31 as he has to confront his father-in-law, Laban. What do you see in that story that illustrates the proper expression of this powerful emotion?

6. This chapter also ends with five excellent action points designed to help us learn how to manage our anger. Prayerfully consider how you can implement them in your life and evaluate how following them would help you avoid the hazard of unresolved anger.

- a. “*Embrace righteous anger.* The Bible says that God sometimes grows angry. . . . . Read the Bible to learn the things that made God angry and allow yourself to grow angry about such things along with Him.”
- b. “*Confess your anger mismanagement.* When you have grown angry about things that God is not angry about, confess your feelings to God. Also confess your poor behavior that has resulted from your anger. Begin to ask yourself, *Do I have a good reason to be angry?*”
- c. “*Develop a healthy outlet for your frustration and stress.* . . . . Some outlets are healthy, such as exercise, reading, painting, working in the yard. Some others are unhealthy, such as overeating, oversleeping, physical aggressiveness, yelling, addictions (drugs, alcohol, sex, and others). Begin to replace your unhealthy outlets with healthy, intentional ones.”
- d. “*Talk about your emotions.* Instead of allowing your emotions to build up silently like the pressure mounting beneath a volcano, begin to discuss your feelings as they develop. . . . . You’ll find that talking serves as a pressure release valve that will prevent you from blowing your top later down the road.”
- e. “*Forgive the people who have made you angry.* Identify the source of your anger and extend forgiveness to that person – if not for his or her sake, for yours. At some point, the act of withholding forgiveness moves from punishing the other person to punishing you. And don’t forget to ask for forgiveness from those who have been the unwitting recipients of your outbursts and misdirected anger.”

7. The chapter ends with another memory assignment. “Be angry, and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath.” (Ephesians 4:26) The New English Translation that Pastor Miller cites translates “wrath” as “the cause of your anger.” Verse 27 goes on to add: “nor give place to the devil.” What do these additional insights add to your understanding of this topic? How do these verses relate to our learning how to properly managing our anger? How would building these verses into your life help you avoid the hazard of unresolved anger and make your use of this powerful emotion different from that of most men?