***ANGER***

***How to be “Quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger…”***

“I am so angry, I could spit fire,” was the expression my children heard when I was frustrated and tired and it was past their bedtime. Whenever these angry sounding words came pouring out of my mouth almost uncontrollably, I always felt guilty and that I was a terrible mom.

I have since learned that it’s not bad or a sin for a Christian to feel angry because what matters is how I express it. Anger is a feeling that we can be skillfully managed. As Paul told the Ephesians**, “Be angry and do not sin…”** How do we do that? During the 1970s, psychologist Paul Ekman identified six basic emotions that he suggested were universally experienced in all cultures. The emotions he identified were happiness, sadness, disgust, fear, surprise and anger.

**Fear**



**Disrespect**

**Disappointment**

**Resentment**

**Mistrust**

**ANGER**

**Abandonment**

**Unloved**

**THE ANGER ICEBERG**

Anger is often described as a secondary emotion because it is often used to protect ourselves from other vulnerable feelings

**Shame**

. experienced under the iceberg waterline.

We experience primary feelings immediately before feeling anger. Primary feelings such as

rejection, loneliness, disrespect, being ignored, pressured, misunderstood and not

getting physical and emotional needs met are hidden beneath what is being express as anger. Anger plus something we want hidden.

In managing our emotional reactions it’s important to separate what we feel from what we think. Feelings and thoughts function differently within our brain and bodies. Feelings are fickle, can’t be trusted and can send wrong message to our brain about who we are as children of God. Often what we feel is so overpowering that we believe how we feel defines who we are. I feel disappointed in my presentation, that means I am a disappointment. I feel incompetent that means I must be stupid. Our feelings are not driven by rational thoughts but often by stressful flight or fight hormones. Therefore, our feelings do not define our value or worth or get to be the basis for making decisions; feelings do not have a brain. Our emotions are driven by what we perceive is happening within us and outside of us.

### WHAT CAUSES US TO FEEL ANGRY?

### What causes anger is subjective to each person. Being tired and hungry is often called “hangry.” Who hasn’t felt hangry? We feel frustrated when our daily routine is interrupted and planned goals are not met for the day. When unspoken expectations are not met we feel angry and believe that someone “should” have known what we were thinking. Our pride is revealed when self-centeredness is unable to give up personal rights, accept limits and ignore the Spirit’s leading to be humble and put other’s first. Philippians 2:3 “Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.” How often anger is caused because we want a task accomplished in our own way; a preference with no moral value, just my way.

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When King David was confronted by Nathan the prophet for his sin committed with Bathsheba, he pleads for forgiveness and prays, “You delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.” Having wisdom about our inward thoughts, desires and secrets of our heart often helps us understand the why behind our anger. Asking ourselves, “why does what just happened make me feel so angry” can reveal that the hidden feelings below the iceberg need to be addressed.

The second half of Ephesians 4:26-27 says “don’t let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.” This verse trains us to “go vertical” quickly in prayer. Take every angry feeling, thought or action that you have or that someone else has directed toward you, directly into the throne room of God for comfort, understanding, forgiveness and peace. Receiving forgiveness or releasing another’s debt blocks Satan’s ability to fan any spark of pain into flames of resentment into bitterness. This time out alone with our Holy God allows us to search our hearts and to “take the log out of our own eyes,” repose, think Biblically and respond in a manner pleasing to Him.

Anger is a universal warning signal to be aware that a downward precarious drift is looming. Feeling disappointment can begin the slide into frustration that may bump us into feeling “hurt” and propel us into anger. Often before we know what happened we trip into the pit of anger surrounded by all of anger’s relatives: resentment, bitterness, and possibly rage.

The counselors in Hyde Park Counseling Center are always ready with out-stretched hands to guide away from the drift or pull someone feeling stuck in a pit onto solid ground. You will be so welcomed - it’s a safe place to learn to manage anger. Come check us out.

**James 1:19 encourages us “to be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”**