

THE BEREAN

"...EXAMINING THE SCRIPTURES DAILY..." (Acts 17:11)

SLOW TO ANGER

A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES
PART THIRTEEN OF SIXTY FOUR

"But let every one be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God" (James 1 :19,20 NASB95).

Anger is a strong and sometimes sudden feeling of displeasure. The word used by James is defined as "a more settled and abiding condition of mind, frequently with a view of taking revenge - less sudden in its rise...but more lasting in its nature" (Vine).

To be slow to anger suggests a well developed rule of self. Solomon said, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city" (Proverbs 16:32). Knowing that we cannot "achieve the righteousness of God" in yielding to anger, we understand the truth of Proverbs 14:29: "He that is slow to anger is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly." "The discretion of a man maketh him slow to anger" (Proverbs 19:11).

Anger in a man's heart does not work in him the righteousness designed and enjoined by God. In such a state man cannot do works acceptable to God. Anger so blinds a man's reason that nothing worthwhile can be attained. Things said and

done in anger may be regretted for a lifetime because they can never be undone. Man's wrath destroys his forces of restraint. In extreme anger man becomes a beast. "For in their anger they slew a man" (Genesis 49:6). "Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan. . .and Saul cast his spear at him to smite him" (I Samuel 20:30-33). Jonathan was his own son, but in anger he would slay him.

In addition to personal destruction, the progress of the gospel is hindered by anger in Christians. "Perhaps, the fallacy of anger is obvious because it is so common. And yet, since it is so common, all the more we need the additional warning here" (Fream).

Too many times we excuse our outbursts of anger by saying, "I can't help it." The admonition of James most surely indicates that man can do something about giving vent to anger. Anger is a result of a lack of self-control. We can control ourselves with the help of God. "Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry; for anger resteth in the bosom of fools" (Ecclesiastes 7:9).

(B. G. Echols)

CHURCH OF CHRIST

412 East King Street
Shippensburg, Pa. 17257