

RESOURCE:

IF GOD WEREN'T ANGRY BY PAUL DAVID TRIPP

Called to represent God's work of grace in the lives of others, many of us in ministry need to reevaluate how we think about the anger of God. Sometimes we can treat God's anger like the embarrassing uncle in our extended family. It's as if we're working hard to keep this attribute of God away from public exposure. Are we secretly worried about causing undue embarrassment to the family of faith? We are tempted to act as if anger were the dark side of God's character.

God doesn't have a dark side! John says, "God is light; in him there is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). It is impossible for there to be anything evil in God. It is impossible for him to feel or act unrighteously. He is entirely holy in every respect. He is completely good in everything he does. He is not evil, cannot be tempted by evil, and does not tempt anyone to do evil. He is perfectly holy, always, and in every possible way.

Implications for a Fallen World

All of this has very important implications as we seek to live and minister productively in this fallen world. If God is holy and angry at the same time, then anger is not evil in and of itself. If it were, God would never be angry. The many passages that teach us God is angry simply would not be in the Bible (see Exodus 32:10, 34:6; Deuteronomy 29:28; 2 Kings 22:13; Psalms 2:12, 30:5; Romans 1:18; and more). Therefore, it is not merely possible to be holy and angry at the same time, it is a calling. If you recognize and treasure the unchanging holiness of God and his call to be holy as he is holy, you will find it impossible to be in contact with anything that is in any way evil and not be angry.

This means if we are to take seriously the call to imitate our Father in heaven, calling ourselves and others to act and respond as he does within our human limitations, we must be angry. Not selfishly angry because we are not getting our own way, but worshipfully angry in the face of anything that is a violation of what God says is right, good, loving, and true.

THE ANGER OF GRACE

Let's be very clear. God's anger is the anger of grace. It is not the violent anger of unbridled and unrighteous fury. God's anger always works to right what is wrong. That is what grace does. This gracious anger has two sides to it: justice and mercy. In the gracious anger of justice, God works to punish wrong, but he does even more. God is not satisfied merely with punishing wrong. His hunger for right is so strong that he will not relent until wrong has been completely destroyed. He will not rest until evil is no more and justice and righteousness reign forever and ever!

There is also another side to his gracious anger. It is the anger of mercy. In mercy he works to convict—that is, to produce in us a sorrow for the wrongs that we think, say, and do. In mercy he works to forgive—that is, to clear our moral debt. In mercy he works to empower—that is, to give us everything we need to resist wrong and to do what is right. And in mercy he works to deliver. He will not be satisfied until every microbe of sin is completely eradicated from every cell of the heart of every one of his children.

Where do we see both sides of God's anger coming together in one moment? On that hill outside the city gates where Jesus hung. That is where we see justice and mercy kiss. As he hung there, Jesus bore the full

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/if-god-werent-angry/>

FORGIVE

RESOURCE:

IF GOD WEREN'T ANGRY BY PAUL DAVID TRIPP

weight of the justice of God's anger. He paid the penalty our sin required. And on the cross Jesus became the instrument of God's merciful anger that every sinner needs. He purchased our forgiveness.

If God were incapable of anger, there would have been no cross. You see, preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ forces us to deal with God's anger. It requires us to help those to whom we minister to think of God's anger in a deeper, more richly biblical way. Think about it: no anger, no cross; no cross, no hope of the final victory of righteousness, mercy, and justice. This would leave us in a world where evil exists inside of us and outside of us with nothing that we could do about it. The entire world and everyone in it would literally be going to hell, and we would be along for the ride with no way of getting off. We would be both victims and also victimizers living in a now and future hell of separation from God and everything that is good, watching darkness get darker with no hope of light. There would be no redeeming hope, no message worth taking the time to prepare and preach.

Anger is one of God's most beautiful characteristics. For God's children, his anger is a place of bright hope. Because he is righteously angry with sin every day, we can rest assured that everything sin has broken will be restored. Everything sin twisted will be straightened. Everything that has gone wrong will be made right again. God's anger assures us that all things will be made new.

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/if-god-werent-angry/>

FORGIVE