

How To Make God Angry

By Vic Coleman

Introduction

During a recent time of personal study, a certain theme kept coming up. Over a period of two weeks as I read and listened to the books of Psalms, Matthew and Mark on CD, I noticed that there were certain things that angered our Heavenly Father. To my surprise (and dismay) I found myself doing those things quite often. It seemed so easy to fall into this particular “sin”.

As we go through trials and tribulations, we eventually seek the Lord for help (the sooner the better) – this is a step in the right direction. But as time goes on, we often engage in activities that take us two steps backwards, thus nullifying our petitions to the Lord.

This lesson is a study in those activities that so easily entrap us and gets God mad.

Scriptures Used In This Lesson

Psalms 78:9 – 22

Exodus 16:1 – 8

Psalms 95:7 – 11

Matthew 16:1 – 12

Matthew 10:1

Forgetting The Past

A study of a passage in Psalm 78 provides some clues on getting God mad. The first section provides a summary of Israel’s (referred to as Ephraim) sin. Read Psalm 78:9 – 11. We are told of three things:

1. They did not keep God’s covenant
2. They refused to live by His law
3. They forgot what He had done for them

These three speak of the “faults” we constantly exhibit:

1. We do not live as if Christ is our Lord and we are in a covenant relationship with God through Christ. We accept Jesus as Savior, but His lordship is far from us. We don’t live as if God is with us throughout the day. We rarely ask for guidance during the day or stop to ask for wisdom. Unfortunately, too often the first time we think about God during the day is when we

sit down for our evening meal. We pray at meal time only as a result of a habit developed during childhood, and not out of a true heartfelt desire to give Him thanks.

2. We refuse to live by God's laws and principles. Since Christ's lordship is not first in our lives, we do things on our own or to please others. Sometimes we "go with the flow" and little by little distance ourselves from the Lord. If everyone else is engaged in an activity, we follow along to be part of the group, so we won't be rejected at some level. We never stop to ask, "Is this godly conduct? Am I really living in a manner that is consistent with Christ, to the best of my abilities?"
3. We forget the things God did for us in the past. As soon as the current crisis is over and the pressure subsides, the "memory lapse" begins. We experience a time of "peace" and then the next trial occurs. The reality of what God did for us in the past is like a mist, its there, but of no real substance; not relevant enough to encourage us for the current trial. *We don't carry the foundations of faith from the previous trial to the next.*

The last item is where I found myself the most lacking...I forget the past. I am thankful when the Lord delivers me through a trial, but by the time the next one comes about, I find myself "beggin' and pleadin'" as if I don't know if God *can* or *will* deliver me. This is what gets Him mad.

Read verses Psalm 78:12 – 16. Here we are given a list of things God had done for Israel.

What has the Lord done for you over the past year? Take a few moments to make a quick list. Were the things the Lord did for you significant? Did they affect your life or the life of others around you in a positive way? How often do you remind yourself of the things He's done? Why do we forget His goodness? Why do we continue to sin against Him?

Next read Psalm 78:17 – 22. Verse 18 says that, "They willfully put God to the test..." (NIV). The KJV phrases it this way, "And they tempted God in their heart...". The word "tempted" (or "test" in the NIV), comes from the word "nacad" which means to test, or to prove. So Israel was trying to make God prove Himself to them by demanding the food that they craved.

Now read Exodus 16:1 – 8 for background. What's interesting about the passage in Exodus is that Israel's vocal complaints were directed at Moses and Aaron, but the attitude of their hearts (which was disbelief) was directed towards God; He took it personally. After He had delivered Israel from Egypt in a great way, they doubted if He could provide them food. *They didn't carry the "foundation of faith" developed by the previous miracles forward to the next trial, which was hunger.* Instead of seeking the Lord (Who was visibly

present in a pillar of fire or cloud every day) for food, and feeling confident because of what He did for them in the past, they doubted His willingness and ability to help them in this current situation. This is what got Him mad. Notice what Moses said in Exodus 16:8, their grumbling was not against him and Aaron, but against God.

Now back to Psalm 78. Verses 19 – 20 clearly present the doubt of the Israelites. But we are no different today. How many times has God delivered you in a great way, and a week later, you doubt if He will help you in the next trial. Verses 21 – 22 show how God responded to their doubt. We are told not only that He became angry, but *why* He became angry.

The attitude Israel displayed affected God to the extent that it is mentioned several times throughout the Bible. Psalm 95:7 – 11 is an example.

Why do you think God gets angry when we doubt Him? Assuming you are a loving parent who has provided for your children for several years, how would you feel if they doubted you? As a parent what would hurt you the most, the disbelief in your ability, the disbelief in your love, the disbelief in your intentions, or the disbelief in your character? Why? What do you think hurts God the most?

Some Things Don't Change

A New Testament example of God's attitude towards lack of faith is found in Matthew 16:1 – 12. In the first part of this passage, Jesus has an encounter with the Pharisees and Sadducees. They wanted to "test" Jesus by getting Him to perform a miracle. The fact of the matter was that they had already witnessed or heard of several miracles; they just wanted to cause Him to "slip up" and undermine His popularity and influence.

Verse 5 tells us that the disciples forgot to bring bread with them on this trip. In verse 6 Jesus warns His disciples to be on guard against the "yeast of the Pharisees", referring to the encounter that just occurred. Verse 7 tells us that the disciples had concluded that Jesus made His comment because they forgot to bring bread so they could eat.

Now Jesus' response to their conversation was very revealing (verses 8 – 11). Instead of initially saying, "You all misunderstood me. I wasn't talking about food...", He begins by saying, "You of little faith...". Now why would the first thing out of Jesus' mouth be a criticism about their faith? The answer lies in Matthew 14 & 15, where the disciples had recently helped Jesus miraculously feed 9,000 people. With Jesus, food was not a problem; it should not have even been a topic of discussion. Their faith should have been at the

level where they cared not about their needs – Jesus was with them. They should have immediately looked deeper into the meaning of Jesus’ warning about the “yeast of the Pharisees”.

As you read verses 8 – 11, you can sense a tone of frustration with the disciples, especially verse 11. Not only had the disciples participated in the feeding of 9,000 people, they had witnessed many other miracles. They had even gone out in pairs with the authority to “drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.” (Matthew 10:1). So given what they had personally experienced, they had no excuse for worrying over the bread they had forgotten. Their lack of faith is what got Jesus frustrated.

Why do you think the disciples were concerned over bread? What are you concerned about? Why? Given what you know God has done for you personally, should you be concerned? Why or why not?

Summary

The key point in this lesson is very simple and straightforward:

When God does something for you, carry that experience forward in your life; use it as a foundation to further build your faith in Him.

Faith in God goes beyond what He will do for you; faith in God is the basis for your relationship with Him. When a loving parent is not trusted by his/her children, the hurt cuts deep into their heart. This is especially true when the parent has “proven” himself/herself time and time again. That’s what God feels; that’s why He got angry with Israel. That’s why Jesus got frustrated with His disciples. That might be the reason God is frustrated with you.

Make some time within the next 24 hours to do the following:

- Take a sheet of paper and fold it in half.
- On the left hand side, make a list of all things God has done for you in the past 12 months.
- On the right hand side, make a list of all of your current concerns.
- Make a decision to use the left side of the paper as your foundation of faith for the right side.
- Review the list every day for 30 days.
- When you pray (daily), begin your prayer thanking God for the things He has done on the left, and for taking care of the issues on the right.

After a while you will begin to realize that there is no reason to get Him mad; only reasons to rejoice.