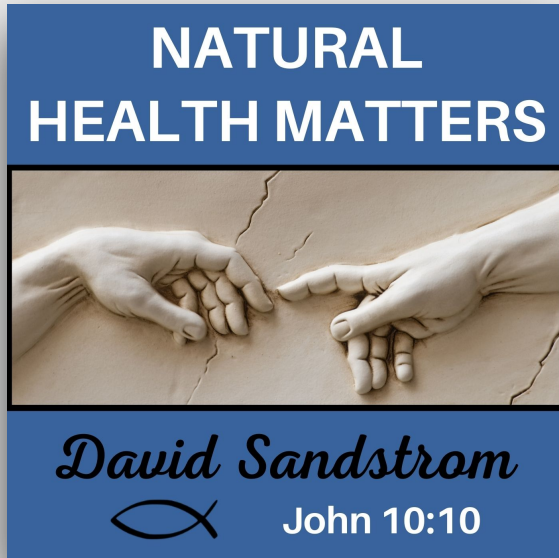


## NHM 68 Spiritual Health part 14: Overcoming Anger

David Sandstrom 0:00

Here's a sample of what you'll hear on this episode of Natural Health Matters.



Yes, the Bible says be angry, and yet do not sin. "Do not let the sun go down on your anger and do not give the devil an opportunity." That's Ephesians 4, verses 26 and 27. Some people try and take this passage literally. And they think that if they have a disagreement with their spouse, they can't go to bed until the conflict is resolved. Nowhere in this passage, does it say that we can't go to sleep with unresolved conflict. This passage is actually a caution, to not allow anger to control us. We're the ones in charge, we should be managing it. Welcome to the Natural Health Matters podcast where it's all about maximizing

your health potential, so that you can pursue the abundant life more effectively. I'm your host, David Sandstrom, Naturopathic Doctor, and Biblical Health Coach, and this is episode number 68.

David Sandstrom 1:06

This episode is part 14 in our series on the spiritual component of health, and we're continuing with some specific sins that can interfere with our health and well being. If you've been following along with the series, you know that the Bible has a lot to say about how we are to live in harmony with God's designed for spirit, mind and body and how that alignment is health promoting. Today we're going to be talking about anger, resentment, and bitterness. Ephesians chapter 4 verse 32, says this, "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you. Along with all malice." Anger and rage are powerful, health destroying emotions. Researchers at the Association for Psychological Science, analyzed angry, hostile language used on Twitter, and compared its use to actual county wide rates of heart disease, using data from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. They found that angry, hostile language used on Twitter was a better predictor of heart disease deaths than traditional health risk factors such as smoking, diabetes, hypertension, and obesity. In addition, they also found that positive emotions and psychological engagement were health protective. Wow. I guess God really did know what he

was talking about when he said, Don't let the sun go down on your anger. And love your neighbor as yourself. And pleasant words are a honeycomb sweet to the soul and healing to the bones. That's proverbs 16:24. Once again, it's good to see science catching up with what the Bible has been teaching for 1000s of years on health. I'll repeat it, God would never tell us to do something that's not for our benefit. And he would never tell us to avoid something that's not for our protection. I'm gonna put a link in the show notes to that study, because it's worth looking at. It's hard to believe that that's actually true. That anger in expressing that anger on social media is worse than smoking and obesity for heart disease risk. That's That's amazing.

David Sandstrom 3:22

In the last episode, Episode 67, Part 13 of the series, I said that the quickest way to trigger our stress responses with fear. And that's true, I still stand by that statement. But another way to efficiently trigger a stress response is when we get angry, we've all seen someone red in the face with anger. We've all been there. making this a habit is not health promoting. We may try to disguise our anger by giving it a Christian sounding name like I'm not angry, I'm simply experiencing righteous indignation. Well, call it whatever you want. our body's response is still the same. stress hormones get elevated. And as we've already discussed, chronic elevation of cortisol and other catecholamines prevents our bodies from properly repairing and replacing worn out cells. If you haven't already, listen to episodes 53 and 54, which are parts one and two in this series on the spiritual component of health. In those episodes, I explain the physiological link between our emotions and our bodies, our physical well being.

David Sandstrom 4:31

Not all anger is sin. It's okay to get angry now. And then it's part of being human. Anger that rises up occasionally can be telling us something about our God given passions and desires. We'll be talking about purpose and passion when we conclude this series, however, persistent anger is sin, because it will impede our ability to love others and may very well lead to illness. Yes, The Bible says Be angry, and yet do not sin. "Do not let the sun go down on your anger and do not give the devil an opportunity.: That's Ephesians 4, verses 26 and 27. Some people try and take this passage literally. And they think that if they have a disagreement with their spouse, they can't go to bed until the conflict is resolved. Nowhere in this passage does it say that we can't go to sleep with unresolved conflict. This passage is actually a caution, to not allow anger to control us. We're the ones in charge, we should be managing it. If the Bible written today, I think the language of this passage would sound something like this. Be angry and do not sin. Don't let your anger fester and cause you trouble. Think twice about venting your anger and social media. If it gets to that point,

you're probably letting your anger control you. And this is harmful to your health and well being. That's Ephesians 2:26. David's modern translation.

David Sandstrom 6:04

We must remember, anger is an emotion. And like all emotions, it must be processed. We mustn't allow ourselves to become emotionally constipated. We should explore and analyze the emotion, then put a name to it, and ask ourselves, what is this sensation or this feeling telling me? We should be learning what we can from our emotions, and then we let them go. This way, we can use it to our advantage in our emotions will be serving us, as opposed to us being slaves to them.

David Sandstrom 6:40

When thoughts escalate toward hostility and violence, anger turns to rage. We don't have to commit the violence to reach rage, out of control ideas that intend to inflict harm or rage. If anger triggers an unhealthy stress response, what do you think rage can do? If we've reached this level, it's time to get some help from a qualified professional counselor or pastor.

David Sandstrom 7:06

Another toxic emotion related to anger and rage is resentment. Resentment is indignation at being mistreated. Resentment has to do with things that happened in the past. We can't change the past, we live in the present, and our actions help to shape our future. Living in the past by holding onto resentment does not serve our health building pursuits. Having an unhealthy amount of resentment is usually based on the idea that things should always be fair. We've got to be careful what we wish for life is not fair. The sooner we come to grips with that fact, the better off we'll be. God isn't fair. And we should all be grateful that he isn't. Earlier in my Christian walk, I used to wrestle with the idea that because of Adam's sin, we're all guilty before God. We've all inherited his sinful nature. This seemed terribly unfair to me. But one day, a good friend and mentor of mine pointed out to me that, yes, the imputation of original sin from Adam to the entire human race is incredibly unfair. But neither is the imputation of Jesus righteousness. It's not fair that Jesus had to pay the price for my sins on the cross. He was innocent, yet motivated by love. He willingly laid his life down for me, Romans five, eight. I'm convinced that if there were only one person on earth, and that person was me or you, Jesus would still be willing to lay his life down for that one person. And by the way, we've all fallen short of God's ideal. Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." But thank God, the story doesn't end there. Romans chapter 6, verse 23, says, "For the wages of sin is death. But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Since Jesus life, death, and resurrection are historical facts, now we

get to receive His forgiveness and righteousness. I'm eternally grateful that God isn't fair.

David Sandstrom 9:24

Just as unrelenting anger and fury can morph into rage, resentment can escalate into bitterness. Bitterness is even more harmful to our health and resentment because it's more intense. Once again, God's word comes to our rescue. "See to it that no one comes up short of the grace of God, and that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it, many be defiled." That's Hebrews 12:15. When our anger seems to have a hair trigger, and we go off at some minor infraction, we need to do some serious reflection in prayer and perhaps counseling. What this may be telling us is that there's some unhealed wound for the past. A quick story. I was Once bitten by a pitbull, I didn't promote the dog, it aggressively launched at me and the owner made no effort to control his animal. As a result, I find myself getting annoyed at anyone that according to my definition, doesn't control their pet. This annoyance can quickly turn into anger, and I've said some very inappropriate things to people. The truth is, most pet owners care very much about their dog not hurting anyone. The problem was inside of me. I was allowing my festering emotional wounds to control my thought life and behavior. anger, rage, resentment, and bitterness are all related in that they flow from painful events from our past. Hurt, almost always precedes anger.

David Sandstrom 11:05

That's an important point I'm going to repeat that hurt almost always precedes anger; it comes before anger. Then as a result, rage, resentment and bitterness follow anger. Some pain from our past is causing trouble with our present the antidotes for these toxic emotions, our comfort, empathy, and forgiveness. We rarely get over our hurts alone. When we have these feelings, we need comfort. We can of course turn to God for support, we can also rely on a trusted friend. Make sure whoever you turn to for comfort has the skills to bring it. When we're hurting. We don't need advice or a pep talk. What we do need is reassurance and support. Effective support involves emotional responding. We respond to emotion with logic or reasoning. We respond to emotion with emotion. Once again, the Bible has guidance here. Romans 12:15 says "Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep." This is a simple yet profound statement. Learning the skill of emotional responding is a powerful tool for any kind of relational interaction. Emotional responding also involves active listening. Once again, the Bible has more advice for us. "Everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger. For the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God." That's James 1 verses 19 and 20. God gave us two ears and only one mouth. I think there's a reason for that. Maybe he's telling us to focus more on listening, and not so much on speaking. We should be listening

to understand instead of what most of us do, which is listen in order to respond. Generally speaking, the less that said the better. Sometimes we just need a shoulder to cry on. By all means don't suffer in silence. If you don't know anyone with the skill of emotional responding and compassion, you can teach it to them. But don't go without comfort.

David Sandstrom 13:24

Another important factor in letting go with these hurts is empathy. We must acknowledge that we live in a sinful, fallen world and bad things are gonna happen. Jesus said, "In the world, you will have trouble but take courage. I have overcome the world". That's John 16:33. The people that hurt us had themselves been injured by others. They have their own wounds that need healing too. We wouldn't get angry if a blind person stepped on our foot. Why should we get angry with someone that is acting out of unhealed wounds or ignorance. Empathy helps us to resolve our anger and resentment.

David Sandstrom 14:05

Comfort and empathy are crucial steps. But the real antidote to resolving these toxic emotions is forgiveness. Forgiveness allows us to get over the hurt and remember the event with grace. If we want to enjoy more relational harmony and peace, forgiveness is necessary. This is a super important topic and it's so important that I'm going to have to devote a whole episode to forgiveness in the near future.

David Sandstrom 14:32

So let's summarize. Angry hostile language used on social media can predict heart disease that's better than traditional lifestyle factors such as smoking, diabetes, hypertension, high blood pressure, and obesity. Anger is one of the quickest ways to induce a stress response and elevate stress hormones and other catecholamines stress chemicals. We shouldn't allow ourselves to become emotionally constipated. That will bring us harm. Hurt almost always precedes anger, rage, resentment and bitterness follow anger. The antidotes to all these toxic emotions are comfort, empathy, and forgiveness. Please remember, in this series on the spiritual component of health, I'm leaning heavily on my book the Christians guide to holistic health. If you enjoyed this series, you're really going to enjoy my book. My book addresses not just the spiritual component to our health, but the mental, emotional and physical aspects as well. Go to my website, [DavidSandstrom.com/book](http://DavidSandstrom.com/book) and you can pick up a copy today. If that doesn't work, you can go to Amazon, it's available in paperback, Kindle, and audible. For more, go to David Sandstrom calm in the show notes for each episode, you'll find links to all the resources that were mentioned, as well as a full transcript with timestamps that you can download for free. In addition, I always include a content upgrade with each show, which is a free download that

is designed to help you go deeper with that subject. Once again, thank you for listening, and I'll talk with you next week. Be blessed