

Mary Craig

From: Mary Craig
Sent: Monday, July 05, 2010 10:39 AM
Subject: Mary Craig Ministries July 2010 email



Mary Craig Ministries, Inc.

July 2010

Fourth of July. Behind our house is an apartment complex, in particular, the pool and patio area. Our neighbors enjoy holiday weekends with barbecues, beer, swimming, talk about sports, and setting off small fireworks that scare the kids and cause the dogs to bark and the cats to take cover under a rug. The party continues over any long weekend, and as it goes, the cursing and vulgarity increases with the alcohol intake and the anger level escalates, sometimes to having the police called to settle some domestic dispute or other. It makes for sordid entertainment for some, I suppose; but in another way, it's sad. Is life just a party? And if that's life, is that all there is?

Sometimes I wonder if we are aware of the cost of freedom in our country. We shy away from getting pulled into the intensity and gravity of wars and revolutions for freedom. We want the celebration, the remembering of the glory of victories won and rights secured, like life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

The thing is, we are seeing our liberties eroded and life cheapened. We hear solid rhetoric about the pursuit of happiness and going after our dreams, but reality sets in when the bills come in the mail and the price of milk takes another hike, the stock market dives, the grass needs cutting, and we really don't know what the future holds.

Many in our nation are not just angry because they had too much to drink. They're angry because they are frustrated, feeling disappointed, anxious, and just plain mad. Rome gave people "bread and circuses" to placate them, celebrations and violent sparring matches to get their minds off of rising up against the state. How did that work? Is that working today?

When people turn to government and away from God, they find that government wants people's lives to fit neatly into little boxes we can check off on forms online. God is creative; government is not. God deals uniquely with each person; government requires categories and labels and stock situations. We may all be equal, but thank God that He does not deal with each of us the exact same way. His justice always contains with it the mercy factor. He deals with us as individuals and tailors His responses to us accordingly. Every hair on our head may be numbered, but we are not merely a "number" to God. The Lord of the universe listens to us, knows the deep cries of our hearts, calls to us to turn to Him in repentance and in faith, and turns our hearts for our healing. The Living God sent His Son Jesus to propitiate His wrath, His holy recoil against the sin that offends His holy nature and person. God's love absorbed that wrath as

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Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sin.

Oddly, I opened a time up for prayer at Craighouse and four people began asking for prayer about their anger issues. Other heads nodded in agreement. I don't know whether this is a "God set up" because I am starting a study on dealing with emotions July 7th (Life on the Vine) or whether the study is just well-timed, but I do know that anger is an enemy that can steal our joy and put us into a rage with such fire so as to consume us.

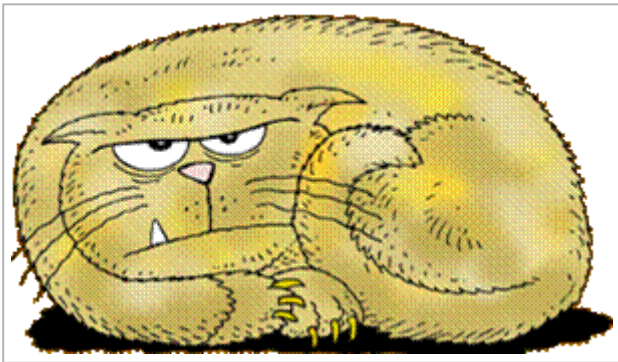
When we have a sudden and strong dislike and antagonism directed against what we perceive to be the cause of an assumed wrong or injury to ourselves, we get angry. That anger can escalate into rage and fury as we lose control and cross the boundary into madness. Some people are mad all the time, but it isn't events per se that make us angry; it's how we interpret and perceive those events that elicit the anger, outrage, and/or violent uproar.

The devil wants us angry. Ephesians 4.23-27 tells us "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor; for we are members one of another. Be angry [or in your anger] do not sin: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil."

God gave us our emotions and we can't say that we shouldn't get angry. When we feel anger, however, we are to handle it God's way—



not blowing up like a volcano or steaming coffee pot and **not** stuffing it all inside, pouting in some corner—



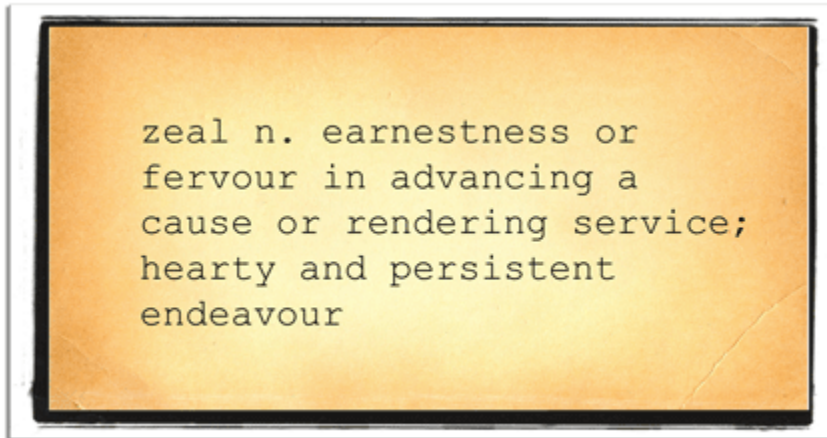
but releasing anger under control. This takes the Holy Spirit, folks.

When we get angry, the devil is right there ready to get his foot in the door, and if he succeeds, that anger can escalate from bitterness to resentment to anger to malice to wrath to envy to murder. Satan wants us to carry around the heavy weights of wrath and anger, weights that slow down and destroy our effectiveness and rob us of joy. (Proverbs 27.3)

Proverbs 19.11 tells us that we have the discretion to defer our anger and that it is our glory to pass over a transgression. We need to seek to understand as well as to seek to be understood. We need to listen and think about

the other person more than pop off at something that offends us. One way to keep our joy is to defer our anger. Be quick to hear [or listen], slow to speak, slow to anger. Give a soft answer. Slow down and speak calmly. Satan wants us to get into a stir, a yelling match. He wants our blood pressure to shoot up and to get us to the point of “fisticuffs.” [my mother’s word]

If we do want to get angry, then we need to turn that anger into zeal undergirded by wisdom.



People in our nation are angry right now. A lot of that anger can be turned into good use with godly zeal for the gospel of Jesus Christ, zeal for interceding for our nation and its future, zeal for getting out the vote, zeal for standing up for what we believe is right. Peter Marshall said that a man who stands up for nothing falls for anything. With God we have a voice; in a democracy, we vote, both by casting our votes and with our money. We need courage to stand for our convictions, to fight the good fight of faith, to war the warfare in the battle of kings and kingdoms.



We overcome anger with love. Love may not seem at first to be a more powerful emotion than anger with its fireworks and outrage, but it is. Love carries us farther, longer, enabling us to endure, to persevere, to never give up. God in His love forgave us on the merits of Jesus Christ. We can grow in grace. We can always choose to forgive others even as God for Christ’s sake has forgiven us. Love never fails.

The LORD reigns; let the people tremble:
 He sits between the cherubim; let the earth be moved.
 The LORD is great in Zion; and He is high above all the people
 Let them praise our great and terrible Name; for it is holy.

Psalm 99.1-4

Pastors:
Rev. Jim Craig
Dr. Mary Craig



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