

Title: It's My Ancestors' Fault!
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It's an epidemic! An estimated 16 million Americans are already suffering from this disorder. The typical victim begins exhibiting symptoms at around age 14 and, on average, will suffer 43 attacks during his lifetime. I am not talking about AIDS or Hepatitis C. The malady I am describing is IED, Intermittent Explosive Disorder, a psychiatric disorder highlighted by a recent study.

Some signs of IED are "road rage, temper outbursts that involve throwing or breaking objects and even spousal abuse," according to the National Institute of Mental Health. The Mayo Clinic reports approximately 7.3 percent of the adult population of the United States are affected by this disorder, characterized by "repeated episodes of aggressive, violent behavior that are grossly out of proportion to the situation."

Dr. Emil Coccaro, chairman of psychiatry at the University of Chicago's medical school, is one of the researchers who "discovered" the prevalence of this disorder. He is quoted as saying, "People think it's bad behavior and that you just need an attitude adjustment, but what they don't know...is that there's a biology and cognitive science to this." It was also noted that not all road rage, temper outbursts or even domestic violence is the result of IED.

How does one become a victim of this disorder? The Mayo Clinic reports that "most people with this disorder grew up in families where explosive behavior and verbal and physical abuse were common." In addition, "there may also be a genetic component, causing the disorder to be passed down from parents to children." The researchers who conducted this "ground-breaking study" claim "the disorder involves inadequate production or functioning of serotonin, a mood-regulating and behavior-inhibiting brain chemical."

It is not surprising the treatment for this disorder combines the use of antidepressants and behavioral therapy similar to anger management therapy. Even relaxation techniques have proven to be useful to some in controlling the "disorder." The fact that "sufferers" of this supposed disorder usually come from dysfunctional families where parental anger is uncontrolled makes me suspicious of the validity of the research. The Bible indicates that the expression of anger is a learned behavior (Proverbs 22:24-25). Could it be that "victims of IED" have learned this destructive behavior? Note the tentative language: "there may also be a genetic component."

There is certainly such a thing as mental illness and such illness can affect an individual's responsibility for his actions. Some segments of the medical community, however, seem determined to relieve people from responsibility for virtually any behavior described by the Bible as sinful. Rather than a man accept responsibility for his

decision to drink, some in the scientific community have decided that he is “genetically inclined” to the addiction. He really can’t control himself. In similar fashion, we have been told by “medical experts” that homosexuality is caused by genetics. The medical community is now informing us that perhaps uncontrolled anger is in many cases a function of biological processes regulated by one’s particular genetic makeup rather than conscious decision.

The implication of “genetic causes” is the inability of the individual to control such causes. We don’t choose our genetic makeup. We are to believe the alcoholic should not be considered guilty of anything; it’s not his fault. He is no more responsible for his drinking than a man is for the color of his skin. What a relief to know that now anger outbursts can also be blamed on the genetic material passed from one’s ancestors!

The Bible says intoxication is a sin (Galatians 5:21; Romans 13:13; 1 Peter 4:3). God also identifies homosexual behavior as sinful (Genesis 19; Jude 7; Romans 1:26-28). In addition, He commands us to put away all wrath and anger (Colossians 3:8; Ephesians 4:31), even “outbursts of wrath” (Galatians 5:20). Such behavior is clearly “bad behavior”; the only question is whether a man is actually responsible for his actions. We must be careful about excusing sinful behavior as simply the result of “mental disorders.”