

no accounting record! (1 Corinthians 13:4-5). The biblical mandate is blunt—Christians need to resolve anger immediately (Matthew 18:15). We must stop and consider that WE might have a sin to confess and an apology that needs to be made FIRST! (James 5:16)

To God. The best cure for unrighteous anger is a long, thoughtful prayer! Such will clarify our vision and help us distinguish the righteous from the unrighteous.

Breaking the Angry-Word Cycle

The retaliatory cycle—angry words always provoke more angry words. One raised voice is met with another raised voice. A shouting match never has a winner. The “air is not cleared” and is only filled with noxious fumes of a verbal warfare. (Matthew 5:22).

Christ stresses that His Followers are NOT to play the retaliation game (Matthew 5:38-42).

- ◆ *“Turn the other cheek.”* Accept the blame and walk away! Remember Matthew 12:36-37.
- ◆ *“Love your enemies.”* This is not determined by emotions but by decisions.
- ◆ *“Do good to those who hate you.”* Deeds of love extinguish the fires of anger.
- ◆ *“Bless those who curse you.”* Counter angry accusations with constructive words.
- ◆ *“Pray for those who mistreat you.”* Take refuge in the promise of Romans 12:19.

The Proactive Response

When you recognize your anger rising then...

- ◆ *Hesitation!*
- ◆ *Listen!*
- ◆ *Evaluate!*
- ◆ *Calm!* (Proverbs 15:1)
- ◆ *Pray!*

“Beware that wrath does not entice you to scoffing...be careful, do not turn to evil” (Job 36:18, 21).

Follow the 2,100-year-old wisdom of ben Sirach, *“Do not believe everything you hear.”*



Lesson Five: Those Angry Words Dalraida Church of Christ

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“Be angry and yet do not sin” (Ephesians 4:26).

Anger has been described in terms that moderate the negative emotion so people feel better about being angry (mad, miffed, irked, irritated, steamed, frosted, etc). Entertainers have generated laughter from portraying anger.

Regardless of how entertaining anger is presented, it is a deadly emotion both socially and physiologically. If it is left unresolved, it feeds hostility that develops into hatred.

Anger is a God-given emotion. But it has been compromised by the Devil’s temptations. Anger has been used many times to further Satan’s purpose rather than God’s purpose! There are times when God commands and expects His People to be angry! The Christian’s communication must decide two critical questions: How are we to control anger? How do we bridle hurtful, cutting, foolish words that initiate anger?

The Anger Response

Anger is a response that occurs when our perceived needs, desires, or goals are frustrated. Our world is knocked out of balance; our comfortable schedules are disrupted; we are inconvenienced! Often the catalyst for our angry eruptions is because something or someone is not doing things the way WE think they should.

Angry emotions cause the physical body to have predictable symptoms: more adrenalin is secreted, more sugar is released, the heart beats faster, blood

pressure rises, the pupils of the eye dilate. Our body is preparing for action! We are ready to respond to a perceived threat.

God made us this way. BUT God expects us to exercise rational decision-making to restrict the physical! God made us to be responsive to perceived threats. What I do with the anger catalyst is MY decision! There is personal accountability for the way I decide to use anger (Genesis 4:6; Jonah 4:9; Matthew 5:22).

When Anger Becomes Sin

The Bible does NOT equate the emotion of anger as an automatic sin. Anger is justified (Matthew 18:34; Mark 3:5). Inspiration clarifies the issue about appropriate and inappropriate anger. Christians are to be “angry” and not sin (Ephesians 4:26). There is a distinction between the anger that leads to sin and the anger that does not lead to sin. Some want the Christian to never be angry. God does NOT command His People to be passively compliant when evil is present!

The Appropriate Response: God expects us to be angry at actions of injustice and unkindness, to the acts of sin, to those furthering false doctrine (Romans 1:18). God DEMANDS His People to be angry in certain situations and with those who justify and rationalize sin. We must understand a very blunt point: God is angry at the sin and angry at the sinner! (Romans 2:5).

“Righteous anger” is directed toward those who violate God’s will. “Unrighteous anger” is directed because our selfish expectations are not met (James 1:19-20).

Understanding the Anger of God

Some object to saying that God possesses anger/wrath (Nahum 1:6). Often these are the very ones who also assert that God has no commands and no pattern for obedient compliance in order to be saved. These assert that God’s grace is greater than man’s choice and so we should not condemn anyone but just embrace everyone. These are fools (Proverbs 6:27).

Understanding the Anger of Christ

Christ’s anger was morally right. He was “consumed” with a zeal for righteous Truth that He demonstrated righteous anger! (John 2:13-17). The right response to irreverence is all-consuming! There are times when it is not only right to be angry, but it is wrong *not* to be angry!

Understanding Unrighteous Anger

The anger of Cain (Genesis 4). Cain demonstrated “unchecked” and “unreasoned” anger. God’s response to Cain’s self-centered anger was “you must master it” (Genesis 4:6-7).

Here are the traits of unrighteous anger:

- ◆ Angry out of jealousy and resentment over another’s success.
- ◆ Refused to accept responsibility and blamed another.
- ◆ Did not think through his feelings.
- ◆ Did not heed God’s warnings.
- ◆ Hurt his family.
- ◆ Allowed anger to master him.

Analysis of “Angry Words”

There is “savage power” in angry words. Effective controls must be in place to govern the tongue. Nothing can quickly destroy as angry words. We must guard against “*snarl words*” that launch verbal projectiles in temperamental outbursts.

Unrighteous anger is a learned behavior, and it must be “unlearned”! It is undisciplined behavior and must be controlled. Remember Matthew 12:36-37; Ephesians 4:30-31.

Dealing with Anger

A failure to deal with anger invites sin to dominate and corrupt your inner man. Angry emotions are like cancer (Ephesians 4:26-27, 31).

Nursing Anger. Deliberately focus on the action, words, or person who is greatly resented. Sweet revenge corrupts our thoughts.

Suppressing Anger. Recognizes the angry emotion and deals with it; not denying but managing our anger (Proverbs 29:11). “Why am I feeling angry?”

Repressing Anger. A negative response to anger. We deny the existence of anger. Repressed anger causes serious physical and psychological damage.

Expressing Anger. Many advocate a “venting.” “Get it off your chest!” “Vent your spleen!” Does “telling someone off” while you are in a state of fury, help? (Proverbs 14:29)

Confessing Anger. The best strategy for dealing with anger. Here is the order: first, confess it to personally, next to the person who is the object and finally to God!

To ourselves. Admit that you are angry. Accept neither excuses nor rationalizations for your anger. Sustaining that anger is a choice we make.

To the object (person). This may not be necessary once we examine the anger we feel. “Love is not easily angered” (1 Corinthians 13:5). Love is also “patient kind, not rude.” And “love does NOT KEEP A RECORD OF WRONGS!” There is