

Anger Part 2 – When Is Anger Justified and How to Control It

(Ephesians 4:25-32)

INTRODUCTION:

1. I want to continue our study of anger today and the passage just read is a very good passage to set the stage because it presents God's desire for His people when it comes to anger.
 - A. We will be angry, but we cannot sin in being angry.
 - B. We must control ourselves, including our words, when we are angry.
 - C. And, anger is to be put out of our lives, or not allowed to characterize our lives.
2. In our last lesson:
 - A. We defined anger and looked at the three different stages of anger.
 - B. We looked at how anger in and of itself is not wrong but must not be harbored in the heart nor allowed to define who we are. We are not to be angry people.
 - C. Finally, we considered various ways that anger becomes sin in our lives in hopes that this would open our eyes to what God expects of us as well as what Satan seeks to do in tempting us to sin.
3. Today I want to continue our study of anger by presenting when the Bible says anger is justified and give some biblical instructions concerning how to control anger in a godly fashion.

BODY:

I. When is anger justified?

- A. Anger is justified when God's will is knowingly disobeyed by God's people.
 1. Although political correctness has affected us far more than we might like, when God's people openly reject God's word, we *should*—we *must*—be angry!
 2. Righteous people zealous for God have always been angered by rebellion from God's people.
 - a. Moses when Israel committed **idolatry** (Ex. 32:19-20 – “So it was, as soon as he came near the camp, that he saw the calf and the dancing. **So Moses' anger became hot**, and he cast the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain. ²⁰ Then he took the calf which they had made, burned it in the fire, and ground it to powder; and he scattered it on the water and made the children of Israel drink it.).
 - i. Israel was rebelling against God...their deliverer!
 - ii. Moses' actions against the calf and the people were appropriate! Sin is terrible!
 - iii. I think our reaction to sin is often far more casual than what it should be.
 - b. Jesus' angry over the **lack of respect given in the temple** (Jn. 2:13-17 – “Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. ¹⁵ When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. ¹⁶ And He said to those who sold doves, “Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!” ¹⁷ Then His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up.”).
 - i. This is strong yet righteous anger against sin because it was for the right reason—disrespect given God and His place of worship.
 - ii. Christ's actions were completely under control and in accordance with righteousness (i.e., “**Zeal** for Your house has eaten Me up.”). **This was about God's glory.**
3. Lesson?
 - a. We can't be apathetic towards what angers the Lord angry—toward sin!
 - b. Paul was amazed that the Corinthian church was allowing sin to remain within their midst with little reaction to it (1 Cor. 5:1-2 – “It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife! ² And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.”).
 - c. But, when it was properly dealt with, consider how their response was described (2 Cor. 7:11 – “For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what

eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter.”).

B. Anger is justified when motivated by people’s attempt to usurp God’s authority.

1. Since God is the one and only lawgiver, when people begin to change His law, anger on the part of the righteous is justified (Isa. 5:20-21, 24 – “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! ²¹ Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And prudent in their own sight!... ²⁴ Therefore, as the fire devours the stubble, And the flame consumes the chaff, So their root will be as rottenness, And their blossom will ascend like dust; Because they have rejected the law of the Lord of hosts, And despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.”).
2. We should be angry when...
 - a. People twist God’s ways and call good evil and evil good, it should anger us.
 - b. The world calls standing for righteousness “hate,” while accepting all sorts of eternally condemning sin and perversion is called “love.”
 - c. The morally pure are ridiculed while the morally perverted are lifted up as heroes!
 - d. The government, which is supposed to support what is good, chooses instead to censure right and uphold evil! (Rom. 13:3-4 – “For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. ⁴ For he is God’s minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.”).
3. Righteous anger *must be kept under control* (Titus 3:1-3 – “Remind them to be **subject to rulers and authorities**, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to **speak evil of no one**, to be **peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men**. For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.”).
- a. What others may do, even against God, does not justify uncontrolled anger and lashing out on our part.
- b. Righteous anger is always a controlled and godly anger.

C. Anger is justified when motivated by injustice.

1. David became angry when Nathan told him the story about a rich man who *unjustly* took a poor man’s *only* lamb when he had many (2 Sam. 12:5-7 – “So David’s anger was greatly aroused against the man, and he said to Nathan, “As the Lord lives, the man who has done this shall surely die! ⁶ And he shall restore fourfold for the lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity.” ⁷ Then Nathan said to David, “You are the man!”).
- a. God had Nathan tell this story to David because He knew it would make David, a just man, righteously angry!
2. God expects Christians to be angered over injustice today.
 - a. Injustice is an affront to the value God places on those of His creation (John 3:16 – “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”). We can’t treat with little care and concern those who God loves so deeply that He would send His Son to die for them!
 - b. Injustice among brethren is insult to oneness found in Christ!
 - i. Gal. 3:26-29 – “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”
 - ii. Rom. 14:10, 12-13 – “But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ... ¹² So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. ¹³ Therefore let us

not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way."

- c. When injustice occurs it should cause righteous anger in the heart of the righteous (Gal. 2:11-14 – "Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I **withstood him to his face**, because he was to be blamed; ¹² for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. ¹³ And the rest of the Jews also **played the hypocrite** with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their **hypocrisy**. ¹⁴ But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, **I said to Peter before them all**, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?").
- d. When people are treated unjustly God expects a response in righteous anger to address it.

II. How to control anger:

- A. When in a situation where you feel anger arising, stop and pray!
 - 1. I know that Satan says "it is not the time to pray, it is the time for response." But Satan is a liar and the power of prayer approached in faith will never let you down.
 - 2. Through prayer of faith...
 - a. We gain wisdom to deal with these situations before they happen (James 1:5-6 – "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. ⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.").
 - b. We are promised help in time of need (Heb. 4:15-16 – "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.").
- B. Ask yourself if you truly need to get angry about the situation.
 - 1. Wisdom teaches us to overlook certain offences (Prov. 19:11 – "The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, and his glory *is* to overlook a transgression.").
 - 2. We can control whether we get angry.
 - a. Prov. 14:29 – "Whoever is slow to anger **has great understanding**, but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly."
 - b. Prov. 17:27 – "Whoever restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of **understanding**."
 - c. So, anger is a matter of choice and its proper time of display is a matter of wisdom.
- C. Ask yourself if another response might be a better response!
 - 1. Prov. 15:1 – "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."
 - 2. Prov. 15:18 – "A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention."
- D. Deal with your anger as God teaches (Eph. 4:26-27, 31 – "Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and give no opportunity to the devil... ³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice." – ESV).
 - 1. We cannot respond in kind (Rom. 12:17 – "Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.").
 - 2. We must not let the "sun go down on your wrath/anger" (4:26).
 - a. We must deal with situations that anger us promptly and honestly.
 - i. Deal with the problem promptly (Matt. 18:15 – "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.").
 - ii. Deal with the problem with honesty (Eph. 4:25 – "Therefore, putting away lying, 'Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.'").
 - b. Situations *beyond our control* may continue unresolved.

- i. That must not be your fault (Rom. 12:18 – “If it is possible, **as much as depends on you**, live peaceably with all men.”).
 - ii. We are not controlled by situations, but by the Lord. So, despite what others have done and the situation, we must *put that anger out of our heart*!
 - c. Are these things easy? No! But it is God’s will for us and we must obey it!
- 3. To husbands and wives:
 - a. I know you can get crossways with one another over emotionally charged issue.
 - b. But you must not let your anger linger even for a night, because it does harm (Psa. 37:8 – “Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; **Do not fret**—it only causes harm.”).
 - c. You must swallow your pride and address the issue, because prolonged anger produces resentment and bitterness which will destroy a marriage.
 - d. When you address the issue, take care with your words (Prov. 29:11 – “A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back.”).
- E. Avoid close association with angry people.
 - 1. We are influenced by others—even when it comes to anger!
 - a. Prov. 22:24-25 – “Make no friendship with an angry man, And with a furious man do not go, lest you learn his ways and set a snare for your soul.”).
 - b. 1 Cor. 15:33 – “Do not be deceived: “Bad company ruins good morals.”
 - 2. There may be some association you cannot avoid (i.e., work, etc.), but choose how closely you associate and whether you will allow their words and actions into your heart!

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Anger is a God-given emotion and *justified* at times depending on the situation.
 - A. We should be angry at situations that make God angry.
 - B. But, as we have continually emphasized, it must be justified to be acceptable—not all situations justify our anger.
- 2. Anger is very serious emotion and can lead us to sin when not properly controlled!
- 3. If you will follow God’s guidelines, you will be on your way to:
 - A. Being a better example to the world of the character of Christ in you.
 - B. Fewer occasions where you are in deep regret over your actions fueled by uncontrolled anger!
- 4. Will you come to Jesus today in humble submission of faith and obedience?