

that demonstrates our trust in Him.

People with understanding control their anger; a hot temper shows great foolishness. - Proverbs 14:29 NLT

What is one thing (there are many) that you fail to “see” when your temper flares that would lead you to control your anger? (e.g. the feelings of another, faults in yourself, God’s perspective).

God wants us to function in understanding and grants us wisdom when we ask. When we lose our temper, we are being foolish because God grants wisdom to those who ask.

19 Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. 20 Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires.

- James 1:19-20 NLT

What does James tell us that God desires for us that anger doesn’t produce? Now which of these do you most need to improve, your listening, your speech, or your temper control?

WRAP-UP

When we live in an angry world, with angry friends and family, and never go beneath the surface to take inventory of our personal anger we are in danger of allowing the toxicity of anger to have a lethal impact on our soul, our relationships, our health, our joy, our peace, our lives. God invites us to bring the Kingdom of Heaven to earth when we surrender our anger to Him. As we trust in His justice, His wisdom and His righteousness we disarm the ticking time bomb of anger that lurks beneath the surface of our lives.

MEMORY VERSE

4 Don't sin by letting anger control you. Think about it overnight and remain silent.
- Psalm 4:4 NLT

Challenge –

Be aware of practices you engage in that feed your anger rather than your spiritual health. What do you watch or listen to, who do you spend time with, that agitate you rather than edify you?

Why Are We Angry? Beneath the Surface - Week 2

INTRODUCTION

Have you noticed that it seems like people are angrier than ever before? We live in an angry world, surrounded by angry friends and family. Anger can build up below the surface like a pressurized tea kettle, just waiting for a vent to burst through. And when it does you don’t want to be in the way! But why are we so angry? Those who want to justify their anger may point to Jesus overturning the money changers’ tables in the temple. If you look at what Jesus’ anger was directed towards you will find it was those who misrepresented God or misled and mistreated His people. But there are many more places in scripture that warn us against the dangers associated with anger. This week we will take a look at what the Bible says about our anger.

Ice Breaker

When was the last time you witnessed something blow up? Perhaps it was a fireworks display, your car’s engine, or something in the microwave. Describe what happened.

Key Passages

26 "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 and do not give the devil a foothold.
- Ephesians 4:26-27 NIV

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Not All Anger is Equal

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul warns us that anger can open a doorway to sin. But notice he doesn’t say, do not be angry. We sin when we are controlled by our anger, rather than us being in control of it, understanding its source and dealing with it.

26 And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 for anger gives a foothold to the devil.
- Ephesians 4:26-27 NLT

9 Control your temper, for anger labels you a fool.
- Ecclesiastes 7:9 NLT

Anger (Gr. orgē) refers to temper, agitation, vengeance, or violence. It is the expression of the wrath of man. The anger that is stirred up in us may stem from various sources.

- Hurt: rejection or emotional pain,
- Injustice: the violation of your rights or the rights of others,
- Fear: from threat or insecurity,
- Frustration: unmet expectations of yourself, others or circumstances.

Which of these four sources most often cause you to be angry- hurt, injustice, fear or frustration? How do you typically express (or repress) your anger?

Paul is quoting Psalm 4:4 which says, "Don't sin by letting anger control you. Think about it overnight and remain silent." By not dealing with or not controlling our anger, we give Satan an opportunity to provoke us and direct us to follow a sinful course of action. So rather than pushing our anger deeper below the surface, we need to recognize what is at the root of our anger and ask God how He wants us to address that issue. We need to listen for God's voice and let Him direct our response rather than allowing the toxicity of anger to have a lethal impact on our soul, our relationships, our health, our joy, our peace, our lives.

2. What Jesus Taught

20 "But I warn you--unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven! 21 "You have heard that our ancestors were told, 'You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.' 22 But I say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell.
- Matthew 5:20-22 NLT

In the sermon on the mount Jesus addresses the issue of anger. It is one of a series of issues where Jesus says, "You have heard...but I say..." Jesus strips away our outward appearance and reveals our heart in each of these passages. He begins by saying to enter the Kingdom of Heaven your righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees who are concerned only with their public appearance (Luke 16:15).

Have you ever seen anger erupt into violence, perhaps at a sporting or political event? What were the warning signs that anger was leading to sin?

23 "So if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, 24 leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.
- Matthew 5:23-24 NLT

Jesus concludes with specific steps to take when anger has begun to take root in our hearts. It isn't to continue to foster the appearance of righteous, it takes action to restore relationships.

Is there anyone that God is bringing to mind that you are angry with and perhaps need to surrender your anger to God rather than feeding it and allowing it to lead you further from Him? Can you identify what the underlying issue is that provoked you to anger? Don't let the sun go down without releasing that to God tonight and begin the process of reconciliation with that person.

3. Surrendering Our Anger

Anger surrendered and at the right intensity can move from something that is toxic and lethal to your soul to something that brings trust, wisdom and righteousness in the Kingdom of God.

19 Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, "I will take revenge; I will pay them back," says the LORD. - Romans 12:19 NLT

Taking revenge can feel justifiable. But in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus taught us to turn the other cheek. Why would taking revenge demonstrate a lack of trust in God?

If we say we trust God to do justice, then we should live in a way that