

Uprooting Anger: Biblical Help for a Common Problem

By Robert D. Jones

- I. Defining and Categorizing Anger Biblically
 - A. Anger defined – “our whole-personed active response of negative moral judgment against perceived evil.”
 1. Our anger is an **active response**.
 2. Our anger is a **whole-personed** active response.
 3. Our anger is a response **against something**.
 4. Our anger involves a **negative moral judgment**.
 5. Our anger involved a judgment **against perceived evil**.
 - B. Biblical Categories of Anger
 1. Divine Anger
 2. Righteous Human Anger
 3. Sinful Human Anger
 - Perceptions are wrong
 - Responses are ungodly
- II. Is Your Anger Really Righteous?
 - A. Criteria for Righteous Anger
 1. Righteous Anger Reacts against Actual Sin.
 2. Righteous Anger Focuses on God and His Kingdom, Rights, and Concerns, Not on Me and My Kingdom, Rights, and Concerns.
 3. Righteous Anger is Accompanied by Other Godly Qualities and Expresses Itself in Godly Way.
 - B. Questions to Help Determine if Your Anger is Righteous (David Powlinson)
 1. Do you get angry about the right things?
 2. Do you express your anger in the right way?
 3. How long does your anger last?
 4. How controlled is your anger?
 5. What motivates your anger?

6. Is your anger “primed and ready” to respond to another person’s habitual sins?

7. What is the effect of your anger?

C. Our Lord’s Righteous Anger

1. Jesus and the Pharisees (Mark 3:1-6)

2. Jesus and His Disciples (Mark 10:13-16)

3. Jesus and the Temple Merchants (John 2:13-17)

D. Summary of Righteous Anger

1. It reacts **against actual sin** – as **biblically** defined.

2. It **focuses on God and His concerns** – not me and my concerns.

3. It **coexists with other godly qualities** and **expresses itself in godly ways**.

E. We must cultivate righteous anger – but that can only come through repenting of our self-centered desires and refocusing our heart on God and His kingdom, rights, and concerns.

III. Getting to the Heart of Anger

A. Nonbiblical Labeling of Causes of Anger

1. Inner, unconscious psychological forces

2. Childhood trauma or chronic bad nurturing

3. Present sufferings

4. Unmet emotional needs

5. Physiological factors

6. Satanic attacks

B. **The Real Cause of Anger: The Heart** (Mark 7:20-23; Luke 6:43-45)

C. Anger in the Christian – James 4:1-2: Four Heart Causes

1. Entrenched, battling desires and pleasures

2. Unmet ruling wants and desires – expectations

3. Coveting and Envy

4. Selfish motives – even for good things.

Summary – Our anger comes from the sinful desires that rule our hearts. Those desires are often not for bad things, but for things we want too badly.

D. How Can You Tell if a Desire is Ruling You?

1. **When it consumes you** – when you dwell or ruminate on it. To what topic does your mind drift when it is undirected? What do you think about in your spare time?
2. **When you are willing to sin to get it** – by manipulation, cry or explode when you do not get what you want?
3. **When you sin when you don't get what you want.**

Summary - the root of anger lies in unsatisfied ruling "I-wantsies," unmet demands, and fallen heart idols. Cravings causes conflicts.

- E. Biblical Examples of Heart Idolatry Anger
- IV. Categories of How Sinful Anger Affect Us
 - A. Anger Revealers – Overt Anger
 - B. Anger Concealers – Covert Anger
 - C. Anger Against God
 - D. Anger Against Ourselves
- V. Repentance: The Road to Uprooting Heart Anger (James 4:4-12)
 - A. Reject our worldly lovers
 - B. Repent of our sinful ruling desires

"I am angry now because I wrongly think that I must have a (husband, wife, friend, boss, etc.) who must (respect me, etc.)" and letting this control my heart. Please **forgive me** and **provide me with enabling grace** to serve You and not myself.
 - C. Humble yourself – quit blame shifting and own your sin.
 - D. Submit and Draw Near to God
 - E. Resist the Devil
 - F. Quit judging others – resign your God-playing and refuse to usurp His sole prerogatives.
- VI. What are some biblical truths about God and about idolatry that we must meditate upon and speak God's truth to ourselves when we are tempted to be angry?
 - A. **I want something too much – which is idolatry.** (James 4:1-4). I am seeking things of this world to replace God – we do not worship God – we worship ourselves and what we want.

- B. **I am not God/Judge** (Genesis 50:16-19; Roman 12:17-21). It is not my job to put on the robe, step up on the bench, and pronounce judgement on everyone in the world (other than myself). The anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God (James 1:20) and we are to overcome evil with good. We usurp God's role as judge – when we should ask ourselves as Joseph did – “Am I in God's Place?”
- C. **God has been very gracious to me – in Christ** (Ephesians 4:31-32; Matthew 18:21-35). Likely one of the greatest apostles said he was “the foremost/chief among sinners” (I Tim.1:15). How much debt/sin have we accrued against God in our lives which apart from Christ – we would be condemned to hell for one of them? Yet we react strongly against “sins” against us like the ungrateful servant in the parable. We, of all people, should show mercy and grace to others – **IF** we understand the weight of sin that we committed and still commit towards God and others.
- D. **God is in control and is doing good** (Gen. 50:20; Romans 8:28). Every bad boss, bad driver/traffic, and other people and situations are brought into our lives for His purpose of making us depend on Him and teaching us to be more like Christ. **There is no random act apart from God's purpose.**
- E. **Remember who we are – a new creature in Christ** (Romans 6:11; 2 Cor. 5:17). We have died to sin once and for all and now are united with Christ in newness of life (Romans 6:4-7). We are new creatures in Christ, no longer controlled by the flesh, but filled by the Holy Spirit Who is producing His wonderful fruit in our lives (Gal. 5: 22-23). When we get sinfully angry and say we cannot control our anger, we are lying and deny our new status in Christ. We are to consider ourselves as “dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”