

**HANDLING WHAT HANDLES YOU
HOW TO HANDLE ANGER-PART 1**

EPHESIANS 4:26, 29, 31-32; PROVERBS 14:17, 29; 16:32; 25:28; 29:22

Introduction

We're in this series of messages I've entitled **HANDLING WHAT HANDLES YOU**. We've been looking at how we as believers need to learn how to **deal with our emotions** and **keep them in check** by **not letting our emotions get out of control!** When these things we are talking about handle us instead of us handling them, they can cause great harm to us, to others, and, most importantly, to the cause of Christ!

Thus far we've looked at how we should handle FEAR, WORRY, BURDENS, DEPRESSION, AND BITTERNESS.

Tonight I want us to look at an emotion that is prevalent in these last days! —The emotion or feeling called ANGER! (I believe its widespread prevalence can be traced to the pressures of our busy society!)

In order to handle ANGER we MUST FIRST UNDERSTAND ANGER FROM A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE. (That is what we've been doing with EACH of these emotions!)

Anger is a normal emotion experienced by all people at various times in life! Some believe anger is always a destructive emotion, while others believe it can be used in a constructive way. Which is true? Is it possible to control anger, and if so how? When we don't control our anger, how can we resolve it?

LET'S ADDRESS SOME PERTINENT QUESTIONS—

I. IS ANGER ALWAYS WRONG OR SINFUL?

Remember last week we saw how **"BITTERNESS" is always a sin!** Thank God, that's **NOT** the case with **"ANGER"!**

Well, Paul commands us here in our text to "be ye angry and sin not. (Ephesians 4:26)

This passage clearly makes a distinction **between being angry and sinning**. Paul is revealing the fact that **anger can be used in the life of a Believer without the necessity of falling into sin!**

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We know the Bible also teaches that *"God is angry with the wicked everyday."* (Psalms 7:11)

We read where Jesus *"looked round about on"* the religious legalists of His day *"...with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts..."* (Mark 3:5). Jesus also expressed righteous anger for the desecration of His Fathers house in *John 2:14-17*.

In *1 Samuel 11:6*, we find that the Spirit of God came upon King Saul and in the same verse it says that *"his anger was kindled greatly"*, which then motivated him to do God's work.

So, anger is an emotion that can be used in a constructive way if it is expressed in harmony with Biblical limitations and principles. The problem is that many times anger is not expressed in a Biblical way and results in great conflict between people!

IS ANGER ALWAYS WRONG OR SINFUL? NO!

II. HOW IS ANGER EXPRESSED DESTRUCTIVELY?

A. Anger Can Be Very Destructive If We Allow Ourselves To Blow Up And Vent Our Anger Against Another Person!

Some people call this *"letting off steam"*, when in reality, it is the sinful use of anger and wrath to destroy or manipulate another person.

James 1:20—"The wrath of man worketh not [i.e. does not produce] the righteousness of God."

Psalm 37:8—"Cease from anger and forsake wrath; fret not thyself in any wise to do evil"

Proverbs 29:11—"A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards"

The use of anger in this manner is clearly a violation of God's commands, which ultimately hinders effective communication and relationships with others.

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B. Anger Can Be Destructive When We Internalize It Or Bury It Inside!

This action is just as wrong as blowing up and venting your anger. In fact, **if we internalize anger it can develop into bitterness!**

Ephesians 4:27, "...let not the sun go down upon your wrath."

This passage commands us not to allow our anger to boil within our heart for a long period. God wants us to deal with our anger and what is causing it, quickly, even before nightfall!

I believe this is what the LORD was trying to get Cain to do when he asked him in *Genesis 4:6—"Why art thou wroth? And why is thy countenance fallen?"*

God knew that Cain was very angry and wanted him to identify its cause in order to help him resolve it. Without taking this action, the LORD knew that his sin would ultimately control him and cause an inevitable blow up—And it did! His anger grew and turned to murder!

C. If our anger has caused us to sin against someone else, we need to seek God's forgiveness and the person or persons that may have been offended by the display of our anger.

1 John 1:9—"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

If we are holding in anger and resentment, we need to identify why we are angry and then take the appropriate Biblical action.

III. HOW CAN ANGER BE EXPRESSED CONSTRUCTIVELY?

The ONLY way anger can be expressed constructively is that it must be restrained and controlled! Some may ask if this even possible? Well, the book of Proverbs declares:

Proverbs 19:11—"The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression." (i.e. Just let it go!)

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Proverbs 14:29—"He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly"

Scripture makes it clear that **anger can and must be restrained and controlled!** Our problem is that we often REACT before we THINK things through!

i.e. We flesh out anger that is Unrestrained and Uncontrolled!

IV. HOW CAN WE RESTRAIN AND CONTROL OUR ANGER?

A. We Must Choose To Control Our Anger!

Is this possible? Yes, it is! Let me give you an example:

Have you ever been arguing with someone and then your phone rings? What did you do? Most likely **you chose to control your anger** simply by making a choice to answer the phone and speak calmly to the caller?

Romans 6:12 says, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof."

That is a choice!

We can also make the same choice not to allow ANGER to reign in our heart.

There have been times in our lives, even before we were saved, that we have **chosen to control our anger!**

We may have **chosen to control our anger** and say nothing simply **because we wanted to keep our job...keep a customer... keep from getting a spanking...or some other ulterior motive!**

If even as a non-Christian we could choose to control our anger, how much more today should we as a believers be able to restrain it? Today we have the power of the Holy Spirit to help us! (The Restrainer!)

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We Must Choose To Control Our Anger...

B. We Must Choose To Walk In The Holy Spirit!

One fruit of the Holy Spirit living within is *temperance* or **self-control**. He can enable us to do all that we need to do to restrain and control our anger!

We need the "*living water*" of His Spirit to quench the fire of our anger! (*John 7:37-39*) God's Holy Spirit is stronger than our anger! This is why Paul said, *Philippians 4:13*—"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"

He will strengthen us to control our anger! If we will simply allow the Spirit of God to control us and to reign in us!

C. We Must Choose To Deal With The Small Issues Before They Build Into Resentment!

Many times the failure to resolve small offenses with a person will ultimately lead us to those volcanic eruptions of anger and rage!

Moses is one of the best examples of allowing multiple issues to frustrate and anger him to the point of this kind of explosion. Scripture reveals that he suffered the people and their contradictions year after year until finally he lost his temper. (*Psalms 106:32-33*)

Again, Paul taught here that we should not allow the sun to go down on our wrath. (*Ephesians 4:26*)

D. We Must Choose To Control And Restrain Our Words!

Proverbs 15:1—"A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger." Harsh words stir up whomever we are speaking to, but it also stirs up our anger if we keep talking. Therefore, if we want to control our anger, we need to "*be swift to hear, slow to speak*", and "*slow to wrath*." (*James 1:19*)

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In other words, stop talking and listen more, this helps us to calm down and reason more clearly. Because if we allow them to, harsh words will stir us up too!

E. We Must Choose To Control And Restrain Our Thoughts!

When we allow angry and resentful thoughts and accusations to rule and control our mind, we will continue to boil inside.

We need the peace of God to rule our hearts and minds which enables us to think clearly and constructively as to a Biblical course of action and Biblical solution to the problem. To accomplish this, we must first understand why we are angry.

God asked Cain in *Genesis 4:6*—"Why art thou wroth?" (i.e. "Why are you angry?") He asked this question before Cain killed his brother Abel in the attempt to help him resolve his rage. Therefore, determine this: Are you angry at God, angry at some other person or group of people, or angry with yourself?

Then we must re-think the issue Biblically from God's perspective which will naturally enable us to control our anger. *Proverbs 19:11*—"The discretion [i.e. wisdom or understanding] of a man deferreth his anger, and it is to his glory to pass over a transgression.

God's wisdom and discretion will help us to think and act in an appropriate manner to resolve why we are angry before we take an inappropriate action as Cain did.

In addition, God's wisdom can and will bring peace to us as we choose to refuse the hateful and revengeful thoughts of bitterness that stems from our anger!

We must acknowledge these thoughts as sinful before God and ask His forgiveness.

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Paul encouraged us to meditate on things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praiseworthy!
(Philippians 4:8)

F. We Must Choose To Control And Restrain Our Actions!

We need to take a **short time out** when we realize that we, or the other party in the conversation, are beginning to get out of control.

Proverbs 20:3 says, *"It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling."*

Proverbs 17:14, "...leave off contention before it be meddled with."

Taking a time out will allow us to pray and get under control before a blow up occurs.

This may entail just walking away from a confrontation before we explode.

Don't grab, push, or have any physical contact with a person you are angry with or that you know is angry with you. If you try to force someone physically to do what you want, this will only increase their anger and resistance.