

What Does the Bible Teach About Managing Anger?

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

February 10, 2022 Thursday Indepth Bible
Class of the Trilacoochee church of Christ

What Does the Bible Teach About Managing Anger?

- Anger is a powerful emotion driven by strong motivation and seemingly unlimited energy to expend itself.
 - It can be controlled, channeled, redirected, and reduced.
 - God requires that we do so.
 - Perhaps it would be helpful to learn how.
- However, is all anger sinful?

A Look At Anger

- In the Old Testament
 - Prov. 14:17 - “A quick-tempered man acts foolishly...”
 - Ecc. 7:9 - “Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, For anger rests in the bosom of fools.”
 - Psalm 37:8 - “Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret -- it only causes harm.”

A Look At Anger

- In the New Testament
 - Uncontrolled anger is not compatible with the Christian disposition.
 - Eph. 4:31-32 - “Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.”

A Look At Anger

- In the New Testament
 - Col. 3:8 - “But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.”
 - James 1:19-20 - “So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; 20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”

A Look At Anger

- Yet, there is a place for a certain kind of anger.
 - John 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 moneychangers 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.’”

A Look At Anger

- There is a place for a certain kind of anger.
 - Mark 3:5 - “And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts”
 - Matt. 23:13 - “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.”

A Look At Anger

- There is a place for a certain kind of anger.
 - Rom. 1:18 - “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness”
 - Rom. 2:5 - “But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God”

A Look At Anger

- There is a place for a certain kind of anger.
 - Eph. 5:6 - “Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.”
 - Eph. 4:26 - “Be angry, and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your wrath.”

A Closer Look At Anger

- God's anger is always a righteous reaction to evil.
 - Rom. 1:18, 2:5-9
 - His wrath is never misguided; He is capable of properly manifesting and managing anger.
 - Man, with his imperfections, is not so capable. His anger is often misguided and misdirected because of ignorance, assumptions, and misunderstandings.

A Closer Look At Anger

- Christ's anger has no self-interest, only anger against unrighteousness.
 - He could be angry, but only for God's honor
- When personally abused, He said nothing.
 - 1Peter 2:21-23 - "For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 22 Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth; 23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously"
- But when abuse was directed against God, He displayed righteous anger.

A Closer Look At Anger

- Man, with his imperfections, does not always properly use anger in matters of righteousness; often it becomes self-righteous anger.
 - We often remain silent when sin is exalted and God is dishonored, and then we get angry when someone offends us personally.

“Be Angry, And Do Not Sin”

- It must be controlled.
- It must be dispelled before nightfall.
- Thumos (most often translated wrath) - “the sudden outburst of passionate anger” - ZPEB; “the blaze of temper which flares into violent words and deeds, and just as quickly dies” - Barclay
- Orge (often translated anger) - “indignation which has arisen gradually and become more settled” - Thayer; “suggests a more settled or abiding condition of mind” - Vine

“Be Angry, And Do Not Sin”

- The point is simply this:
 - It is wrong to “blow off steam” (thumos)
 - It is wrong to “have a lasting, suppressed anger” (orge)

Putting Away Anger And Wrath

- Transformation in the life of the Christian
 - 2Cor. 5:17 - “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”
 - Rom. 6:16-18 - “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? 17 But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. 18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.”

Putting Away Anger And Wrath

- This does not mean that we cannot or do not sin, only that we do not have to sin.
 - Rom. 7:14-24
- We are now free to present ourselves to God, to serve as instruments of righteousness.
 - Rom. 6:11-14, 19

Putting Away Anger And Wrath

- Made possible by renewing our minds.
 - Rom. 12:1-2 - “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

Putting Away Anger And Wrath

- By setting our minds on things above.
 - Col. 3:1-2 - “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.”
- By contemplating the glory of the Lord.
 - 2Cor. 3:18 - “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

Putting Away Anger And Wrath

- With a renewed mind, it is possible:
 - To put off things like anger, wrath - Col. 3:8-11
 - To put on things like kindness, love, the peace of God - Col 3:12-15
- Transformation leads to reacting differently.
 - The world reacts with the works of the flesh - Gal. 5:19-21
 - The Christian reacts with the fruit of the Spirit - Gal. 5:22-23

We Need Righteous Indignation

- We need to stop viewing ourselves as just getting by. In Christ we are conquerors.
 - Rom. 8:35-39 - “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written: For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

We Need Righteous Indignation

- Rev. 21:1-7 - “Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. 2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. 4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.’ 5 Then He who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’ And He said to me, ‘Write, for these words are true and faithful.’ 6 And He said to me, ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. 7 He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.’”

We Need Righteous Indignation

- Our personal weaknesses are not obstacles to what God can accomplish through us.
 - 2Cor. 12:9-10 - “And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”
 - 1Cor. 15:58 - “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

We Need Righteous Indignation

- We need to adopt the viewpoint of a warrior, to answer the Lord's call to arms.
 - 2Tim. 2:3 - "You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."
 - 2Tim. 4:7 - "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."
 - 1Tim. 1:18 - "This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare."

We Need Righteous Indignation

- It is important to be clear about who the enemy really is.
 - Gal. 5:15 - “But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!”

We Need Righteous Indignation

- We need to learn to distinguish the enemy from victims of the enemy.
 - 2Tim. 2:14 - “Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers.”
 - 2Tim. 2:24-26 - “And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, 25 in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, 26 and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.”
 - Acts 10:38 - “How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.”

We Need Righteous Indignation

- Victims of the Adversary need to be rescued not despised.
 - James 5:19-20 - “Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, 20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.”
 - Jude 22-23 - “And on some have compassion, making a distinction; 23 but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.”

We Need Righteous Indignation

- It is important to be vigilant and strong.
 - 1Cor. 16:13 - “Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.”
 - Joshua 1:9 - “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”
 - 1Sam. 4:9 - “Be strong and conduct yourselves like men, you Philistines, that you do not become servants of the Hebrews, as they have been to you. Conduct yourselves like men, and fight!”

We Need Righteous Indignation

- Eph. 6:10 - “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.”
- 2Tim. 1:7 - “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”
- Rev. 2:10 - “Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

We Need Righteous Indignation

- We are not helpless victims who must despairingly, hopelessly surrender to the Adversary's tactics. We can go on the offensive and crush our enemy.
 - John 10:29 - “My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.”

We Need Righteous Indignation

- 1Cor. 10:13 - “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”
- 1John 5:18-20 - “We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him. 19 We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one. 20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.”

We Need Righteous Indignation

- Never give the Adversary an opening.
 - Eph. 4:27 - “Do not give place to the devil.”
 - 1Tim. 5:14 - “Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully.”

We Need Righteous Indignation

- The Adversary can be resisted.
 - James 4:7 - “Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”
 - 1Peter 5:9 - “Resist him, steadfast in the faith”
 - Gen. 4:7 - “If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.”
 - Luke 4:8 - “And Jesus answered and said to him, Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.”

We Need Righteous Indignation

- We need to be righteously angry with Satan for what he has done. In most places Satan has had it all his way for too long.
 - Num. 25:7-13 - “Now when Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose from among the congregation and took a javelin in his hand; 8 and he went after the man of Israel into the tent and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her body. So the plague was stopped among the children of Israel. 9 And those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand. 10 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 11 ‘Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned back My wrath from the children of Israel, because he was zealous with My zeal among them, so that I did not consume the children of Israel in My zeal. 12 Therefore say, “Behold, I give to him My covenant of peace”; 13 and it shall be to him and his descendants after him a covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the children of Israel.’”

Anger Management

- Avoid frustrating situations by noting where you got angry in the past.
 - Matt. 26:41 - “Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”
 - Prov. 4:14-15 - “Do not enter the path of the wicked, And do not walk in the way of evil. 15 Avoid it, do not travel on it; Turn away from it and pass on.”

Anger Management

- Reduce your anger by taking time, focusing on other emotions, avoiding aggression, and attending to other matters.
 - Phil. 4:8 - “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things.”

Anger Management

- Respond calmly to an aggressor with empathy or mild, non-provocative comments, or with no response at all.
 - Prov. 15:1 - “A soft answer turns away wrath,
But a harsh word stirs up anger.”

Anger Management

- If angry, concentrate on the undesirable consequences of becoming aggressive.
 - Psalm 37:8 - “Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret--it only causes harm.”
 - Ask yourself: Why give them the satisfaction of knowing you are upset?

Anger Management

- Reconsider the circumstances and try to understand the motives or viewpoint of the other person.
 - Phil. 2:3-4 - “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”

Anger Management

- Train yourself to be empathic with others.
 - 2Tim. 2:24-26 - “And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, 25 in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, 26 and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.”

Anger Management

- Be tolerant of human limits and patient with weaknesses.
- Be forgiving (ask yourself if you haven't done something as bad).
- Follow the great lesson of Christ.
 - Matt. 7:12 - “Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”

Controlling Anger Through Behavior Modification

- Reduce your frustrations.
 - Find the source of your frustration, whether people, subjects, or situations.
 - Attempt to reduce or eliminate your exposure to these negative stimuli.

Controlling Anger Through Behavior Modification

- Reduce violent stimuli in your life.
 - Avoid violent movies, and violent, aggressive friends.
 - Be very selective with your friends, so that they do not goad you into anger and rage.
 - Eliminate drugs and alcohol as stimulants of anger.

Controlling Anger Through Behavior Modification

- Reveal yourself to others, and try to understand others.
 - Announce you may be having a bad day to others.
 - Attempt to indicate to others that you have noticed that they are having a bad day, and offer to listen or let them vent.

Controlling Anger Through Behavior Modification

- Stop hostile fantasies.
 - Cease dwelling on issues or people that aggravate.
 - Think smoothly and calmly.

Controlling Anger Through Behavior Modification

- Do not escalate the violence.
 - Aggressive action on your part may cause an equally aggressive response that starts a vicious cycle.

Controlling Anger Through Behavior Modification

- Suppress or convert your violent reaction.
 - Count to ten, take a deep breath, go take a walk, or get some exercise.
 - Think of the source of the aggravation and whether a violent reaction will accomplish any purpose other than remorse, which is not a viable goal.

Controlling Anger Through Behavior Modification

- Cease using temper to get your way.
 - While successful in the short term, using anger to win points is a losing strategy in the long run.

Controlling Anger Through Behavior Modification

- Use stress inoculation. This approach involves:
 - Being aware of our own irrational fantasies.
 - Learning a better understanding of why others are weak when they show rage.
 - Rehearsing how to be calm in the face of angering stimulation.

Controlling Anger Through Behavior Modification

- Meditation and prayer
- Instead of trying to determine whether we should react to difficult situations by letting off steam or by suppressing anger, the goal of the Christian should be changing the inner person; the more we are transformed, the more likely we will react with love, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control.

- Following the example of Christ, there may be a place for anger, but only in things pertaining to the honor and will of God; in all other things, we do well to remember:
 - The example of Jesus
 - 1Peter 2:23 - “Who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously”
 - The words of David
 - Psalm 37:8 - “Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret-it only causes harm.”