

# ANGER MANAGEMENT

## HOW TO CONTROL YOUR ANGER

- 1. Anger is a negative emotion, not a sin.** Righteous indignation is a proper response to sin, hardness of heart, greed, and disobedience. Jesus never sinned when he got angry and cast out the moneychangers: "And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers seated. And He made a scourge of cords, and drove *them* all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the moneychangers, and overturned their tables; and to those who were selling the doves He said, 'Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a house of merchandise.' His disciples remembered that it was written, 'ZEAL FOR THY HOUSE WILL CONSUME ME'" (John 2:14–17; cf. "knew no sin" 2 Cor. 5:21). He was also angry with the Pharisees for rejecting his teaching: "And after looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored" (Mark 3:5). God is often angry with (1) the unrighteous: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18) and (2) the righteous, such as David: "O LORD, rebuke me not in Thy wrath; And chasten me not in Thy burning anger" (Psa. 38:1). Believers are instructed to "BE ANGRY, AND *yet* DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity" (Eph. 4:26–27). If anger is a sin, why does Paul instruct them to be angry? Conclusion: anger is not a sin, but it can easily *lead* to sin.
- 2. Anger must be controlled because it can do a lot of damage.** To not work on controlling your anger is to be a fool. How many problems are you willing to create in your home or church with your anger? How many people in your home or church are you willing to hurt with your anger? Is this the kind of testimony you want? Is this being like Christ or godly? Let's receive some wisdom from Proverbs. The tongue causes anger, so watch what you say and how you say it: "A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger" (Prov. 15:1). Anger causes strife: "A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, But the slow to anger pacifies contention" (15:18). "For the churning of milk produces butter, And pressing the nose brings forth blood; So the churning of anger produces strife" (30:33). Anger causes a lot of sin in your life: "An angry man stirs up strife, And a hot-tempered man abounds in transgression" (29:22). Like a flood, anger destroys a lot of people and property and causes a lot of hardship: "Wrath is fierce and anger is a flood, But who can stand before jealousy?" (27:4). Wisdom and a willingness to be defrauded makes you slow to anger: "A man's discretion makes him slow to anger, And it is his glory to overlook a transgression" (19:11). It's not easy to control your anger, but if you do you'll be a superhero and an overcomer: "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city (16:32). The comparison here is between anger in the human spirit and captives in a walled city: it's easier to capture and rule over your enemies in a walled city than to capture and rule over your anger. To be slow to anger requires ruling over your human spirit. How is this done? Short answer: grow in the Word, get knowledge, understanding, and wisdom, and claim promises that immediately produce the fruit of the Spirit in your soul. For example, if you're angry, claim such promises as (1) "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY; SAYS THE LORD" (Rom. 12:19, (2) "all things work together for good to those who love God" (Rom. 8:28 NKJV), (3) "my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19), and (4) "love your enemies. . . that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5:44–45). And immediately your anger will be replaced with love, inner happiness, peace of mind, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control. Now, if everything works out for good, what's there to be angry about? Try it. You'll like it!
- 3. There is a price to pay for uncontrolled anger.** Problems will continue until you learn how to control your anger (rule your spirit, Prov. 16:32 and develop self-control, Gal. 5:23) and consistently manifest the fruit of the Spirit. "A man of great anger shall bear the penalty, For if you rescue *him*, you will only have to do it again" (Prov. 19:19).
- 4. You may have to separate from a man given to anger to protect yourself from becoming like him.** Anger is catchy and leads to misery. "Do not associate with a man given to anger; Or go with a hot-tempered man, Lest you learn his ways, And find a snare for yourself" (Prov. 22:24).
- 5. The wise try to remove anger by being peacemakers.** They are firefighters; they work hard to put out the flames of anger to keep them from spreading. "Scorners set a city aflame, But wise men turn away anger" (Prov. 29:8).
- 6. Don't be a fool: replace anger with the fruit of the Spirit.** "He who is slow to anger has great understanding, But he who is quick-tempered exalts folly" (Prov. 14:29). "Do not be eager in your heart to be angry, For anger resides in the bosom of fools" (Eccl. 7:9).
- 7. Outbursts of anger (one of the deeds of the flesh) are the opposite of the fruit of the Spirit.** Such outbursts need to be replaced with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control. These outbursts of anger are obviously not righteous indignation because Paul (1) classifies them as deeds of the flesh, and (2) includes them in a list of sins with immorality, idolatry, sorcery, and drunkenness. "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19–21). Contrast the next two verses: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law" (Gal. 5:22–23).
- 8. Outbursts of anger have no place in the local church.** "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice" (Eph. 4:31). "But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth" (Col. 3:8). "This you know, my beloved brethren. But let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God" (James 1:19–20). A thematic statement (1:19–20) introduces the three headings of the book: (1) Swift to Hear (1:21–2:26), (2) Slow to Speak (3:1–18), and (3) Slow to Wrath (4:1–5:6).
- 9. Restoration of a brother is the primary goal; rebuke and church discipline are the last resort.** "Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted" (Gal. 6:1). "Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him" (Luke 17:3–4). "And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED. And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer" (Matt. 18:15–17).
- 10. Be wise, not proud.** Listen to the counsel, instruction, correction, reproof, and rebuke of the wise. "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But a wise man is he who listens to counsel" (Prov. 12:15). "Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser, Teach a righteous man, and he will increase his learning" (Prov. 9:9). "Listen to counsel and accept discipline, That you may be wise the rest of your days" (Prov. 19:20). "Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold Is a wise reprove to a listening ear" (Prov. 25:12). "Reprove a wise man, and he will love you" (Prov. 9:8b). "It is better to listen to the rebuke of a wise man Than for one to listen to the song of fools" (Eccl. 7:5).
- 11. Don't be angry with God when you don't get your way.** "Then God said to Jonah, 'Do you have good reason to be angry about the plant?' And he said, 'I have good reason to be angry, even to death'" (Jonah 4:9).