

## STUDY 47 – THE IMPACTS OF ANGER ON YOUR LIFE

We want to take some time to consider two specific areas that really impact your being able to think like God thinks, or stated another way, two areas that will cause you not to be able to think like God thinks. The first of those key areas is that of anger and how you can manage your anger, and the second is stress and how you can manage stress. We will address anger first and stress second.

### ❖ INDICATOR LIGHTS ON YOUR CAR'S DASHBOARD

*Now, I want you to think of the emotion of anger in the same way that you would think about the indicator lights inside your car's dashboard. You are driving along the road, the light comes on, and at that point you have to make a decision as to what you are going to do. I know some people who simply ignore it and will actually cover it up. For some reason they think that by ignoring the problem that it will go away. Good luck with that. In the worst-case scenario, they may simply unplug all the wires that let you know that there is a problem, and I have known people who actually did that. However, **if you are smart**, it would be good to simply check under the hood to see what and if you can actually solve the problem. If you know that you cannot fix it yourself, then you simply need to get some help with someone who can. At least you have acknowledged that you have a problem somewhere in your engine.<sup>1</sup> Most people who are prone to anger, however, simply ignore and suppress their chronic problem with it and have very little concern to try and even get some help to fix it.*

So, what happens to them? Well, their anger is constantly disrupting their personal life, whether at home or at work, or even with people with whom they have recreation with on a regular basis. I knew a man who was so competitive with his golf game that no one who played golf with him could enjoy a round of golf when he played. I was not a professional golfer and neither was he, and sometimes I would just move my ball in the fairway or in the rough, and he would go half ballistic. I am thinking to myself “I have paid a \$40 fee to play a round of golf, bought 3 new golf balls for \$10, and spent another \$20 to ride in a cart, so if I want to move my ball 2 inches, who cares. I am going to miss the green on the next shot anyway.” At the end of the day, what does it even matter. Well, his display of anger would just ruin everyone's enjoyment of what we were even doing. We were just relaxing.

So, here is what you want to consciously do. This is simple, this is freedom, this is spiritually exhilarating. This is the Christian life being lived out so that you can enjoy it every day.

**KEY PRINCIPLE 164: YOU WANT TO SHAPE YOUR ENTIRE LIFE AROUND GOD'S TRUTH AND LET HIS TRUTH BE WHAT GOVERNS YOUR EMOTIONS.**

Now, as we begin a study related to anger, we must appreciate that anger is a God-given emotion, and there may be valid times when you actually should be angry at something. The issue, however, is in how you express that anger. So, I want to provide another Key Principle that has been an adage that we have all heard in one form or another all of our lives. I want you to pay very close attention to this

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<sup>1</sup> Anderson, Managing, 44.

principle because I want these first two Key Principles to be the backdrop against which we develop this part of the study.

**KEY PRINCIPLE 165: WHEN ANGER GETS THE BEST OF YOU, IT ALWAYS REVEALS THE WORST IN YOU.**

So, if you know that something is bringing out the worst in you, then it is only logical and reasonable that you would want to make the necessary adjustments that help you not to express the anger that you may have in an inappropriate way. Some examples that identify that you are expressing your anger in the wrong way would be yelling, pushing, physical abuse of someone else, ranting, cursing, accusations, hurtful words that destroy relationships, fits of rage, heated arguments, destructive behavior, and irritability. Obviously, there are many more negative aspects, but those are good for beginning. What is actually happening in those instances is that **you are reacting in a way out that is out of proportion to the situation, and in a way that is not pleasing to God.**

**KEY PRINCIPLE 166: BECOMING ANGRY WHEN IT IS NOT JUSTIFIED BECOMES A LEARNED AND PREFERRED BEHAVIOR.**

This principle is very critical to understand. From God's perspective, if you think like He thinks, the vast majority of the time expressing anger in the ways that were just mentioned is NOT justified. It is not even logical that it would be. It may be justified to you because you are angry, but not to God. God knows the incredibly negative impacts that anger will have on you, on other people, and on your personal testimony. Just from a physical perspective, anger can trigger a heart attack, a stroke, and cause your heart to get out of rhythm. There have been plenty of studies done that show that there very often is a well-defined link between continual and increased moments of anger with developing premature coronary heart disease and suffering a major coronary event. For instance, the greater and more prolonged the anger, the greater will be the damage to your blood vessel walls.<sup>2</sup> In the terms we are using in these studies, you have developed a very large physical neural pathway in your brain that the enemy has exploited to create a spiritual stronghold in your life. So, not only do you have a physical condition in your brain working against you, but you also have a spiritual condition working against you.

Now, anger is without any doubt one of the most destructive, most damaging, and most debilitating emotions that a person can have in their life. It ranks up there with bitterness and hatred for what it can do in a person's life. It not only hurts other people in ways that are difficult to describe, but it also is very systemically harmful to the person who is actually angry. Now, I have two verses that I want to use in this study of anger that I want you think of them as our key verses. Obviously, there are many more verses that I will use, and many more that are just as important. However, I believe these two verses speak directly to the issues that we want to try and address. The first verse is [Ecclesiastes 7:9](#),

**Ecc 7:9 (NKJV) Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, for anger rests in the bosom of fools.**

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<sup>2</sup> Piedmont, ep.

The NIV says “**Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit...**” The HCSB says “**Do not let your spirit rush to be angry...**” The Message Bible (a paraphrase) says “**Don’t be quick to fly off the handle. Anger boomerangs.**” I like that.

**Proverbs 29:11** says,

Pr 29:11 (NKJV) **A fool vents all his feelings, but a wise man holds them back.**

The NASB says “**A fool always loses his temper...**” The AMP adds an additional thought to this when it says “**A [self-confident] fool utters all his anger...**” Listen to how the ESV and the NIV translate the second half of this verse.

Pr 29:11 (ESV) **A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back.**

Pr 29:11 (NIV) **A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.**

What these two verses have said is very simple. Both say that when you become angry that it is very foolish. **People that are very prone to anger are actually foolish people.** It is like they do not know the impacts that their anger is going to have in their life, as well as in the life of other people. Let us define anger for the purposes of this study this way:

**Anger is when you vent and express your feelings and emotions in the wrong way.**

There is always a right way and a wrong way to vent our feelings, but rarely if ever, is anger the right way. When you become angry, you generally express anger with hurtful words that you will deeply regret later. The problem is that once you have said them, it is sometimes almost impossible to remove the consequences those angry words will create in your life and in your relationships with other people. Once again, in this series, we would say that you have developed a neural pathway that has created a propensity, an inclination, and a predisposition to become angry and then inappropriately express that anger when someone pushes one of your “hot buttons”.

**Galatians 5:20** says that “**outbursts of wrath**” are a “**work of the flesh**”. Your unnecessary “**outbursts**” and your “**fits of anger**” are simply when you lose control. I have never heard of anything that was out of control that was a good thing, and that is exactly why God wants you to exercise self-control. In fact, **Galatians 5:21** makes this idea of “**outbursts of wrath**” so serious that it says “**that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God**”. The word “**practice**” refers to the kind of anger in someone’s life that is their continual, ongoing lifestyle, or something that they do habitually, persistently, constantly and generally without any regret or remorse for what it does to someone else. It is almost as if they do not care. However, and this is very important to understand, there is a biblical difference between becoming angry and being an angry person. Just because you feel anger on the inside does not mean that you are an angry person. **Galatians 5:21** is referring to the person who is always angry at everybody and everything. It is like they can never be satisfied; they use bitter and sarcastic words towards anybody and everything, and you cannot say anything to them that they do not like without it just provoking them to immediately start their little rampage of nasty and ugly words without any regards to how what they are doing is actually hurting someone else. From my own personal perspective, I have known people like this, but probably not that many. This is talking about someone who is always angry. We could say that they are prone to be angry and express some form of anger every day.

Now, what is important to both realize and accept is that what is being displayed verbally and externally is happening for a very specific reason related back to [Ecclesiastes 7:9](#) where it says that “**anger rests (or resides, lives) in the bosom of a fool**”.

**KEY PRINCIPLE 167: WHEN YOU EXPRESS ANGER ON THE OUTSIDE, IT IS EVIDENCE YOU LACK SELF-CONTROL ON THE INSIDE.**

I know that [Ephesians 4:26](#) says that there is a legitimate time to be angry, but in that process and that expression of your anger, it also tells you what not to do when it says,

Eph 4:26 (NKJV) “***Be angry, and do not sin***”: **do not let the sun go down on your wrath,**

The way that you want to understand the first part of this verse is very simple.

**There are times when God may actually justify your anger, but at the same time, He does not justify your expressing it in an unbiblical and inappropriate way.**

**BRAIN FACTS:** (Each of these is from Dr. Caroline Leaf’s book [Switch on Your Brain](#).) They are not related directly to anger, but they relate to the kind of choices that you do make that can certainly lead to anger.

1. Wrong choices cause brain damage, but right choices enhance brain function. Anger is so destructive to you physically, that no matter what age you may be, it can cause you to have a stroke.
2. We are directly responsible for what we choose to think about and choose to dwell on, and we make these choices in the privacy of our own thinking. This is simply the outworking of [Ecclesiastes 7:9](#) when it says that “**anger rests (or resides) in the bosom of a fool**”.
3. As you think, it is important to make a distinction between who you truly are and the person that you have become through the toxic choices that you make.
4. Your brain will follow the instructions and choices of your mind and change the landscape of your brain accordingly.<sup>3</sup>

Now, I did some research as to what anger actually does to someone and it is not a very nice picture at all. I am only going to list some of the side effects that anger creates on your body. This is not a good list, so if you are someone who is prone to anger and angry outbursts, then you need to pay very close attention to what we are going to address because the things that anger creates in your body, your relationships, and ultimately your life are so serious that to deny these impacts is pure foolishness and a mild form of irrationality at best. What I am presenting here is validated research information, so do not get lost with an information overload. The sum of these findings is expressed in the next Key Principle.

**KEY PRINCIPLE 168: ANGER IN THE MIND CREATES SICKNESS IN THE BODY.**

First of all, **anger actually changes your brain**.

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<sup>3</sup> Leaf, *Switch*, 45.

1. Anger prevents you from making good judgments. When you become angry, you cannot think properly or logically. I would say that when you are angry with someone that it is virtually impossible for you to be thinking like God thinks.
2. Anger decreases serotonin levels in your body which is the hormone that makes you happy. Angry people are never happy people. They are disgruntled people, discontented people, resentful people. You cannot satisfy them. They are continually discontented with anything and anyone because their lack of serotonin is strengthening and contributing to their propensity to be an angry person.
3. The lower your serotonin levels become, the more aggressive you become in your behavior, and ultimately it will lead you into depression. If you want to have a very unhappy life, then simply become a very angry person.
4. Anger causes you to secrete harmful stress hormones throughout your body like cortisol and adrenaline that are not good for your body. When caused by anger, they weaken every cell in your body in a very destructive way. The result is that anger actually kills your brain cells. I remember an advertisement once that showed someone frying an egg and it said "*This is your brain on drugs*". I think that they could just as well have said "*This is your brain on angry*".
5. The release of cortisol in your brain prevents you from using good judgment. What happens is that after your episode of anger, you question why you even said or did something. At the moment it seemed justifiable, but looking back you see how destructive it actually was.<sup>4</sup>
6. When someone becomes angry and are in the middle of an actual outburst of anger, they are at a high risk for having a fatal stroke. Brain strokes are very common in people that are having an anger outburst. It greatly increases your risk of having a brain aneurysm.<sup>5</sup>

Secondly, **anger impacts your cardiovascular system.**

1. Anger is a great risk to the health of your heart. This is the predominant place where anger impacts your body.
2. Anger raises your heart rate, your blood pressure, your arterial tension, your glucose levels, and your fatty acid levels. What is important about this is very simple. When anger becomes a chronic problem in your life, your blood vessels become clogged and damaged, and will eventually lead to either a stroke or a heart attack.
3. People who are angry people are much more prone to having heart attacks. Research shows that two hours following an outburst of anger is the time frame when the risk of a heart attack actually doubles in multiples. I.e., the possibility of you having a heart attack about two hours after an episode of anger has compounded itself in that time frame.
4. Research also shows that anyone who is prone to continual anger is at twice the risk of developing coronary artery disease.<sup>6</sup>

Thirdly, **anger impacts your immune system.** You need to remember that 80-85% of your immune system resides in your gut, so if your gut is not healthy, then you will not be healthy.

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<sup>4</sup> Bradstreet, ep.

<sup>5</sup> Dutta, *How Anger*, ep.

<sup>6</sup> Dutta, *How Anger*, ep.

1. Anger lowers the effectiveness of your thyroid, lowers the number of good cells that protect you from disease, and increases your chances of getting cancer.
2. Anger impacts your digestive system. It decreases blood flow to your digestive organs and lowers your rate of metabolism which leads to obesity.
3. Anger increases your chances of having migraines and headaches and lowers your bone density which is vital for having healthy blood.
4. Anger harmfully increases what is called the intraocular pressure in your eyes that is critical to good eyesight.<sup>7</sup>
5. Anger is related to insomnia, increased anxiety, and even eczema. Studies have shown that just recalling past anger experiences causes a significant reduction in the levels of crucial antibodies which play a critical role in your immune system. A study done by Harvard University on men who were very prone to anger found that those with the highest hostility rating had the worst lung capacity and lung functioning.<sup>8</sup>

Fourthly, **anger leads to different forms of violence.**

1. Anger reduces your driving skills, it leads to domestic violence and can destroy your marriage, and anger will isolate you from your children and friends.
2. Anger leads to prolonged guilt and makes it difficult for you to accomplish easy to hard tasks at work or at home.
3. Anger destroys your fellowship with God.
4. Anger makes you impatient, resentful, frustrated, and exasperated.
5. Anger will create feelings of rage, animosity, and indignation towards other people – especially those who you should love the most.<sup>9</sup>

In reality, when reviewing a short list of the manifold and multi-faceted impacts of anger on your life, it is very clear that ongoing, continual anger and outbursts of anger is simply a “stronghold” that the enemy has built into your life. I.e., your anger is controlling you. Research has also validated that when you add up all of these symptoms of chronic anger in a person’s life that it actually reduces their life span.

**KEY PRINCIPLE 169: WHEN YOU ARE NOT ABLE TO CONTROL YOUR ANGER, YOU LITERALLY BECOME A SLAVE TO ANGER.**

So, if you are always prone to anger, then you can be assured that it is impacting every area of your life. It is impacting your physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health. It is impacting your heart, your immune system, and your relationships with people – all of which are critical to living a longer and healthier life. It only makes sense to learn how to control something very harmful to our life rather than letting it control us.

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<sup>7</sup> Nicabim, *Anger*, ep.

<sup>8</sup> Dutta, *How Anger*, ep.

<sup>9</sup> Rambo, *7-Side Effects*, ep.

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