

## STUDY 48 – PEACEMAKER OR TROUBLEMAKER

### ❖ BECOMING A PEACEMAKER

*Have you ever been in a very difficult and stressful circumstance where you were with someone else who was able to help bring some calm and grace into those moments. It may have been someone who just knew how to defuse what was a seemingly disaster just waiting to explode, but because of what they said and how they said it, they were able to neutralize all of the negative emotions and bring a sense of calmness and peace into that difficult moment. I want to call those people “peacemakers”. One author said that that “peacemakers are people who breathe grace”.<sup>1</sup>*

Now, that is what we all should want to be – a peacemaker and not a troublemaker, not a combatant. Peacemakers are people that are able to bring the various graces of Christ into a tense moment. They understand that anger is just one letter short of danger. They sense that someone’s anger is about to rise and immediately they find a way to cool down their hot button. They speak words that are helpful and not hurtful. They speak words that are calming and not caustic. They understand what [Proverbs 15:1](#) means when it says,

**Pr 15:1 (NKJV) A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.**

They speak words that are peaceful and not aggressive. They speak words that offer wisdom and not aggression. Now, everyone of us should want to be a “peacemaker”. [Matthew 5:9](#) says,

**Mt 5:9 (NKJV) Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.**

The technical meaning of the word “peacemaker” is that they are someone who has actually received the grace and peace of God in their own heart so that they are able to bring and offer God’s peace to others who are not experiencing it.<sup>2</sup> So, when you learn what it means to be a peacemaker and not a troublemaker, what you are able to do is turn unnecessary conflict into a testimony of how God wants people to live. You become the person through whom God is able to work.

Here is just a sampling of what you want to try and achieve as we continue to address this issue of anger.

1. You want to learn how to use every conflict that you face as an opportunity to demonstrate both the love and power of Jesus Christ to others. You can only do this when you think like God thinks. You want to be the peacemaker. You want to be the one who speaks the words that calm and defuse something that is turning into an angry moment.
2. You want to determine what are those areas in your own personal life that seem to consistently lead you to have conflict with other people. The best way to know what those areas are is to see what it is in the other person’s life that they are always reacting to in your life. This is not necessarily a right or wrong issue, but exercising discernment so that you know what kind of behaviors and habits in your life to avoid with them because you know that it creates conflict and tension in the other person, and eventually leads to an angry exchange.

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<sup>1</sup>Sande, 11.

<sup>2</sup>Zodhiates, *eirenopoios*, ep.

3. When you actually do hurt someone with your words and aggression, how does God want you to confess those hurtful things that you said or did in a way that creates an atmosphere for forgiveness to take place?<sup>3</sup>

Now, in order for any of this to work on your behalf, or for any of what we are going to study to actually benefit you personally, you must know how God thinks so that His thinking becomes your thinking. A key verse that you need to use to help this happen in your life is [1 Corinthians 10:31](#) which says,

**1Co 10:31 (NKJV) Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.**

Here is what will happen. Someone will say something or do something that hurts you in some way. They may mistreat you, lie to you, use you, become angry with you, or speak down to you. So when that happens, what do you do? How do you respond to those moments? Maybe the better question would be, what does God want you to do? Does He want you to become angry and lash back at them with your own caustic, unkind, and sarcastic words that give them a piece of your mind? I doubt that is even close to how God would want you to respond, so why respond that way? If you do not settle this issue of what God wants to happen in your life first, then when they do hurt you, you will make unfortunate decisions and only make matters worse for both yourself and the other person.

**KEY PRINCIPLE 170: ANGER NEVER RESOLVES AN ISSUE, BUT ONLY MAKES THE ISSUE WORSE.**

It is critical to appreciate that anger is an emotion that can be controlled, but when it is not controlled, it becomes a very destructive emotion. It can quickly destroy relationships and hurt you in every area of your life because no one enjoys outbursts of anger or angry words or angry emotions. No one enjoys someone yelling at them and being spoken to harshly and with demeaning words. No one enjoys that, and if it continues, it will ultimately lead to the destruction of what should have been a meaningful relationship.

**Meaningful relationships can never truly develop in an atmosphere of anger.**

Let us just assume that someone does something that hurts you. It may be something that they actually do on a regular basis, and it hurts. It could be how they talk to you or how they treat you. It could be a lack of respect that they have for you. It could be anything that creates a sense of anger inside of you. If you choose to fight them hurting you with anger, you cannot influence them and you will become even more frustrated. Why? It is because anger never resolves an issue, but only makes it worse. When someone hurts you and you respond to them with gracious words, even words that express how what they have done has actually hurt you, you can walk away from the conflict without saying things that would only make the difficult moment worse and more difficult to resolve in the future. Anger was never designed by God to be what brings about reconciliation or healing. Anger only makes what someone else has done to you more difficult to resolve. Here is what you will always find.

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<sup>3</sup> Sande, 15.

**When you respond by expressing anger as your defense mechanism for the hurt someone has created in you, the conflict only intensifies.**

Think of it this way – you can never be an angry peacemaker. Anger always makes things worse, and actually gives the other person an out for what they did that actually initiated the conflict in the first place.

**KEY PRINCIPLE 171: THE MORE ANGRY OF A PERSON THAT YOU BECOME, THE LESS MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS YOU CAN HAVE.**

So, the normal and natural response for that person who is constantly being yelled at or targeted with anger is to simply ignore the other person and eventually remove themselves from even having a relationship with them. Once again, you have to remember what we have previously said that anger may actually be very valid at times, but the greater and overriding issue is not that you have anger, but how you express and manage that anger. This happens all the time when parents do not know how to control their anger with their children. If you have ever watched a child who is constantly being yelled at by one of their parents, over a period of time the child is virtually ignoring everything the parent is saying to them. Even a child understands that anger is not a good emotion. However, the greater self-control that you exercise in the midst of a conflict, the greater will be your opportunity to do what pleases God. Scripture is clear that the man who honors God is the man that God will honor. So, the key word that you always want to be bringing to your mind when you are hurt by someone is “self-control”. It is a fruit of the Spirit to be exercised in moments of conflict. Guard your tongue, refrain from speaking your mind, and find words that allow your own personal hurt to calm down. I assure you that you will be much more satisfied with the results.

**KEY PRINCIPLE 172: THE MORE ANGRY YOU BECOME WITH SOMEONE, THE LESS INFLUENCE YOU WILL HAVE WITH THAT PERSON.**

I have said this many times that even though I know that I cannot actually change someone who is prone to some chronic negative issue in their life, I still realize that my life can have an impact and influence them when I respond to the conflict the way that God wants me to respond. You always have to keep saying to yourself “*Lord, how do you want me to respond? I want to respond this way, but how do you want me to respond? What can I say and do that will make an impact on this other person?*” It will most likely be words of kindness, words that are filled with grace, words that are calm, and words that are peaceful. However, it will rarely, if ever, be words of anger. Anger only makes the conflict worse.

Now, if you are someone who struggles with anger and you do not believe that anger is dangerous to every area of your life, then you simply are not paying attention and are in some level of denial. Prolonged, chronic anger and outbursts of anger will cause physical illnesses, mental health issues, relational issues, problems at work, financial issues, lack of judgment, and it will greatly impact your ability to obey God and enjoy any level of fellowship with Him. It will destroy marriages, relationships, and cause people not to even want to be with you. You can read the Bible until you are blue in the face, but if you are always becoming angry at people, and especially your loved ones, it is because you are not willing to actually obey God when it comes to the issue of controlling the anger in your life. Your

life simply lacks self-control. You must remember that **your emotions are a by-product of what you are thinking**, and that is why it is so critical to “**bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ**”. If your thinking is out of control, then your emotions will be out of control. That should be fully intuitive to everyone.

You have to constantly be asking yourself the same questions – “*Where is this anger coming from in my life? Is my anger something that is coming from God, or is it because in my stubbornness I have forfeited self-control?*” If it is not coming from God, and I doubt very seriously that it is, then what is its source in my life? The normal answer that I hear from people is that it is someone else’s fault or some circumstance that is making them angry. “*I did not like what they said or how they treated me or that they were not willing to do what I wanted them to do or I do not deserve this.*” Those are very common answers. It is almost as if the person that is constantly demonstrating toxic behavior in their life towards other people simply is not willing to take responsibility for their toxic behavior which comes from their toxic thoughts.

**KEY PRINCIPLE 173: GOD DOES NOT ACCEPT JUSTIFYING OR BLAMING YOUR  
OUTBURSTS OF ANGER ON SOMEONE ELSE.**

Stated another way, God does not justify your lack of self-control. That is the very quality that He is wanting to develop in your life by even allowing you to experience the difficult circumstance. If you think about it for just a moment, when would you think that self-control was actually needed the most. It would be during a difficult and tense moment, during a time when ugly words and demeaning remarks were being made to you. It would be when someone was mistreating you or lying to you, maybe even yelling at you. It would be when someone was offending and even provoking you. Self-control is for those difficult moments. Self-control may be good for not over-eating or for not binging on chocolate cake every day, but its primary use is intended to help you in the most difficult moments of your life. That is when you want self-control to be completely governing everything that you say and do.

Now, I want to make a strong statement at this point. You cannot blame someone else for your toxic words or toxic behavior, and you cannot blame the devil for your toxic words or behavior. God will not accept either of those excuses. Why is that? It is because God holds you personally responsible for your behavior, and until you are willing to take full and complete responsibility for it, you will never make any spiritual progress in your life. You will continue to be a slave to your toxic thoughts, emotions, and behavior. When Adam and Eve both sinned, Eve blamed the serpent and Adam blamed his wife for their disobedience. However, God did not say to them “*Oh yea, I forgot about that. No problem.*” That is not what happened, and the consequences of their disobedience are well documented. Neither one of them were willing to take responsibility for the wrong choices that they had made.

So, if you are not willing to take responsibility for your toxic and angry behavior, you will certainly become a prisoner to the devil’s lies in your life. That is a fact, and probably is exactly what has happened to you. In [Ephesians 6:10](#) you are encouraged to “**be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might**”. It says the following in [Ephesians 6:13 and 16](#),

**Eph 6:13 (NKJV) Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.**

**Eph 6:16 (NKJV) above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.**

Anger is debilitating to your body, and to every system in your body. What most people do not realize is that the way that you think has a direct impact on how your proteins are synthesized, how your enzymes work, and how your brain's neurochemicals work with the rest of your body. They all work together – either for good or for bad. If I can say it in a very simplistic way, you have to do your own brain surgery when it comes to toxic, angry thinking. You have to understand that God has made your brain in such a way that the more that you exercise your brain in a godly direction through continual persistence, that it will change you permanently. Listen very carefully. If you do not believe that God Almighty in heaven has given you the spiritual power to change how you think so that you can control your toxic behavior and outbursts of anger, then you will never change – never.<sup>4</sup> I know that you will fail at times, but when you fail that does not mean that you have to continue to fail. It only means that you need to keep trusting God with how you think so that He can continue to transform your ungodly thinking and behavior into Christlike thinking and behavior. You must understand that failure is God's way of growing a believer.

***BRAIN FACT:***

1. The intervention of your mind to deal with a personal struggle that you are having with someone changes your brain physically, chemically, structurally, and functionally.
2. Research shows that there is no more effective way to produce localized and specific changes in your brain than behavioral and mental intervention.<sup>5</sup>

No wonder God encourages you to meditate on His Word and not to lean unto your own understanding. Let us assume that you find yourself in a somewhat toxic circumstance with someone who you know will become angry, or has the potential of making you angry. Anger is very tricky, sort of like a flash fire that can be brought about by just a spark of fire. I have known people who would become angry in just seconds of something being said to them that they did not like. They were so reactionary to what someone said or did to them, that their first response was some kind of outburst of anger.

Here is what research has proven over and over again, so listen very carefully. Research clearly shows that by severely limiting caustic and harsh communication, that the environment to generate anger is greatly removed. To me personally, it is simply the application of [Proverbs 26:20](#) that “**where there is no wood, the fire goes out**”. However, the problem with anger is that it neurologically generates more anger in your brain.<sup>6</sup> So what if you are with someone who is always angry with you? What do you do? What do you need to remember in those caustic and toxic moments?

**KEY PRINCIPLE 174: BREVITY OF COMMUNICATION REDUCES CONFLICT.**

If you keep placing more wood on the fire, the fire actually gets hotter and takes much longer to go out – right? What God is revealing in [Proverbs 26:20](#) is not putting a fire out. It is about learning how to

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<sup>4</sup> Leaf, Switch, 67.

<sup>5</sup> Leaf, Switch, 67-68.

<sup>6</sup> Newberg, *Words*, 61,

defuse anger during a major verbal, relational, or emotional conflict before it becomes destructive. Please appreciate that anger does not work. It never works. It does not work with your marriage partner, with your children, with your friends, or with your co-workers. Unfortunately, modern psychology will tell you that you need to release your emotions, say what you want to say, and get your anger off of your chest. Nothing could be further from biblical truth. In fact, neuroscientific research greatly supports this reality. Instead of decreasing anger, this kind of counsel actually increases it and can cause irreparable damage to the relationships that you have with people. Anger is so disruptive to your ability to think like God thinks, that it keeps you from making rational decisions and it blinds you to the fact that you are actually an angry person. Expressing anger is so destructive to you personally because of all of the stress hormones and neurochemicals that it releases in your body. I want you to think of anger as something that is literally eating you alive by constantly damaging the emotional and regulation centers of your brain.<sup>7</sup> When you get angry, your cognitive thinking is so diminished that you simply will find difficulty controlling anything about your life at that moment. Your words will be harsh, ugly, toxic, and damaging. Anger never works and God says that it rests in the bosom of foolish people.

Research has also shown that anger and hostility greatly interfere with the body's healing process. There was a study done at the Ohio State College of Medicine where they brought forty-two married couples into a hospital and created small blister wounds on their arms. They measured the rate of healing and found that it took twice as long for the blisters to heal in those couples who were always arguing and becoming angry with one another.<sup>8</sup> So, just assume that you have developed some form of cancer in your body that is unknown to you, but you are a very angry person. What is happening in your body is that your anger is systemically causing your cancer to grow at a faster rate than it normally would grow. Anger is never good – never. It rests in the bosom of fools.

Now, I want to remind you once again that you are fearfully and wonderfully made. It is the idea that how God has made you is awesome and that you are a very unique individual. The reality of life, however, is that everyone is fearfully and wonderfully made, and when you see them that way, you will treat them that way – with dignity, with kindness, with grace, and with Christlikeness. When you think like God thinks, it becomes crystal clear that anger has no meaningful, long-lasting place in the life of any Christian, no matter what their circumstances may seem to say to them. If God shows mercy and grants forgiveness, then so should you. If God is longsuffering in how He deals with you, then you should be the same way in how you relate to other people. I beseech you to root out any and all roots of bitterness and anger that may be persisting in your life because they are literally destroying your life in ways that you may not even know until it is way too late. [Hebrews 12:15](#) says it this way,

**Heb 12:15 (NKJV) looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;**

The words “**looking carefully**” mean to highly regard and give attention to something so that your life does not “**fall short of the grace of God**”. May God grant you His grace in giving attention to your anger.

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<sup>7</sup> Newberg, *Words*, 17.

<sup>8</sup> Newberg, *Words*, 174.

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