

STUDY 49 – HOW TO STOP BEING AN ANGRY PERSON

❖ LOOKING BACK AT ANGRY MOMENTS

I want you to take a trip back in time for a few moments and just ask yourself four very simple questions. These are not difficult to answer – either yes or no, but hopefully they will make the point.

1. *Have you ever said something in a moment of anger that you wish you had never said?*
2. *Have you ever hurt someone in a moment of anger that you wish you had never hurt?*
3. *Have you ever made some really foolish, even stupid decisions, during a moment of anger?*
4. *Have you ever destroyed a relationship with someone during a moment of anger?¹*

I think that all of these moments of anger and the consequences that they produce simply reinforce what [Proverbs 29:22](#) has to say about an angry person.

Pr 29:22 (NKJV) **An angry man stirs up strife, and a furious man abounds in transgression.**

One thing that God is clearly saying in this very simple, but strategic verse is that when you become angry with someone that two distinct things will happen. First, you will “**stir up strife**”, stir up contention, stir up conflict, and start fights. It is inevitable and unavoidable. Then to make it even worse, many of the problems that your anger creates may never get resolved, especially relationally.

KEY PRINCIPLE 172: THE MORE ANGRY YOU BECOME, THE MORE PROBLEMS YOU CREATE.

Secondly, you will “**abound in transgressions**”. You will say something that should not have said, you will make really bad decisions, you will hurt other people, and you will destroy relationships. I have no idea how many marriages have been literally destroyed because of anger and angry outbursts where all of these can easily come into play. It is like a very destructive domino effect. So, if you want to create a lot of ongoing and damaging trouble in your life, just become someone who lacks self-control over their anger. As I look back over my own personal life, the worst moments of my life were when I became angry with my amazing wife and children and said things that I wish I had never said in some stupid fit of anger. I hurt the people who actually loved me the most. Does that even make sense? I have no good answer as to why I would even have considered anger as an option, but unfortunately, I did.

Let me say in a very simple and practical way that if you are someone prone to anger, what that generally means is that you have some “**hot buttons**” and some “**triggers**” that you need to get rid of in your life. It really is a very simple assessment that you have to make – “*What makes me angry and why?*” Just assume that you do have these hot buttons and triggers that make you angry. I think that you would be better off calling them “**strongholds**” that the enemy has created in your life. Your triggers and hot buttons are very dangerous and very strong neural pathways that will always hinder you from having meaningful and lasting relationships with people. **No one likes to be with an angry person.** Once again, this is not negating someone else’s negative behavior, not at all, but your triggers and hot buttons are your responsibility to control. Trust me, but there is no place in Scripture where God gives you a

¹ Ingram, 17.

green light to just become angry with someone because something is not working out like you may want it to work out. For instance, [Proverbs 19:11](#) says,

Pr 19:11 (NKJV) **The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, and his glory is to overlook a transgression.**

The NRSV says “**Those with good sense are slow to anger...**” So, how you do that when you believe that you are becoming agitated and angry? Well, Proverbs says that you just “**overlook**” what someone may have said or done to you so that you do not do the same to them. God says that it is actually a virtue, an asset, a glory, and a great benefit to your life to just “**overlook**” what someone has said or done to you that has hurt you. Just move on with your life when that happens and know that if you are around that person on another occasion that they may be prone to do the same thing again. Listen carefully. No one is exempt from being mistreated, wrongfully accused, spoken to inappropriately, yelled at, becoming disappointed with what someone does to you, lied to, or taken advantage of by someone. No matter who you are or where you are in your Christian life, these kinds of moments will invariably find you. So, what do you do when some of these kinds of moments happen to you?

1. Do you get angry and lash back at the person? I hope not.
2. Do you say something ugly back to them? I hope not.
3. Do you retaliate and get your revenge? I hope not.
4. Do you fight fire with fire? I hope not.

However, if any of these is your reaction, then my question to you is simple - “*Why*”? Why would you think that any of these responses were how God wanted you to respond? There is no biblical justification for any of these kinds of responses. Every one of them only adds wood to the fire, they all “**stir up strife**”, and they only cause you personally to “**abound in transgressions**”. So, why become angry? There is no benefit to you or anyone else for that matter. The simple answer to the question as to why you become angry is simple – you lack self-control.

One of the primary questions that we want to address as we navigate through this part of our study is “*How do you actually express the anger that you may feel on the inside?*” Maybe the better question would be “*Do you even express it?*” If you already know that most moments of anger are **much more destructive than constructive**, then should you even express your anger at all. Listen carefully to our next Key Principle. This is so super important and cannot be overstated.

KEY PRINCIPLE 173: GOD IS USING THE ANGER YOU MAY FEEL ON THE INSIDE TO HELP YOU HARNESS IT, NOT EXPRESS IT.

This is how you learn self-control. If you do not learn what self-control is and why it such an important quality to integrate into your life, then you basically become spiritually unusable and unstable. The person who has no self-control will always be out of control.

1. If you are someone who always has to **speak your mind**, then you lack self-control.
2. If you are someone who always has to **have your way**, then you lack self-control.
3. If you are someone who has to **always be right**, then you lack self-control.
4. If you are someone who is **always getting angry**, then you lack self-control.

God has a great plan for your life, but I can assure you that anger is not a major part of it. In fact, I would say that your uncontrolled anger and inappropriate responses of anger actually remove you from God's amazing plans for your life. It is very seldom that you should feel that you have to defend yourself when someone does something or says something to you that is hurtful or stressful.

KEY PRINCIPLE 174: YOU WILL NEVER FIND GOD'S PEACE BY RETALIATING OR REACTING INAPPROPRIATELY TO SOMEONE ELSE'S MISGUIDED BEHAVIOR.

If you choose to remove anger as one of your responses to the hurt that other people may cause to you and in you, then you will become a much more focused communicator of how God wants people to handle their stressful moments. You become a peacemaker.

[Ephesians 4:29-32](#) clearly says the following,

Eph 4:29 (NKJV) Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you (aorist imperative), with all malice. ³² And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

God's solution is very simple, so do not make it complicated. When you start to become angry with someone, listen very carefully, **JUST STOP** and figure out a way to say the right thing, how to say something that will bring grace and edification into your difficult moment. Choose to be patient until you can say the right thing. Start building that neural pathway in your brain before the conflict even happens. Choose today to use words that are "**kind**", "**tenderhearted**", and "**forgiving**". Why? **It is because that is what God says to do.** This is not complicated unless you make it complicated. You have to choose to think like God thinks.

KEY PRINCIPLE 175: DO NOT USE HURTFUL WORDS THAT INCITE ANGER, BUT USE KIND AND TENDER WORDS THAT DEFUSE ANGER.

If you do not choose to do this, then you are not only hurting yourself and someone else as well, but you are also grieving the Holy Spirit. He is wanting to work in you, but you are literally resisting His best for your life. You are making choices that are not His choices, and in the end your choices will not bring about the results that you thought they would.

KEY PRINCIPLE 176: THERE IS NEVER ANYTHING GOOD THAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN YOU USE ANGRY WORDS.

God would not have included any of this in the Scriptures if He did not design you so that you can actually accomplish this in your life. This is living out the Christian life. So, you must understand that when you become angry with someone, it is because something that they have said to you or done to you is **provoking** you to anger. Once again, when that happens, you have to STOP and find a way to be

kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving before your anger even has a chance to be vented on them. [1 Corinthians 13:4-5](#) says,

1Co 13:4 (NKJV) Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵ does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil;

The word for “**provoked**” in this context means that when you love people like God loves people that it is very difficult for them to arouse your anger or indignation.² It means that you have learned how to not to use angry words, but only words that edify others – even in the midst of the conflict. Men and women, this is a neural pathway that you have to develop in your life. Make the most of every moment that you have when stressful words and circumstances are pushing you to what you may consider to be your limit. Let God stretch you in your faith in Him. Memorize [1 Corinthians 10:13](#) that says,

1Co 10:13 (NKJV) 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.

So, what is the temptation that you face? **The temptation you face will be to become angry.** However, God wants you to fight through your negative feelings and emotions until you find His words that can help defuse the circumstance. It may not work the first time for you, or the second, or the third time, but the more often that you yield yourself to what God says that He will do for you – which is to help you overcome the temptation to become angry, the greater will be your desire to keep yielding yourself to Him. You are building that neural pathway in your brain that will help you to do that which you know is pleasing to God. You must make a conscious choice to live this way. This is what it means to live out the Christian life. Do you see this? Do you believe this? Do you even care about this?

KEY PRINCIPLE 177: ANGER ALWAYS NEGATIVELY IMPACTS YOUR THINKING, YOUR EMOTIONS, YOUR AFFECTIONS, YOUR WORDS, AND YOUR ACTIONS.³

The problem with uncontrolled anger is that it effects every part of your being.

So, when you become angry at someone you are literally assaulting them with everything that you have inside of you. Everything that can be negative about you becomes visibly and audibly negative. When you become angry, neurologically you cannot think calmly or logically, your emotions become incensed, your blood pressure rises, it is impossible for you to be Christlike, your words become caustic, demeaning, and unkind, and you lose control of what you are actually doing. You are prone to curse, vent, rage, and literally “fly off the handle” when you become angry. In that process, you are abusing the other person mentally, emotionally, relationally, spiritually, and even physically, not to mention again that you are grieving the Holy Spirit. The ultimate problem is that you are not willing to accept responsibility for your out-of-control behavior. **You have reached a place in your life where you are not willing to own your anger, own your behavior, and own your words.**

You have to figure out and accept what is causing your anger. **At the root level, you cannot blame your anger on the other person’s behavior.** The issue is that something has taken root in your own

² Zodiates, *paroxuno*, ep.

³ Jones, 24.

heart and you have not allowed God to deal with it. In fact, people who consistently become angry have developed elaborate reasons and rationalizations why their anger is justified. For some strange reason, they think that it is okay to hurt people with angry words. It is never okay! Listen to what Jesus said in [Luke 6:43-45](#),

Lk 6:43 (NKJV) "**For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. ⁴⁴ For every tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. ⁴⁵ A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.**

When you read about the “heart”, the term is very encompassing. It includes what and how you think, the emotions you display, the choices that you make, the attitudes that you develop, and the words that come directly out of your mouth.

KEY PRINCIPLE 178: IF YOU WANT TO GET RID OF ANGER IN YOUR LIFE, THEN YOU HAVE TO FIRST GET RID OF ANGER IN YOUR MIND.

You have to identify, uproot, and remove everything in your mind that is causing the behavior that you know is not pleasing to God.

You must recognize and accept that your personal wrong thinking has physically built a spiritual stronghold in your brain. This neural pathway is just as much a part of your body as are your hands and toes. It is just as real as your ears and nose. These neural pathways literally exist and keep growing inside of your brain until you make a determination to let God work in your life to rid you of them. **Knowing Scripture and applying Scripture is the cure.** Just knowing Scripture is not enough. If [Ephesians 4:31-32](#) says that you have to “put away” anger from you and to replace it with kindness, tenderness and forgiveness, then that is your responsibility. You have to apply what God says that you must do. What does this mean at a very practical level? Well, it means that when you find yourself becoming involved in a tense moment that is causing you to become angry on the inside, that you have to immediately stop where you are headed and change what and how you are thinking. You have to ask yourself these three simple questions.

1. “Will God justify me becoming angry just because I want to be angry?” Nope!
2. “Does God want me to see this difficult moment as a means of expressing Christlikeness to someone else?” Yep!
3. “Okay, which choice am I going to make?”

Now, that choice is a choice of life over death. [Proverbs 18:21](#) says that “**death and life are in the power of the tongue**”. You can choose to use angry words or choose to use godly words. It is always your choice.

KEY PRINCIPLE 179: GOD’S SIMPLE CURE FOR ANGER IS TO PUT AWAY WHAT IS WRONG AND REPLACE IT WITH WHAT IS RIGHT.

I love the way that the NIV translates “**put away**” in [Ephesians 4:31](#) when it simply says to just “**get rid of**” your anger. You must understand that the root of anger is something that you have allowed to believe in your mind that is contrary to what God says He wants you to believe. So, if you keep blaming other people for your becoming angry, then you will have great difficulty in making any spiritual progress in your life. **Your anger is your problem, not theirs.** Do you know what all of this is? **This is spiritual warfare taking place in your heart. This is the battle that you face every day between the flesh and the Spirit.**⁴ So, how do you know if you are in that spiritual battle? Well, I am glad that you asked.

1. This is when you want something, but you do not get it, so you become angry.
2. This is when you want to say something, so you say it because you lack self-control.
3. This is when you quarrel and fight because you have anger in your heart.
4. This is when you allow angry thoughts to remain in your heart and in your mind.
5. This is when you think negative and resentful things about someone else.
6. This is when you become angry on the inside and the outside because you were not treated the way that you wanted to be treated.

All six of these are “**strongholds**” that you have allowed the enemy to build into your brain because you have bought into his lies and you find yourself struggling to make any meaningful spiritual progress in your life. Just think about this for a moment and how easy it is to blame someone else for your actions, for your attitudes, and for your words. This is subtle, so you have to listen carefully.

1. “I got angry **because they** lied to me.”
2. “I got angry **because** I did not like what **they** said about me.”
3. “I got angry **because they** did not show me any respect.”
4. “I got angry **because they** did not give me the raise I deserved.”
5. “I got angry **because they** did not do what I asked them to do.”

This is how you pass the buck on your anger – you blame it on someone else. All of these are examples of someone simply not doing what they know God **does want them to do** – and what is that? It is to “**put away anger**”, to “**put off anger**”. These kinds of excuses may seem justified to you, but they do not fit within God’s biblical mandates for your life. Each of these are examples of you not taking responsibility for your own behavior, but rather feeling comfortable in blaming your anger on someone else. When you finally stand before God and have to give an account of your own behavior, He is not going to keep saying, “*Oh, I see why you did not do what I asked you to do. Oh, I see why you felt justified to ignore my commands to put away your anger. Oh, I see why you felt totally justified to spew all of your negative, caustic words on someone else. No problem. Well done my good and faithful servant.*” **You must own your anger, and you must take full responsibility for it.** I know this may seem a little strange to you at first, but your anger can easily become an idol that you worship – an idol of being able to spew out on other people whatever comes into your mind. If that is what is happening in your life, you can be assured that the enemy has built a literal, living fortress in your mind and your brain, and until you seek God’s forgiveness and other’s forgiveness for your wrong behavior, that stronghold will only grow and grow and grow.

⁴ Jones, 50.

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