

STUDY 50 – GOD’S CURE FOR ANGER

❖ I JUST LOVE PROVERBS

There is something about reading the Book of Proverbs each day that has instilled in me a love for God’s wisdom. The Book of Proverbs is not a book of commands, but simply a book of wise counsel and principles that are so practical. In my mind, everything that it says is intuitive and readily obvious when you read it. Obviously, it has a lot to say about anger and a lack of self-control when it comes to someone’s anger.

Just as a for instance, [Proverbs 12:18](#) says,

Pr 12:18 (NKJV) **There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, but the tongue of the wise *promotes health*.**

The NIV says

Pr 12:18 (NIV) **Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.**

You certainly have to take note of what is being communicated. Solomon is clearly saying that angry, caustic, cutting, sarcastic, sharp, unkind, and “**reckless**” words are what cut deep into another person. Just by their very nature, ugly and ungodly words have great power to hurt people, and in many different ways. One author commented that even though some people may never actually hit someone in a fit of anger that they still are slicing someone apart with their words. In order to glorify Christ in your life, you need to simply get rid of any and all words that you know are hurting someone else. It does not matter if the words they are saying to you are hurtful, your obedience to Christ in this area of your life is critical for your spiritual growth. From God’s perspective, what needs to happen is really very simple. This next Key Principle is so powerful, so compelling, and so effectual that it has to be one of my favorite Key Principles.

KEY PRINCIPLE 180: YOU NEED TO LEARN HOW TO LOVE DIFFICULT PEOPLE WITH YOUR WORDS¹.

You never want to hurt someone with your words, but you can if you do not think like God thinks. Think of it this way. **When someone is hurting you with their words or actions, you can love them with your words and actions.** You can use your **words** to literally change the direction of the conflict in which you find yourself. So, you always want to be asking yourself simple questions such as:

1. **What does God think** about my speech? Is He approving of what I am saying?
2. **What does God think** about the words that I am using to respond back to someone who may be hurting me?
3. Am I under control, am I exercising self-control?
4. Am I at peace with how God wants me to respond, or am I always resisting His best for my life?

Listen to [Proverbs 14:16-17](#) which says,

¹ Jones, 82.

Pr 14:16 (NKJV) **A wise man fears and departs from evil, but a fool rages and is self-confident. A quick-tempered man acts foolishly, and a man of wicked intentions is hated.** ¹⁷ **A**

The NIV says that “a fool is hot-headed and reckless”. The ESV says that “a fool is reckless and careless”. The HCSB says that “a fool is easily angered and is careless”. This is not a good picture of someone who is unable to control their anger. They are “hot-headed, reckless, careless, easily angered”, and “act foolishly”. It does not take much to “light their fuse”. In fact, [Proverbs 22:24](#) says,

Pr 22:24 (NKJV) **Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man do not go,**

The NASB says,

Pr 22:24 (NASB) **Do not associate with a man given to anger; or go with a hot-tempered man,**

The NRSV says,

Pr 22:24 (NRSV) **Make no friends with those given to anger, and do not associate with hotheads,**

In the book of Proverbs, a fool is someone who is considered to be an ungodly person, someone whose life is out of control – and they probably do not even know it, do not even recognize it. They have been prone to anger and frustration and irritability and grouchiness for so long, that they no longer even know how to live sensibly and how God would want them to think and live. They have really large neural pathways and strongholds in their life, but they are almost oblivious to the fact that they are constantly hurting people. They always find ways to justify their anger – no matter how much their anger may actually hurt someone. They have chosen to only see life from their perspective, so there is never any understanding or patience with someone else’s perspective.

**KEY PRINCIPLE 181: IF YOU WANT TO ELIMINATE UNNECESSARY CONFLICT,
THEN JUST ELIMINATE YOUR ANGER.**

Learn to be patient with people and gentle in how you respond to them. Choose not to say what you want to say or to treat them how you want to treat them. If you choose not to do this, before you know it, you will be provoking them to anger, frustration, and disappointment. You will be stirring up greater conflict and creating more hurt in their life, and yours as well. Please never forget about the neurological reality of “neural resonance” and how your behavior, your words, and your anger stir up the same things in the person with whom you have become angry. However, it also works for your benefit when you learn to speak with grace, love, and patience in the midst of a conflict. When you respond that way, neural resonance has the effect of producing the same kind of responses in the other person. It may not always work if someone has reached a point of excessive anger, but generally it has a calming effect on the other person. I have said this many times, but my favorite verse on anger is [Proverbs 15:1](#) which says,

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

My wife has taught me more about this verse than I could ever express. If she senses that I am about to get frustrated or irritated about something, she has a way of calming me down with calm words. Once again, we are talking about neural resonance and how what one person says to another has a way of resonating with them and helping them.

**KEY PRINCIPLE 182: YOU HAVE TO TAKE OWNERSHIP OF YOUR ANGRY WORDS
SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY ARE YOUR WORDS.**

Your angry words are not someone else's words. They are your words, spoken out of your mouth, and spoken out of your heart. **You cannot blame someone else for what you say to them,** and if you do say something angry and ugly to them, you need to ask them to forgive you as quickly as possible. Do not simply say *"I am sorry how I spoke to you"*, but say *"I was wrong in how I spoke to you. Will you please forgive me."* If you only say to them that you are sorry for what you said, they are thinking to themselves *"Well, I'm sorry for what you said to me as well."* When you ask someone to forgive you because you know that what you said was wrong and not what or how God would have wanted you to speak to them, what you are telling them is that **you are taking ownership for your hurtful words.**

I do not mean to sound arrogant about any of this, but what we are talking about is one of the clear and evident characteristics of a fool. For instance, [Proverbs 29:11](#) says,

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

The NASB says,

Pr 29:11 (NASB) **A fool always loses his temper, but a wise man holds it back.**

When you read these two translations, you are forced to ask yourself the right questions such as:

1. *"Do I think that venting all of my angry emotions is a good thing or a godly response to what is happening?"*
2. *"Do I think that always losing my temper is a good thing because this is what a fool does?"*
3. *"Do I think that it is perfectly okay to always be speaking my mind to people when I do not like something they said or did to me?"*

Well, if you have any spiritual integrity about your life and any interest whatsoever in learning to both think and live the way that God wants you to live and think, the answer to all three of those questions has to be "No". God clearly says that a wise man **"holds back all of his feelings"** and has learned how to restrain himself in what he says. He allows the tense moment to pass until emotions have cooled down and he can speak in a calming and godly way. You have to make a choice in your life from God's perspective as to whether or not you want to be a fool or a wise person. [Proverbs 29:20](#) is very clear when it says,

Pr 29:20 (NKJV) **Do you see a man hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.**

**KEY PRINCIPLE 183: THE MORE THAT YOU ARE PRONE TO SPEAK YOUR MIND,
THE LESS HOPE THERE IS FOR YOU.**

This verse is so penetrating because the writer says that if you are someone who is always just speaking your mind, always saying whatever you want to say with no regard for how your words are hurting someone else, and always justifying your negative, ugly words, then a fool has more hope than you do. I am convinced that the greater control that you exercise over what you say to people and how you respond to them, especially in difficult moments, that that self-control reveals more about you than

probably anything else in your life. The individual who is prone to being angry and yelling and cursing and using sarcastic speech is someone who knows nothing about true spirituality or self-control – absolutely nothing. They are self-deceived and spiritually deluded. The devil has lied to them, duped them, conned them, and tricked them into doing the exact opposite of what God wants them to do.

[Proverbs 25:28](#) says,

Pr 25:28 (NKJV) **Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, without walls.**

The NASB says,

Pr 25:28 (NASB) **Like a city that is broken into *and* without walls is a man who has no control over his spirit.**

The NIV says,

Pr 25:28 (NIV) **Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control.**

The HCSB says,

Pr 25:28 (HCSB) **A man who does not control his temper is like a city whose wall is broken down.**

No matter how much we look at these verses in Proverbs, we will always be getting back to one simple reality. This is a Key Principle that you cannot ignore if you want to think like God thinks, so listen very carefully. This is so important and so critical for helping you to control the anger that you often feel on the inside. Please do not miss how simple this Key Principle really is and how it can change your life.

KEY PRINCIPLE 184: SELF CONTROL IS GOD'S CURE FOR ANGER.

I am personally convinced that the more that you vent and constantly express anger in your life that the more the enemy keeps tightening his grip on your life. He loves for you to get angry. He loves for you to have no self-control. He just loves for you to speak all of your feelings. He loves for you to always be finding fault in others and criticizing them. He just loves it when you do any of these. It is like he says to himself “*I’ve got this person exactly where I want them and I am not going to let go.*” I personally think that people develop a lot of nasty habits in their life like cursing, smoking, not brushing their teeth, texting and driving, biting their nails, picking their nose in public, or ignoring people that truly love them. The list is actually endless. However, in the context of this study, it is clear and evident that losing your temper and becoming angry all the time is a really, really bad habit that you have developed in your life that ultimately has severe consequences. **A nasty habit is a nasty neural pathway.** Let me give you a hint, a suggestion, a tip, and some really good advice on whether or not you may be an angry person, so listen very carefully.

KEY PRINCIPLE 185: IF SOMEONE ELSE THINKS THAT YOU ARE A HOTHEAD AND AN ANGRY PERSON, THEN YOU PROBABLY ARE.

I know people who I could never say that about their life and I have never heard anyone else say that about their life. However, I also know people where that is exactly what I would say about them. You listen to them talk, you hear what they said to other people, you watch their behavior and lack of patience

in a difficult or tense moment, and you just think to yourself “*That is someone who is very inclined to anger.*” Have you ever had someone tell you that you needed to just “*get it off of your chest*”, or just “*go blow off some steam*”?² Now, I know that every psychologist on the planet would think that I am crazy, but I do not see anything like that in the Scriptures – not one verse. Jesus never told his disciples that when something happened to them like being unjustly put in prison to just get in the corner and yell. He never told them that it was perfectly okay to vent when they were abused or taken advantage of or were getting angry. He never encouraged them to just let off some steam – never, not one time.

You cannot resolve one sinful habit by simply replacing it with another sinful habit.

Why is it so hard for some people to bless someone else, but then so easy to lash out at them? It is sin in their heart. It is always having to be right. It is always demanding to have your way. Jesus clearly says that we are to bless our enemies, to pray for them, to do good to them, so how does anger and frustration and irritation fit into the relationships that we have with those who are the most cherished people in our life? They do not fit! It simply is not Scriptural to behave in that manner.

The more effort that you place into depending on God’s Spirit to strengthen you in the midst of a conflict, the more quickly you will learn self-control in what you say to other people and how you treat them.³

The difficult part of what I have just said is that God will allow you to be confronted with difficult moments and difficult people. That is an unavoidable reality of life. In fact, if you are not careful with what you say and how you treat people, you may actually be the angry, rude, and impatient person that God is using to strengthen someone else in their life. If you do not accept the reality that conflict is very often unavoidable, then you will never learn self-control. I have emphasized over and over that the key word that you want to constantly reinforce and strengthen in your mind and brain is “**self-control**”. If you know that you are going to be in a tense situation with someone and you know that you are prone to just say what you want to say and to react however you want to react, then you have to keep reminding yourself of the word “**self-control**” before that moment ever happens. It is so much better to be prepared than to be unprepared. Please appreciate that self-control implies using gentle words, being patient with people, and not reacting inappropriately to what they may be saying or doing to you. **Self-control is always better than anger – always. Self-control is always better than impatience and speaking your mind – always.** Once again, you have to learn how to love people through your words.

Let us suppose that you are an angry person with almost daily tendencies to see life from a very negative perspective. You see the worst in people. The way that you can know if you are seeing the worst in people is that you are always prone to criticize them. However, as a believer, you are commanded by God to put all of that kind of behavior to death. [Ephesians 4:22-24](#) says,

Eph 4:22 (NKJV) **that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,²³ and (YOU) be renewed in the spirit of your mind,²⁴ and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.**

² Jones, 107.

³ Jones, 107.

Ephesians 4:31-32 says,

Eph 4:31 (NKJV) (YOU) Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. ³² And (YOU) be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

Colossians 3:8 says,

Col 3:8 (NKJV) But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.

There is nothing difficult to understand about these verses. These are all commands that you as a believer and follower of Christ are responsible to work into your life, and it all starts with your willingness to think about your anger the way that God thinks about your anger. Knowing the right thing to do and doing the right thing are two very different things. We have addressed this before, so I will not belabor the point, but anger and wrath in your life is very destructive to your body in many different ways. It literally is killing you and you do not even know it. For instance, **Proverbs 14:29-30** says,

Pr 14:29 (NKJV) He who is slow to wrath has great understanding, but he who is impulsive exalts folly. ³⁰ A sound heart is life to the body, but envy (and anger and wrath) is rottenness to the bones.

I love the way that the Amplified Bible translates v30 when it says,

Pr 14:30 (AMP) A calm and undisturbed mind and heart are the life and health of the body, but envy, jealousy, and wrath are like rottenness of the bones.

Anger is always a lose / lose for you in every way possible. It never benefits your life in any way. It hurts you and injures you and it hurts and injures other people. It destroys relationships. **It is very difficult to do anger correctly.** If you mess up when it comes to anger, you are messing up your life in many different ways. If you have always been strong-willed, irritable, argumentative, confrontational, and/or volatile, you have not let God deal with your anger. Becoming irritable is one of your triggers, one of your hot buttons. It means that you are cranky, grumpy, and ill-tempered. Anger is all about how someone else creates displeasure in you. When you consistently become angry, **or** have the opportunity to become angry and do not, and especially with those that you love the most, every word that you say in those circumstances speaks volumes about who you are in Christ and what you believe about your relationship to Him. So, **when you get anger right, you are getting your life right, and God can bless your life.**⁴ The bottom line is very simple, so do not miss what I am saying. It is very, very important.

KEY PRINCIPLE 186: GOD WILL NOT CONTROL YOUR ANGER FOR YOU. IT IS A SPIRITUAL CHOICE THAT YOU MAKE TO YIELD THIS AREA OF YOUR LIFE TO HIM.

You will never be disappointed that you made the right choice.

⁴ Powlison, 2-3, 9, 41.

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