

"Confronting Anger"

April 15, 2018



THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

Ephesians 4:26-27, Exodus 32:1-20,
Matthew 21:12-13, Matthew 5:1-9, 21-22,
Proverbs 15:1, 30:33, Ephesians 4:31,
Lamentations 3:19-24,
James 1:19-20, Matthew 5:21-24

DAY 1

Read [Ephesians 4:26-27](#), [Exodus 32:1-20](#),
[Matthew 21:12-13](#)

It is very tempting when we talk or think about anger to assume that other people are wrong for getting angry but that our own anger is "righteous" and that our anger will teach important lessons to others who are in need of improvement. Unfortunately, our anger seldom demonstrates Christ-like righteousness - instead, if we are honest, it is simply self-righteous anger and we use it to justify our own failings or to cast blame. While we'd like to believe our anger is like the anger Moses displayed when the people worshiped the golden calf or the anger Jesus demonstrated when he drove the money-changers from the temple, our anger is usually born of impatience, our inability to get our own way, or our lack of self-control. Scripture reminds us that even when our anger is righteous, we should not hold onto it because of its power to give the devil a foothold.

- **Think about instances when you wanted to teach an important lesson to a child. Was your teaching more effective when it was delivered in a loud angry tone or when the lesson was taught with**

calm firmness?

- **Reflect on a time when you were positive that your anger was justified and served a Godly purpose. How long did you hold onto that anger? Did you have a moment of restoration and forgiveness with the person who was the object of your anger?**
- **Ask God to help you see clearly the motives behind righteous indignation and anger. Pray for the ability to discern in a spiritually mature way whether your anger is righteous or self-justifying**

DAY 2

Read [Matthew 5:1-9, 21-22](#); [Proverbs 15:1 & 30:33](#)

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus identified certain desirable personal characteristics in a passage known as the Beatitudes. He said that the meek, the merciful, and the peacemakers would be blessed. Contrast those words with the ones he spoke just a few verses later when he likened angry words to murder. Anger is not consistent with meekness, mercy or peacemaking. It is often destructive in ways that are hard to overcome. It can range from mildly irritable words to murderous rage like we see exhibited so often during evening newscasts. Anger is an emotion that we need to tackle head on.

- **When was the last time you lost your temper with a perfect stranger? Were you driving your car in traffic or stuck in a slow moving line at the grocery store? Was your anger directed toward someone you love?**
- **Reflect on how your anger changed your outlook and attitude long after the person who was the object of your anger was no longer present.**
- **Pray for the Holy Spirit to empower you to "catch yourself" before angry words come out of your**

mouth.

DAY 3

Read [Ephesians 4:31](#) and [Lamentations 3:19-24](#)

A minister named Ron McManus once said, "bitterness is like drinking poison and waiting for the other person to die." It is self-destructive because we often hold it within us as we harbor a slow-burning anger toward the difficult circumstances of our lives or toward someone who we believe has wronged us. If we are not careful, grief, sickness and loneliness can become a bitterness toward those who don't share in our hurt, or toward God if we choose to blame God for our suffering. Bitterness is deadly because it sneaks up on us as we settle into attitudes of self-pity instead of gratitude, jealousy instead of celebration for others, or selfishness instead of selflessness. Bitterness can be controlled if we discipline ourselves to take time each day to thank God for a blessing rather than to obsess over a hurt. Our reading from Lamentations reminds us that no matter how bitter or downcast we feel, our hope is in God's faithfulness and unending love for us.

- **Identify the causes of any bitterness you may feel toward a person or situation. Ask God to help you release that bitterness so you will be free to experience God-given joy.**
- **When was the last time you named your blessings aloud to God? Next time you feel bitterness rising in your heart, sit down and thank God for every little blessing you have enjoyed that day.**
- **If your bitterness stems from grief or loneliness for a loved one who is gone, pause to remember the love and joy you shared with them and then thank God for the blessing of that departed loved one's presence in your life. After all, we don't experience deep personal grief unless we**

enjoyed a great personal love first.

DAY 4

Read [James 1:19-20](#)

James makes it abundantly clear that anger does not produce the kind of righteousness that God wants to see in our character. In the final analysis, that is why we must learn to tackle our anger issues head on. Anger is a destructive emotion that allows us to wallow in self-centeredness at the expense of our own joy. It inhibits our ability to love God and love our neighbor. We have to choose to either reflect God's image or the image of the evil one. Make no mistake - it is a choice we must make each and every day because our society is filled with priorities, messages, and temptations that can provoke our anger.

- **Reflect on a time when you controlled your temper, de-escalated a confrontation, or simply walked away from an opportunity to let your anger get the best of you. Compare that with a time when you let your anger explode.**
- **Which situation left you feeling better?**
- **Which situation was more likely to find favor in God's eyes?**

DAY 5

Read [Matthew 5:21-24](#)

Last week Pastor Bob taught us about the importance of sincere confession - not only to God but to the anyone we harm. He read a scripture about the importance of being reconciled to someone with whom we had a difference. This lesson is so important that we will repeat it today. One of the major causes of our guilt and our need to confess and

be reconciled is our anger. Angry words, malice, and bitterness do lasting harm and cripple some of our most important relationships. Our angry outbursts are like spikes driven into a board. When the spikes are removed the holes, scars and damage remain. The best thing for us is to learn to hold our tongues so that those angry spikes cannot tear into our relationships. In our human sinfulness we will fail to control our anger some of the time. When that happens, it is important to acknowledge our guilt, confess our sin, ask forgiveness and seek restoration.

- **With whom do you have an unresolved conflict that resulted from anger?**
- **Pray for God to reveal to you the truth about harm caused by your anger. Ask for the courage to seek forgiveness and reconciliation with any person you have harmed.**
- **Ask God to remind you of a situation when you were hurt by the anger of another person. To the extent it is possible, offer forgiveness to that person so that your relationship can be restored.**

DAY 6

Take some time today to pray. Ask God for help in controlling your anger and courage in asking forgiveness of those that have received the brunt of your anger. Thank God for your blessings this and every day.

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