

Resolving The Cause of Anger

Christ views anger as murderous. It is therefore a very serious sin and should be remedied at any cost. Christ's first instruction about how to deal with anger is not to the one who is angry.

9. Who is Christ addressing in Matthew 5:23-24?
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We also observe that Christ is talking about a dispute between people in the same "church". Unresolved disputes between people in churches is deadly to the spiritual life of a church.

10. What *advice* does Christ give to someone involved in a legal dispute with another party? (Mat. 5:25-26)
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"A lean settlement is better than a fat lawsuit!"
C.H. Spurgeon

Reconciliation is Christ's answer to anger. Anger needs to be dealt with "quickly" by being reconciled to those we have angered or those we are angry against. This demands forgiveness.

Envy is the little brother of anger. When we are envious about someone else's good fortune, it can actually be a mild case of anger.

11. We now know that the emotions of person dramatically affect their physical health. According to the Bible, what does envy to a person? (Prov. 14:30)
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If envy can eat away at a person, how much more does the full blown emotion of anger and unforgiveness? Dealing with anger involves- (i) care with our words, (ii) taking quick action, (iii) seeking to be reconciled with those we have angered, and (iv) forgiving those who have angered us.

Amen.

LIVING DIFFERENTLY

Part One

This study series on the Beatitudes is designed to show us how Christ expects us to live. Nicky Gumble has written on the Beatitudes in his book "Challenging Lifestyles". He refers to them as the most challenging pursuit any person can engage in. He makes mention of the incredibly high standard that they set. As we study these, let's remind ourselves that we can not possibly attain to these standards without God's help (Gal. 2:20).

CONTROLLING ANGER

Read Matthew 5:21-26

Anger can be good. There are some things that we should all get angry about. Positive anger can actually be a motivating force in our lives. Martin Luther said, "When I am angry I can write, pray and preach well, for ten my whole temperament is quickened, my understanding sharpened, and all mundane vexations and temptations depart."

But there are more times when we should *not* get angry. Knowing when to get angry, and when to control it, will make us a better person. We shall observe what Jesus taught about anger, and what Jesus demonstrated about anger and see how these two aspects paint a balanced picture of how we should control anger.

WHAT IS ANGER

The kind of anger that Jesus is talking about is one that is a selfish, consuming, lingering, emotional state of hatred. It is usually the kind that is directed toward others. It is an anger that refuses to go away, and continually seeks revenge. Jesus said that this kind of anger was wrong.

1. How is this kind of anger contrasted to the kind of anger that Jesus displayed in the temple? (Jn. 2:15)
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There is a kind of anger that is short term, motivating, and can achieve good. It's the kind of anger that drives marathon runners on to finish a race, or mountaineers to climb a mountain, or a football coach to spur his losing team onto a victory. It is also a factor in godly people doing exploits for God (Ps. 4:4). This kind of anger is usually directed inward. Anger that is aimed at someone else, has as its goal: *revenge*.

2. What can the kind of anger that Christ is warning us against lead to? (Matt 5:22)
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3. What always precedes murder according to this same verse?
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Therefore, this kind of anger is as much a sin as murder!

4. How does this compare with 1Jn. 3:15?
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YOU HAVE RIGHTS?

"You have the right to be angry!" This seems to be an accepted statement in our society.

5. When do you usually get angry (the kind that Jesus is now referring to)?

When Jesus made the whip and drove out the money changers from the Temple, it was *righteous* anger that He was displaying. He wasn't angry because His pride, feelings, ego, or rights had been violated. He was upset on behalf of God. Some of the "rights" that the world refers to are pure expressions of selfishness and pride. As Christians we are called to lay down these kind of rights.

HOW ANGER BEGINS TO EXPRESS ITSELF

6. What is our first reaction to someone who provokes us to anger? Note what Christ said in Matthew 5:22.
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Jesus said that to call someone an insulting name, in anger, is to risk God's judgment. Christ gave two examples of what we would have to consider very tame insults: *raca* (empty head) [an insult against someone's intelligence], and *fool* [an insult against someone's character]. Not only have I called people by worse names than these, I've been called by worse names than these!

7. What is the point to Christ using two relatively tame insulting names to illustrate how anger is initially expressed?
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Angry words fuel the flames of anger. The first thing to do in controlling anger is to guard our mouths! We need to develop into people who don't just spout out the first thing that comes into our minds.

8. How does James 3:2 describe a person who can control their tongue?
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