

Ephesians 4:26–32
Battling the Enemy of Your Anger

Anger is incredibly powerful and lethally dangerous. We live in an anger society. Anger is irrational. It doesn't take counsel of the future, of personal safety, or of another's circumstances. Is anger always wrong? No. God is slow to respond in anger. His anger is balanced with His love and grounded in His holiness. Before we are too quick to justify our anger, let's look at God's example and characteristics of right anger. Psalm 103:8, Nehemiah 9:17 & Nahum 1:3

The higher you rise in leadership, the greater the need to control your anger. Sadly, we often think it works the opposite way. With greater power, we feel like we have the right to greater anger. The Bible has much to say regarding our anger. Consider these Proverbs 15:18; 16:32; 19:11; 25:28; 29:11.

I. Is There Such a Thing as “Sinless Anger?”

Yes. Our text admonishes us to be angry and sin not. What does this kind of anger look like? Looking at our perfect Example, we see that the anger of Christ was never in response to a wrong done to Him, but instead was a response to an offense committed against God's righteousness. Look at how He responded to offenses committed against Himself in 1 Peter 2:23.

II. What Are the Characteristics of Sinless Anger?

A. Sinless anger is unselfish

Responsive anger, sinful anger, is always rooted in self-interest. Often we are angry because we have been wronged, our pride is offended, or we're displeased about something. Sinless anger is not concerned with what others have done to us.

B. Sinless anger does not nurse grudges (doesn't keep a fire going)

Illustration: When a camp fire dies down, all you need to do is poke it a little and blow on it to get it to flare back up with a vengeance. So it is with many people and their anger. For some, the slightest poke, a little fuel, or a gentle breeze can start a fire that is not easily quenched. Any anger that is nursed without being dealt with is in danger of becoming vengeance. Over time, the enemy of anger transforms itself into another enemy—bitterness.

C. Sinless anger is purposeful

Anger without purpose is not a rebuke, it's a tantrum. Jesus' anger in the temple in John chapter 2 was for the purpose of cleansing. It was not because He had been personally wronged, but because of a wrong committed against the holiness of God. It was purposeful, focused, directed, and over. This was not something He nursed. Because Christ's anger was purposeful, it was also controlled. When you begin to speak in a way that is out of control, when your emotions are out of control, when your conversation goes somewhere that is uncontrolled, this is not sinless anger. It is destructive and unusable. It is probably more like a tantrum than any type of righteous indignation.

