

# *How to Handle*

## Anger

Of all our emotions, anger is perhaps the rawest, strongest, and potentially the most destructive. While the Scriptures tell us that not all anger is sin: “Be angry, and yet do not sin” (Ephesians 4:26), it is not surprising that anger is mentioned as the precursor of sin throughout the Scriptures.

Before Cain murdered Abel, what emotion preceded the act? (Genesis 4:3–7)

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Proverbs 29:22 and 30:33 tell us anger leads to what conditions?

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Is there any danger in befriending those who are easily angered? Can you think of anyone you associate with who may fit that description? (Proverbs 22:24)

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Unbridled anger is the source for much outward acts of violence and inward roots of bitterness. Whatever stage our anger may have reached, we can take biblical steps to release it to God and experience His peace.

Though we will struggle with angry feelings as long as we live, it is how we deal with that anger that determines its effect on us.

Jesus experienced anger and yet did not succumb to sin. We can share in His triumph for He lives within us to help us. We do not have to be helplessly swept up in the torrents of angry feelings. Our new relationship to Christ gives us hope and power to deal successfully with anger’s sudden attack and dispose of its lingering toxin.

***Whatever stage our anger may have reached, we can take biblical steps to release it to God and experience His grace.***



### **Types of Anger**

Just as all anger is not sin, so all anger is not the same. There are various types of anger that we can identify.

One form of anger is rage. Rage is vicious, explosive anger that seeks to hurt others verbally

or physically. It is very dangerous and stands at the most harmful end of the anger spectrum. It is open war on your circumstances or on the person toward whom you feel extreme anger.

Have you previously or do you now find yourself in the grip of rage?

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Is this type of anger ever presented favorably in Scripture? (Luke 4:28–30; 2 Corinthians 12:10; Galatians 5:20)

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The more common form of anger is resentment. It is inner turmoil that seethes and boils. It can be a response toward someone who wronged you or an unjust situation that hurt you or your loved ones. It can be as destructive as rage since the victim of resentment suppresses his resentment and suffers emotionally and/or physically.

Has resentment toward another gripped your emotions? What will it do to you and others? (Hebrews 12:15)

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While both rage and resentment are condemned in Scripture, another type of anger that we call *righteous indignation* is not presented in a sinful context. This is the kind of anger we feel when we witness certain forms of injustice and wicked acts.

Righteous indignation should motivate us to become positively involved by our love for God and regard for His honor in opposing social or personal evils. However, we must be careful for even our good intentions can be sabotaged by Satan. God has not called you to solve all the social ailments and injustices of the world. You cannot take up everyone's offense.

When Jesus scattered the peddlers at the temple, what form of anger was He expressing? Why was He upset? (Matthew 21:13–16)

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According to 2 Corinthians 5:14, what is to be the controlling motive for our actions? Should that influence the way we express righteous indignation?

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## Effects of Anger

- **Physical ailments.** Anger can produce a host of physical problems ranging from ulcers to hypertension. If entertained on a sustained basis, anger can be very detrimental to your physical health.
- **Emotional ailments.** Probably the most common companion of anger is depression. Depression is often anger turned inward. This combination is very destructive to our spiritual and emotional well-being.

Read 1 Samuel 20:24–33. Who was Saul angry at? Why? Did he check his rage? Did it affect his emotions?

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*No one can make you angry. You make yourself angry.*



## Dealing with Anger

First, remember that not all anger is sinful or even bad. There are occasions when it is appropriate to express our feelings to one another. We can say something like, “Bill, I am upset about this problem. Can we talk about it?” Often our anger can be resolved through clear-headed communication and loving confrontation.

Sometimes that is not possible. In such cases, we should realize that our anger, if allowed to brew, can spill over into sinful actions or harmful emotions. We never have a biblical excuse for becoming combative or overly aggressive.

Read Acts 15:36–40. Do you think Paul was angry with Mark? Does the passage say Paul sinned? Did they resolve the conflict in an appropriate manner?

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**1. Acknowledge your anger to yourself and God.** It is impossible to hide your anger from an omniscient God, and it is equally hard to fool yourself. Have you been honest with God and yourself regarding your anger, or have you tried to hide it under a layer of superficial

Christianity?

Read Psalm 139:1–6. Can you hide anything from God? Why not?

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2. **Tell God that you are angry at \_\_\_\_\_ (identify the source).** Open the channel of communication with your heavenly Father who will not condemn you for your feelings. Identifying your source of anger will keep you from hurting others who are innocent. Perhaps you are angry at someone at work and take it out on your family. Do they deserve such treatment?

3. Now, having pinpointed the source of your anger, **choose to respond to it through the power of the Holy Spirit.** No one can make you angry. You make yourself angry. This is a crucial principle to realize. You can control your emotions because you are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, the supernatural presence of God who gives you His power of self-control. There is no excuse for out-of-control anger when the God who controls heaven and earth lives within you to make you like Himself.

This is perhaps the most critical point in dealing with anger. You may have struggled with it for a lifetime. You may struggle with it only occasionally, but you do struggle with it. However, now that you are a Christian, a transformation has occurred.

According to Galatians 2:20, what happened to your former way of living? Whose life now resides in you?

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What does 2 Corinthians 5:17 say about you?

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What does Romans 6:6 tell you about enslavement to sin? Romans 6:4 says you were buried with Christ so you may do what?

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Read Colossians 3:5–10. What are some of the characteristics of the old man that was crucified with Christ? Is anger part of the old man?

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According to Colossians 1:27 what is the new man? What does Ephesians 4:22–24 tell you to do with the old man and the new man which you are in Christ?

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Galatians 5:19–21 describes the behavior of the old man before salvation. Who is at work in you now to produce the godly behavior described in Galatians 5:22–23?

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What does it mean to walk by the Spirit? (Galatians 5:24–25)

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***You can control your emotions because you are indwelt by the Holy Spirit ...***

Will the Holy Spirit help you with your anger? (John 14:16; Acts 1:8)

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***4. Deal with your anger quickly through the power of the Holy Spirit.*** Come to God in prayer and ask for His supernatural help. Specifically ask that the fruit of self-control produced by the Holy Spirit will be cultivated in your life.

Ephesians 4:31 tells us to put away anger and wrath. What is the primary way we do that according to Ephesians 4:32?

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Right now, choose to forgive the person who has made you angry.

*Lord, I choose to forgive \_\_\_\_\_ who has made me so very angry.*  
If that is your choice, stick by it. You are to forgive others because Christ forgives you. You

cannot do it in your own power, but Christ is in you to help you forgive those whose actions have led to sinful expressions of anger.

If you are angry with God, drop it. How can you be angry with the Person who died for your sins and accepts you unconditionally through the sacrifice of His Son? Humbly ask God to forgive you (He will) and receive the embrace of His love. He can use whatever circumstances that made you angry with Him in a positive way if you trust Him and submit to Him. Rebellion and anger only hurt you, not God.



## **The Father's Heart**

God wants you to experience an abundant life. Suppressed anger or ongoing rage and resentment is a spiritual barrier reef erected against the love of God. People or circumstances may have hurt you, but you can respond in forgiveness through your new life in Christ. You are not a victim of your circumstances but a victor through Jesus Christ.

**Father, thank You for loving me even when I am angry. I realize that cultivated anger damages my relationship with You and keeps me spiritually ill at ease. Thank You that I can forgive those who hurt me and cope with those situations that stimulate anger through Your calm, indwelling Spirit. I am a new creature in Christ. I am not a slave of anger. Christ controls me, and I yield my anger to Him. Refresh me with Your love and help to walk by the Spirit each day under His stable influence.**



## **God's Word for You**

- Proverbs 10:12
- Proverbs 15:1
- James 1:19–20
- Proverbs 14:29
- Proverbs 29:8
- Psalm 37:8
- 1 Timothy 2:8
- Proverbs 16:32
- 1 John 2:9–11
- Philippians 4:8

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<sup>1</sup> Stanley, C. F. (1997). *Dealing With Life's Pressures* (electronic ed.). Atlanta: In Touch Ministries.