**Biblical View and Response to Anger**

**Tonight we’ll talk about a biblical definition and response to anger and how to minister to an angry heart. Here are a few passages to consider as we begin this evening:**

**Proverbs 15:1-2, 18 - *A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable, But the mouth of fools spouts folly. A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, But the slow to anger calms a dispute.***

**Proverbs 17:27 - *He who restrains his words has knowledge, And he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding.***

**Proverbs 22:24-25 - *24 Do not associate with a man given to anger; Or go with a hot-tempered man, 25 Or you will learn his ways And find a snare for yourself.***

**Ephesians 4:26-27 *- Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity.***

***Colossians 3:8 – But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth.***

**There’s obviously more in Scripture about anger and the heart of anger, and expressions of anger, and the results of sinful anger, and so on. We’ll talk about much of that tonight.**

**Restraining our anger, taming our tongues, putting on self-control, engaging in and practicing spiritual discipline is all part of our sanctification. Restraining and controlling our anger is a heart discipline, justlike calming our anxious hearts, not being fearful, and in walking in the Spirit and not the flesh is part of our sanctification. It is part of growing in Christlikeness.**

**Like much of what we’re talking about in this class, we have a choice as to how we’ll respond to whatever is challenging us. We have a choice in the spiritual and material effort we put in to cooperating with the Holy Spirit in our sanctification. Listen to this quote from the book by Jerry Bridges, *The Discipline of Grace***

**“Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit in us whereby our inner being is progressively changed, freeing us more and more from sinful traits and developing within us over time the virtues of Christlike character. However, though sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit in us, it does involve our wholehearted response in obedience and the regular use of the spiritual disciplines that are instruments of sanctification.”**

**Tonight we’ll see that our anger is a choice, and if not restrained, it is a sinful trait and it involves our wholehearted response to tame, restrain, and to control it and not sin in it. Our getting angry, sinfully expressing our anger, and sinning in our anger is totally up to us and we can and must change if it controls us.**

**Let’s pray…..**

­­­­I. Understanding Anger.

A. What is anger? A \_\_\_GOD-GIVEN EMOTION\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

1. Definition: Anger is a strong \_\_FEELING\_\_\_\_ of displeasure or hostility caused by a real or perceived offense, injury, or unmet desire to one’s self or others, usually accompanied by a desire to retaliate or seek revenge.

2. Anger is not a thing, it is not something inside you – anger is a \_\_CHOICE\_\_\_\_, not something you can’t help.

B. Two words for anger are used in the NT:

1. *Thumos* - Eph. 4:31 - *Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.*

*Thumos* – “heat, anger boiling up and soon subsiding again.”

“slay to kill, to slaughter.”

\_\_EXPLOSIVE\_\_\_\_\_\_ anger, boiling agitation of the feelings and passion of anger.

2*. Orge -* Col. 3:8 *– But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth.*

*Orge* – “the natural disposition, temper, character, movement or agitation of the soul, impulse, desire, violent emotion, indignation, anger exhibited in punishment.”

“inner desire which is stretched out.”

An abiding unsettled \_\_\_ATTITUDE\_\_\_\_\_ of indignation that frequently seeks revenge, slow burn, holding grudges.

**The point here is to show the ways in which the Bible describes anger and I think we can recognize that in us and others. There is the explosive rage and then the slow burn that plays out against others. We’re not going to dig in and explore those for more examples, but just wanted to show how the Bible describes anger.**

C. Anger has two components:

1. \_AROUSAL\_\_\_ “Why am I angry?”

2. \_EXPRESSION\_\_\_\_ “What I do/say when I’m angry”; “How others know I’m angry?”

3. Both the arousal and the expression of anger can be either:

\_\_UNRIGHTEOUS\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_RIGHTEOUS\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

II. Understanding Anger.

A. Anger is a \_\_\_\_CHOICE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

We are created in the image of God with the capacity to be righteously angry.

Our sin nature causes us to choose to be sinfully angry – we lose control….

B. Anger is often \_\_LEARNED\_\_\_\_ (having been taught and modeled by parents, siblings, many others) and can become habitual. We learn what to get upset about and how to show that we are upset.   
Proverbs 22:24-25 - *Do not associate with a man given to anger; Or go with a hot-tempered man, Or you will learn his ways and find a snare for yourself.*

C. Most people think their anger is a normal and \_\_JUSTIFIABLE\_\_ to the way they have been treated. God commands us not to \_\_SIN\_\_\_ when we are angry (Matthew 5:44; Romans 12:18-19) Ephesians 4:26-27 - *Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity.*

Ephesians 4:26-27 clearly addresses the sin of anger in believers…

Those controlled by anger instead of the Holy Spirit allow this sinful emotional expression/response to linger in their lives and create a foothold for the devil.

Believers cannot be indwelt by Satan because God does not share or give up His rightful place in their hearts, but those who yield to the emotion of anger allow the enemy some level of influence in their lives.

Unchecked anger produces bitter fruit of unrighteous feelings, thinking, and acting.

Sinful anger not crucified through confession, repentance, and obedience will produce sinful behavior in time (James 1:15).

D. God and anger. God gets angry in a just response to what is wrong and offensive (God’s wrath - John 3:36). On several occasions, Jesus was filled with anger (Mark 3:5; John 2:14-17). **READ**

E. God demonstrates that anger can be right, good, appropriate, and a loving response to sin. Anger for the sake of God and His reputation is righteous anger. Anger for the sake of ourselves and our reputations is sinful anger. It is possible for us to be angry and not sin, however, our sin nature defaults to sinful anger.

F. Sometimes we are tempted to use anger as a tool to get what we want – manipulation of others! Practiced under the guise of righteousness and justified as a means of producing righteousness in someone else. Scripture is clear that this is wrong (James 1:19-20). God never uses human anger to accomplish His purposes.

G. There is a difference between unrighteous and righteous anger. We often want to characterize our own anger as righteous indignation or anger – \_\_IS IT\_\_\_\_?

H. Unrighteous and Righteous Anger (See Handout)

I. Righteous Anger Summary - Robert Jones, Southern Theological Seminary; ACBC

1. Righteous anger reacts to \_\_ACTUAL SIN\_\_, not my \_PREFERENCE\_\_\_\_.

2. Righteous anger focuses on God’s kingdom, not my kingdom.

3. Righteous anger is accompanied by \_\_GODLY QUALITIES\_\_ of expressing itself in Godly ways, not in how I feel to be appropriate or based on my emotions.

III. Sinful handling of anger.

A. Identify \_\_SINFUL AROUSAL\_\_\_\_\_\_ of anger.

1. Is my thinking/desires idolatrous?

2. Am I angry because I don’t get my way or what I want (James 4:1-3)?

3. Do I want good things so much they become an idol of the heart (Rom. 1:25; James 1:12-15)

4. Am I motivated by sinful thoughts and desires (pride, immoral or evil thoughts, envy, selfishness, etc)?

5. Any person controlled by anger is a fool – Proverbs 29:11 - *A fool always loses his temper, But a wise man holds it back.*

B. Questions to ask about arousal to anger.

1. Questions to ask about arousal to anger.

2. What motivates my anger? Anger begins in our hearts (Mark 7:21-23).

3. Is my anger “primed and ready” to respond to others sin without looking at my own sin? Do I look for sin in others? (Matthew 7:3-5; 1 Cor. 13:4-7; Js 1:19-20).

C. Identify \_\_SINFUL\_\_\_\_ expressions of anger.

1. Blowing up, raging, getting even (Proverbs 6:34).

2. Clamming up, not admitting it (Ephesians 4:26-27).

3. Act foolishly (Proverbs 14:17).

4. Do not understand, distort facts. (Proverbs 14:29 - slow to anger=great understanding).

5. Be hard to live with – (Proverbs 16:14).

6. Fail to rule your spirit – (Proverbs 16:32 -*Slow to anger-better than the mighty*).

7. Stir up anger and strife in others – (Proverbs 15:1, 18 - *A gentle answer turns away wrath; slow to anger pacifies contention*).

8. Get angry habitually – (Proverbs 19:19).

9. Not being good company. Being harmful – (Proverbs 22:24, 25).

10. Becoming ‘ticked off’ by others – (Proverbs 25:28).

11. Be fierce and destructive – (Proverbs 27:4).

12. Get even - (Romans 12:17-21).

13. Behaving poorly. Showing poor manners – (1 Corinthians 13:5).

14. Attacking a substitute.

15. Denying anger.

D. Questions to ask about expression of anger.

1. Do I express anger right – so that it pleases God? (1 Cor.13:4-7; Eph.4:1-3).

2. How long does my anger last – slow burn or volcano?

3. How controlled is my anger (Gal. 5:22-23). (Fruit of the Spirit – *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control*).

4. What is the effect of my anger? Is there a trail of pain, broken relationships (Matthew 5:16; Proverbs 14:17).

5. Is my anger an effective testimony for Christ?

IV. View of Anger from Secular psychology

1. Secular psychology promotes anger management – expressing, suppressing, calming.

1. Secular strategies try to keep anger at bay– relaxation, cognitive restructuring, problem solving, communication, humor, changing environment, counseling.
2. The secular methodologies do not address the heart of sinful anger (deny idolatrous self-desires).

V. Godly response to anger:

A. Recognize, admit, and confess sinful arousal and expression of anger. Anger is a strong human emotion and sometimes feels overpowering. When we are tempted to think in this manner, we must recognize that our perspectives are wrong.

B. Confess to God and the appropriate people.

Proverbs 28:13 – *He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper,  
But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.*

C. See God in the trial. Know that the events of your life are not out of control, but ordained by your good, loving and sovereign Father (Genesis 50:20, James 1:2-4).

D. List what you learn about Him from Romans 8:28-39; Genesis 50:19-20; Luke 12:22-32; Matthew 6:19-34.

E. Return good for what you think is evil. No matter how you are treated, return a blessing (Genesis 50:21, Romans 12:21).

1 Peter 3:9 – *not returning evil for evil or insult for insult but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.*

F. Communicate to solve the problem.

Use the four rules of communication from Ephesians 4:25-32.

* Be honest
* Keep current
* Attack problem, not person
* Act, don’t react.

G. When anger is rising ask yourself 6 questions before responding.

1. Do I have the facts straight? (Proverbs 18:13).

2. Should love hide it? (1 Peter 4:8) *Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins*.

3. Is my timing right? (Proverbs 15:23b) *a timely word is delightful!*

4. Is my attitude right? (Ephesians 4:15) *speaking the truth in love.*

5. Are my words loving? Is my speech gracious? (Ephesians 4:15, 29)

6. Have I prayed for God’s help? (Prov 3:5)

H. Act to solve my part of the problem.

Deal with your own sin, especially a critical spirit. Recognize that God is a merciful forgiver and the righteous judge of your own sins (Matthew 7:3-5; Matthew 18:21-35; Micah 7:18-20).

Colossians 3:13 - *bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.*

Live peaceably – as far as it depends on YOU! (Romans 12:18).

According to God, we can control our emotions as an act of obedience to Him. Psalm 37:8 – “*Cease from anger and abandon wrath; Do not get upset; it leads only to evildoing”*.

We must CHOOSE to set aside uncontrolled anger as it is in direct opposition to God. In doing so we avoid hurting ourselves and others in disobedience to God (Colossians 3:8).

I. Five things to tell yourself when you are getting angry.

1. I want something too much – Idolatry. Jas 4:1-4; Isa 55:1-2; Rom 1:25

2. I am not God – Judge. Jas 1:19-20; 4:19-20; Gen 50:19; 1 Pet 2:23; Matt 7:1ff; 1 Cor 4:5; Rom 12:17-21

3. God has been very gracious to me – In Christ. Ps 103:8; Eph 4:31-32; Col 3:13; Matt 18:22-35; Rom 5:10, 3:21-26.

4. God is in control – He is doing good and will not give me more than I can bear. 1 Cor 10:13; Gen 50:21

5. Remember who I am – A new creature in Christ. Rom 6:11; 2 Cor 5:17; 1 Pet 4:1-6; 1 Cor 10:13; Gal 5:13-16, 19-23.

H. Five More Things to Remember as you are Calming Down

1. God’s grace helps me to exercise self control, patience and gentleness. 1 Cor 13:4-5; Jas 1:19; Titus 1:7; Prov 12:16

2. God’s grace enables speaking with gentleness and grace-Prov 15:1; Eph 4:29

3. God’s grace enables me to lovingly do good to those who wronged me. Rom 12:20; Matt 5:43ff; Gen 50:21; 45:7-11

4. God’s grace enables me to receive correction, even from those who hurt me. Prov 9:8; 13:10; Matt 7:1ff

5. God’s grace helps me to pursue the restoration of those who hurt me. Gal 6:1-2

I. Five More Practical Principles

1. Don’t be quarrelsome. Prov 17:14; 29:3; 26:20; 2 Tim. 2:24-25; 1 Pet 3:7

2. Deal with your anger and conflict quickly. Eph 4:26-27; Matt 5:23-24; 7:1ff

3. Prepare for temptation. Prov 21:5

4. Seek God’s help through prayer. Heb 4:16

5. Your anger can motivate you to pursue a biblical solution to problems.

V. Counseling an Angry Person.

A. Data gathering/interpretation.

1. What does this person want so badly? Jas 4:1ff

2. Is physical or any abuse taking place? Is anyone in danger?

3. Biblical identification/responses of righteous and sinful anger

4. Loving confrontation/acknowledgment/confession/repentance of sinful anger.

B. Homework for those who give in to anger.

1. Repent of anger. Abandon your rights. Phil 2:3-8; Mk 10:42-45; Jn 13:1-17 (humility; consideration of others first)

2. Create note cards for what you need to tell yourself when you are angry.

3. Make a plan for dealing with anger (think-do). Prov 27:12

4. Keep an anger journal.

5. Meditate upon and memorize key texts.

6. Reading Scripture and focusing your mind rightly.

7. Work through the questions and principles above.

C. Go through Lou Priolo’s handout



