

# DEEP DIVE: ANGER

Anger primarily happens for two reasons. First, a goal is being blocked. You want to get to an important meeting, but there is traffic on the way stopping you from getting there, so you get angry. Second, you believe someone owes you something. You were wronged and now you believe that person owes you an apology, your reputation back, the item they took, the upbringing you deserved, the future they stole, etc. In your heart, that person owe you a debt. And until the debt is paid, you are angry.

Ecclesiastes 7:9 says, “Be not quick in your spirit to become angry, for anger lodges in the heart of fools.” If you let anger lodge (remain, dwell, take up residence) in your heart, you will start to walk a foolish road. Your anger will wreak havoc on your thought life, motivations, and confidence.

So how do you deal with anger? Forgiveness.

Forgiveness **never** means that what someone did to you was okay. It also does not minimize the wrongs that were done, and it’s not giving that person permission to do it again. Forgiveness says, “I choose to release your debt. You no longer owe me that anymore.”

When Jesus Christ died on the cross and said, “Father forgive them, they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34), He was not saying that your sin was okay, minimizing its wickedness, or giving you permission to do it again. Consider the woman caught in adultery, where Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more” (John 8:11). When Jesus forgave, He was choosing to release your debt.

*Do you have any anger you are harboring toward people in your life? Do you have any anger at yourself? Do you have any anger with God?*

**In the space on the next page, list the names of people that come to mind.** Next to their name, write down all the debts that you feel they owe you. Do they owe you an apology? Your reputation back? A future opportunity they stole? Also, make sure to write **"myself"** at the bottom of your list if you have areas you need to forgive yourself. Write **"God"** if you are harboring resentment toward the Lord. Obviously, God doesn't need your forgiveness, but you do need to let go of all disappointments and anger you have with your Heavenly Father.

Once you make your list, start with the first person and choose to forgive them **from your heart**. For forgiveness to be complete, it must reach the emotional core of your inner being. Allow the painful memories to come to the surface and be honest about what you feel. Then choose to release that person's debt. Don't wait until you feel like forgiving. You will never get there. Forgiveness is a decision of the will, so make the hard choice to forgive in view of all Jesus Christ did for you on the cross.

Lastly, do not say, "Lord, please help me to forgive" or "Lord, I want to forgive." God is already helping you. Say, "I **choose** to forgive this person for what they did to me."

For every debt you feel someone owes you, pray as follows:

***Dear Heavenly Father, I choose to forgive [name the person] for [what you believe they owe you]. I choose to release their debt even though it made me feel [be honest here].***

Once you have forgiven every person, pray as follows:

***Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for setting me free from my resentment and bitterness. I choose today to forgive all these people and let go of my right to seek revenge. I ask You to please heal my damaged emotions and renew my mind in Your truth. Today, I hand them into Your hands. Lastly, I ask You to please bless each person that hurt me.***