

## ANGER

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### INTRODUCTION:

Proverbs 22:24-25 “Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man do not go, lest you learn his ways and set a snare for your soul.”

Proverbs 14:29 “He who is slow to wrath has great understanding, but he who is impulsive exalts folly.”

### HOT NOSES:

A literal rendering of these two texts would start something like - Prov. 22:24 “Do not be a friend with a lord of the nose . . .” And Prov. 14:29 “A long nose will understand much . . .” These make a little more sense when you understand the Hebrew idiom for anger and patience – a hot nose.

Something doesn't go your way, seems to be unfair, seems not the way you want it to be, not the way that it should be, and you get hot in the face.

Notice what this heat in the face is inspired by – some perception of injustice.

Anger is an intense and burning urge to see that which we think is wrong, uneven, and unbalanced, to be made right, even, and balanced. It is an urgent sensation that you have been somehow wronged and that justice needs to be done.

### TWO KINDS OF ANGER:

This means that it is possible for anger to be right and godly. And it is possible for us to be consumed by an ungodly anger.

Most obviously, God is capable of great, righteous anger. Rom. 1:18 “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness of men. . .” Throughout the prophets we hear of the coming wrath of God and the day of his wrath. John the Baptist preached about the coming wrath of God (Lk. 3). And the book of Revelation is filled with vivid descriptions of God's wrath, poured out like bowls of wine on earth or described as a winepress that all the unrighteous will be tread in. Psalm 2 tells the kings of earth to “kiss the son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little . . .” God has intended to display his wrath. “What if God, wanting to show his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction . . .” Rom. 9:22). But his wrath is entirely just, directed at the unrighteousness of men.

But then there is man's anger. The first recorded instance of anger in Scripture is Cain. Cain is convinced that God has wronged him by not giving him the favour that he thought was owed to him.

Other great moments in the anger of men –

Jonah 3:10-4:5. “And it got hot.” Jonah sees that God is having mercy on Nineveh and asks to die because things are so bad. He is convinced that the just thing would be for Nineveh to be nuked. And it gets him hot to see Nineveh get mercy.

Luke 15:28. “But he was angry and would not go in . . .” This is really the same story all over again. In both of these stories a man is angry seemingly on behalf of justice, while the one who truly had the right to be angry has given mercy.

### **WRATH OF MAN VS. WRATH OF GOD:**

So we see God getting angry with a perfect and righteous and holy anger. And then we see men getting sinfully angry, trying to justify their anger as right and good. James contrasts these two kinds of anger – James. 1:19-20.

James corrects here our sinful confusion. When we are heated, we become blinded by the delusion that what we are after is justice. And there are two parts to this delusion. First, we tell ourselves that a terrible injustice has been committed and that is what has provoked our anger. And second, that our anger, the heat of our outrage, is itself the solution to the problem.

### **DEALING WITH ANGER**

So how do we deal with the anger that rages in our hearts? First, we have to understand the difference between the anger of God and the anger of men. Rom. 12:17-19. Vengeance is God’s. In other words, anger does not belong to us. When anger creeps up on you, it does so by making a case that you have a right to feel this way, that your outrage is just. Dealing with anger begins with refuting this. You don’t have a right to wrath. You too are a sinner, in need of forgiveness. Get this perspective and let go of the anger. “For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thes. 5:9). Through salvation we are saved not only from the wrath of God, but we are also delivered from our own sinful wrath.

### **APPLICATION**

If you have a problem with wrath, what do you do?

1. Identify it, and stop justifying it. If you can’t let go of the “demands of justice and righteousness” then you need to step back and honestly assess what the demands of justice and righteousness actually are in your own case. Do you deserve the wrath of God? Are you going to be the unrighteous servant who’s choking the debt out of his fellow servant?
2. Once you’ve identified it, confess it. Let go of it. Name it to God, and then name it to everyone else that saw it. The confession should be as public as the sin.
3. Now that you’re ready to be done sulking under the gourd tree, go into the party. And if you recoil at the thought of this, then go back to step one again and keep doing this until you are ready to go into the party. God didn’t appoint you to wrath, he appointed you to salvation.



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