



Anger: The Good,
the Bad, & the Ugly

Biblical
Counseling
Seminar 2020

Housekeeping

- Times, presenters, schedule
- Keeping it real
- Be a humble, active listener... think “chicken & watermelon”
- Know your “lens”
- A Gospel Focus



Anger: Speaking of keeping it real...

- If you have been hurt by an angry person...
- If you ARE or HAVE BEEN an angry person...
- If you live with or know an angry person...
- REFLECT: Why are YOU here this weekend?



What IS Anger?

“Anger is our God-given capacity to respond to a wrong that we think is important...Your capacity to be angry is an expression of being made in [God’s] image. So when you get angry, you are not necessarily wrong. But often our anger does go wrong.”
(Powlison)

Meaning Makers

- As life happens, we filter all that happens to us by what we *really* believe and what we *want* the most. We ask:
- Is God punishing me?
- Why are there so many idiots around me?
- I am frustrated! This. Is. Stupid.



What is “Good Anger”?

- We like to think that good anger is what happens when I am angry and bad anger is when others are angry!
- Stuart Scott says, “Righteous anger is indignation for holy reasons. This kind of anger is consumed with the desire for righteousness or with God’s will, reputation, and honor.” (Can you think of any examples?)
- NOTE: In our Christian subculture, we tend to view ALL anger as bad, & we tend to see angry people as sinning.

What is “Bad Anger”?

- “Anger goes wrong when we get angry about things that don’t matter...We often get angry at things that aren’t true wrongs and don’t really matter to anyone but us.”
- “Anger goes wrong when we want a good thing more than we want God.” (As in, you’ll sin to get it).
- “Anger goes wrong when you respond to a true wrong in the wrong way.”

-- David Powlison

Manifestations of “Bad Anger”

- It’s not hard to think of what bad anger often looks like: yelling, bad language, a red face, throwing things, gestures, threats, violence, demands, etc.
- However, bad anger can ALSO be manifested through an inward “slow burn” – passive aggressive behavior, sarcasm, stonewalling, bitterness, or withdrawal. These behaviors, over the long haul, can be just as destructive as the more overt expressions of anger.



- Proverbs 14:29;
15:18; 16:32;
22:24-25
- Jeremiah 17:9-10
- Psalm 139:23-24
- Ephesians 4:25-32
- Colossians 3:5-10

Let's hear from God's Word

Let's Talk

- In general, what do you *expect* an angry person to look like, sound like, or do?
- Have you seen anger “done right”? What did that look like?





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The Most Angry Person in the Bible is God

“God can be provoked to anger. God hates evil (Proverbs 8:13). He hates dishonest scales (Proverbs 20:10). He hates haughty eyes, a lying tongue, murderers, schemers, false witnesses, and those who stir up dissension (Proverbs 6:16-19). Since these are occasions when His honor is violated and His people oppressed, *we would hope that our God of justice would get angry.* But His anger deserves a different word – perhaps holy anger – because it is like nothing we have ever witnessed.”
(Ed Welch, SBBP, 121)

Thinking Theologically About God's Wrath

“Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) breaks down wrath's disordered expression into three categories:

- We get angry too easily (when we are quick tempered);
- We get angrier than we should (disproportionate to the offense);
- We stay angry too long (when anger smolders into resentment and grudge holding).”

-- DeYoung, 124

THINK: How is this different from God's wrath?

Thinking Theologically About God's Wrath

“God is slow to anger and quick to show mercy.”

(Exodus 34:6-7; Psalm 145:8-9; Luke 6:35-36)

“God's anger is fair-minded. His anger always rises for a good reason. It's never a fit or a spasm or a bad hair day.” (Deuteronomy 29:24-28; Romans 1:18-20; Ephesians 5:3-6)

(Powlison, Chapter 9)

Thinking Theologically About God's Wrath

“The anger that your sin deserves fell on Jesus” (*i.e. “till on that cross as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied”*)
(Isaiah 53; Matthew 27:45-54; I Peter 2:24)

“God’s anger works to disarm the power of your sin... because He loves us, He is angry at our self-destructive sinfulness.”
(Hebrews 12:5-11)

(Powlison, Chapter 10)



Thinking Theologically About God's Wrath

“God’s anger delivers us from the pain of other’s sins...the Lord is angry at people who seek to hurt us...on the final day, all causes of pain will be destroyed forever.”

“God’s anger protects us from ourselves...the constructive displeasure of mercy makes God’s anger your friend.”

(Powlison, Chapter 10)

Let's Talk

- What can we learn about God from thinking about His wrath?
- What can we learn about our anger as we think about God's anger?





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What does Our Anger “Say”?

“Anger says, ‘That is wrong.’ It is a fundamentally moral emotion. In fact, you could say, it is *the* moral emotion... Anger always passes judgment...Sinful anger still seizes the morally high ground...Anger offers the intoxicating experience of playing God—of being lawgiver, judge, and jury and ordering the world according to what / like.”

-- Groves & Smith, Untangling Emotions, 170-171

What does Anger “Say”?

“The underlying message of highly angry people is that ‘Things oughta go my way’ ... Angry people tend to feel that any blocking or changing of their plans is an unbearable indignity and that they should not have to suffer this way.”

-- DeYoung, Glittering Vices, 122



Group Exercise: Angry People in the Bible

- Who is angry?
- What is the perceived wrong that prompts the response of anger?
- What does the angry person want?
- What is done, and how does it turn out?

- Genesis 4:3-8
- II Chronicles 26:16-21
- Nehemiah 13:4-9
- Jonah 3:10-4:11
- **A summary:**
James 4:1-10

Anger Management!

Powlison's Eight Questions (Chapter 13)

1. What is my situation? Anger is about something.
2. How do I react? Thoughts, emotions, actions.
3. What are my motives? Want, believe, fear, love.
4. What are the consequences of my anger? Family, job, health, legal issues.

Powlison's Eight Questions (Chapter 13)

5. What is true? What does God say about this?

6. How do I turn to God for help? Do it. Turn to Him. Ask for help. ("Angry people always talk to the wrong person. They talk to themselves.")

7. How could I respond constructively? Think through your positive options.

8. What are the consequences of faith & obedience?

Five Gospel Perspectives



THE EXTENT &
GRAVITY OF
OUR SIN



THE
CENTRALITY OF
THE HEART



THE PRESENT
BENEFITS OF
CHRIST



GOD'S CALL TO
GROWTH &
CHANGE



A LIFESTYLE OF
REPENTANCE AND
FAITH

Christ is our HOPE

“Christianity’s change process does not revolve around a system of redemption, but around a Person who redeems. The Bible calls us to focus on Christ our Redeemer who gives us the pattern & power for change.

Christ is our hope.

He links the forgiveness of the past to the growth of the present to the hope of the future.” (HPC, 43)

How does the GOSPEL speak to Anger?

You grow in God's grace:

...by remembering and believing afresh that you are justified by what Jesus did on the cross for you.

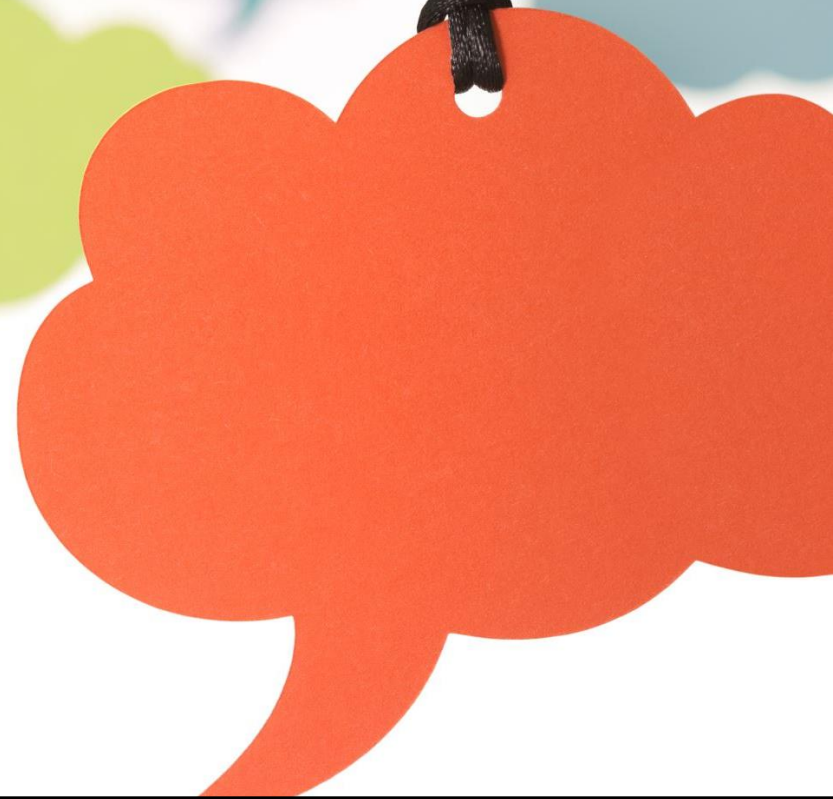
...by hearing and believing and interacting with God's truth, one troubling situation after another.

...by learning to obey God's command, even when it is difficult to do so.

...by daily turning to Jesus, daily rehearsing the gospel.

Let's Talk

Of Powlison's Eight Questions,
which is the hardest to
actually DO?





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