

Anger Resolution Seminar

*“Death and life are in the power
of the tongue.” —Proverbs 18:21*



Seminar Workbook
Institute in Basic Life Principles

ANGER RESOLUTION SEMINAR WORKBOOK

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The Power Behind
Anger Resolution

**Discerning
a Spirit of Anger**

Session One

The Urgency of Resolving Anger

Unresolved anger is a major destroyer of relationships.

Unresolved anger is one of the chief contributing factors to the destruction of marriages, the breakdown of families, and the weakening of nations. It is a major cause of health problems and lack of productivity in the workplace, and it is a common denominator among juvenile delinquents.

When a husband displays a spirit of anger toward his wife, he damages the spirit of their marriage. When a father responds angrily to his children, he destroys their trust in him. When an employer expresses a spirit of anger toward his employees, he decreases their desire to achieve.

Unresolved anger is a “giant” every person must conquer.

Anger is not limited to one age group, culture, race, economic level, social status, educational background, or any other classification. It is a universal problem. When thousands of men from across the United States have been asked if they have a problem with anger, more than 90 percent have acknowledged that they do. Anger is not just a problem in our day; it has been a problem since the beginning of history. Anger that progressed into wrath was one of the first evidences of the Fall of man and resulted in the first murder. (See Genesis 4.)

Unresolved anger is a deep-rooted problem.

It is no small task to help a person resolve anger. Scripture states, “A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment: for if thou deliver him, yet thou must do it again” (Proverbs 19:19). The only hope of resolving anger is to deal with root causes in a wise and effective way. That is the objective of this course.

There is a significant relationship between unresolved anger and lust. Both are expressions of unrestrained emotions, and both focus on present fulfillment with little or no thought of future consequences. The primary Greek word for *anger* is *orge*; it means an “excitement of the mind” and “violent passion.” These same emotions are also related to lust.

When a man sows immorality, he exposes his children to similar temptations, and when he tries to discipline them for their actions, he often overcorrects them with a destructive spirit of anger. There is also an obvious relationship between anger and violence. If anger develops into hatred, one is guilty of becoming a murderer in his heart (see I John 3:15), and what is in a man’s heart tends to be expressed in his actions. (See Matthew 12:35.)

We are grateful for the study and ministry of Dr. S. M. Davis, who developed much of this material on the spirit of anger. We recommend his video, *Freedom From the Spirit of Anger*, as a valuable resource.

How to Evaluate Anger

- Reacting to hurts = lighting a _____ 1
- Rehearsing offenses = starting a _____ 2
- Reporting offenses = feeding the _____ 3
- Rejecting offender = fueling _____ 4

Anger Resolution—Not Anger Management

Anger management is like trying to control what is out of control. In essence, attempting to manage anger is similar to expecting “competing gods” to cooperate. (Little gods are by their very nature intolerant of other gods.) Most anger *management* courses fail to effect lasting change in the hearts of those who attend them.

The Need to Test Every Spirit

When we meet other people, we can usually discern whether they are sad or happy or depressed or angry. This discernment comes from our human spirits. There are other spirits that we are not able to detect with our human spirits. These require a special gifting of God’s Holy Spirit so that one is able to be a “discerner of spirits.” (See I Corinthians 12:10.)

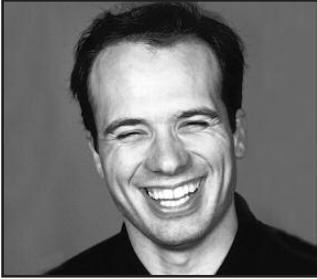
Every person communicates a spirit that can be detected by others. It can either be a positive spirit or a negative spirit. We may believe that we are communicating a positive spirit. However, others will react to us if our spirits are not right, and the results of a wrong spirit will be evidenced in our lives and in the lives of those around us.

Scripture instructs us to test the spirits to see whether or not they are of God. If we lack wisdom in discerning our own motives or the spirits of others, we can simply ask God for that wisdom according to His promise: “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (James 1:5).

- Do other people say that you are angry when you do not think you are?
- Do you discern a spirit of anger in yourself?
- Do those around you live in tension and with the fear that you might “blow up”?

Discerning a Spirit of Anger

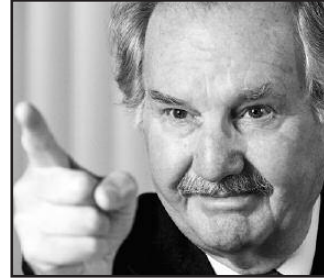
Which of these men has a spirit of anger?



1



2



3

When you meet a group of people, can you discern which ones have a spirit of anger? If you were considering someone for a job or even for a life partner, how would you know whether that person had an angry spirit? What evidences would you look for?

Why would number 2 be chosen?

In looking at the three faces above, most people would select number 2 as the one who has a spirit of anger. They would probably make that choice based on the following factors:

- He is not smiling.
- His facial features look harsh.
- His eyes are dark and evasive.

The lack of a sincere smile could tend to indicate a spirit of unhappiness. Yet, other factors can also hinder a person from smiling. Facial features also reveal inward attitudes. Hard features are often the result of years of inward tension. The darkness of the eyes and the evasiveness of a person who cannot look you in the eye are telltale signs of guilt. However, the guilt may not be accompanied by a spirit of anger.

Actually, any one of the above three people could have a spirit of anger, but you would not know it by looking at them. Some of the most winsome and likable people in public are volcanoes of anger when they are alone with their families. People are shocked to discover the truth when a marriage breaks apart or children run away from abusive anger in the home.

When a father seeks help for a rebellious son or daughter and the father is asked if he has a problem with anger, he usually says yes. There are times when a father will say no, but his wife or children will correct him with examples of an angry spirit of which he may not even be aware.

Only those who live with each one know the answer.

What Is a Spirit of Anger?

- **It is hostile energy from a buildup of inner _____⁵.**

The tension of a spirit of anger is the result of past hurts that have not been properly resolved and guilt from wrong responses to those hurts. For example, a son who is falsely accused by his father and punished for something he did not do will be deeply hurt, but if he lashes out at his father with verbal or physical disrespect, he will add guilt to the hurt. If this situation is not properly resolved by the father and the son asking each other for forgiveness, the tension will continue because . . .

Tension is _____⁶; it builds up and does not dissipate by itself.

- **It is a disposition of hostility from anger, _____⁷, and malice.**

There is a sequence of words in Scripture that defines characteristics of a spirit of anger. Colossians 3:8 says, “Put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.” The Greek definitions of these words reveal the increasing intensity of a spirit of anger.

Definition of *anger*: The primary Greek word for *anger* is *orge*, which means an “agitation of the soul . . . any violent emotion.” The soul involves the mind, will, and emotions. Further understanding of the anger described here can be gained as we realize that the mind can be stirred up with memories, the emotions can be aroused with irritation, and the will can be provoked to action. Added to this is a rush of adrenaline that produces an increase of strength for whatever action is taken.

Definition of *wrath*: One Greek word for *wrath* is *thumos*, which means “passion . . . heat, anger forthwith boiling up and soon subsiding again.” Unresolved anger turns into wrath. Anger is the stirring up of the soul, whereas wrath is the boiling over of passion that results in damaging words or actions.

Definition of *malice*: The Greek word for *malice* is *kakia*, which means “ill-will, desire to injure.” Malice is a smoldering desire for vengeance without regard to the breaking of laws. Malice is cutting off a person and wishing him harm, and it is the same emotion as hate.

Definition of *blasphemy*: One of the two Greek words translated *blasphemy* is *blasphemia*, which means “slander, detraction, speech injurious to another’s good name.” It is also translated *evil speaking* and *railing*. Slandorous words that defame another person are expressions of vengeance that come from malice. These words cannot be restrained, because they come from the heart of a person with a spirit of anger.

- **It can be an attitude (irritation) that a relationship _____⁸ or an evil spirit’s _____⁹ that controls a person’s responses.**

A spirit of anger can be impersonal or personal. In the same way that a person could have a spirit of generosity, a person could have an impersonal spirit of anger—an attitude

or a disposition of anger. A spirit of anger can also be an external power that has made its entrance in a person's life and controls responses even contrary to the will of the person. Counselors who deal with personal spirits of anger identify them as multiple personalities. However, Scripture states that they are evil spirits.

- **It is usually an _____¹⁰ condition and therefore denied by one who has it.**

A spirit of anger is equivalent to the gall of bitterness spoken of in Scripture. (See Acts 8:23.) Bitterness is like the disease of leprosy. A leper loses the feeling of pain to the point that when he hurts himself, he is not even aware of it. A bitter person will usually be quick to remember the hurts of the past but will be unaware of the pain and damage he is inflicting on himself and others because of his spirit of anger.

A Biblical Example

When James and John saw that the people of Samaria did not welcome Jesus on His way to Jerusalem, they said, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke 9:54-56).

In this situation, Jesus was actually saying to them: "You do not realize the spirit that is coming from you." The spirit they had was a spirit of anger and wrath, but it was not the Spirit of God because it was opposite to the nature and purpose of God.

- **A spirit of anger creates constant _____¹¹ in those who must live with it.**

Living with a person who has a spirit of anger is like living next to an active volcano. You are never quite sure when it will erupt. Therefore, you live in a state of constant tension. Those who have a spirit of anger are likely to have an outburst of unresolved anger provoked by a small matter, or it may even be unprovoked because it is boiling over from past hurts and guilt.

Characteristics of a Spirit of Anger

A person who has a spirit of anger will usually demonstrate one or more of the following characteristics. It is important to recognize these characteristics in ourselves and remove them. It is also important to detect them in others since we are warned by God, "Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go" (Proverbs 22:24).

1. The justification that a little _____¹² is permissible

One of the chief contributing factors to a spirit of anger is the false idea that a little anger is acceptable and that it just needs to be controlled. This wrong conclusion is also a chief hindrance in conquering a spirit of anger.

The initial emotion of anger is not sin. It can actually be viewed as a signal to go back to the hurts and guilt that may have produced it and to clear them up. Allowing a little anger to continue is like letting a little fire burn in a dry forest.

2. An _____¹³ to the hurts caused by anger

Many people are surprised when they hear recordings of their own voices for the first time. They thought that their voices actually sounded different to others because they certainly sounded different to them. The same thing could be said of our voice inflections, tonal patterns, volume, and pitch. Added to this is the matter of facial expressions. We do not see them as others do, but they reflect far more of our inward attitudes than we realize.

3. The belief that anger can be _____¹⁴

The problem with this idea is that when anger is not recognized and properly disposed of, it quickly turns into wrath, bitterness, malice, or other sinful emotions. Wrath is intense and sustained anger. A distinction between anger and wrath is made in Ephesians 4:26–27: "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil."

What we really mean is that we think we can contain the amount of damage that unresolved anger produces. This, of course, is neither practical nor possible because one angry response can produce different levels of pain among those who are hurt by it. Also, a spirit of anger is contagious—those who are around angry people may develop a spirit of anger and damage others.

4. An attitude of pride that feeds on _____¹⁵

The contention that comes from a spirit of anger is a clear indication of pride, because Scripture states, "Only by pride cometh contention" (Proverbs 13:10). The ultimate expression of pride is putting ourselves on the same level as God. We do this when we deal in wrath, because God is the only One Who has the right and the authority to express wrath. Outbursts of wrath, bitterness, or malice give a person a sense of power and authority, with which they attempt to control others.

5. An indulgence in _____¹⁶

The very definition of one Greek word for *wrath* is “passion.” The indulgence of passions in one area leads to the indulgence of passions in other areas. Thus, there is a close tie between unresolved anger and lust. It is common for one who is defeated in the area of unresolved anger to also be defeated with moral impurity. The guilt that comes from unresolved anger feeds the area of lust and intensifies a spirit of anger.

6. A quickness to take up _____¹⁷ for others

Bitterness caused by taking up offenses for others is the most difficult to overcome. God gives grace for someone who has been offended to forgive his offender, and God gives grace to the one who offended to repent and ask for forgiveness. A person who is not directly involved in the situation but who takes up an offense for either party does not receive the grace to understand the offense or the purposes of God in allowing it to happen. In many instances, long after the offended and the offender have cleared up their differences, the one who has taken up the offense is still angry. (See Psalm 15.)

7. A family _____¹⁸ of angry people

When a person with a spirit of anger is asked whether his father or grandfather had a problem with anger, the response is almost always a vehement yes. Parents who have a spirit of anger can pass on this same spirit to their descendants in the same way they pass on family characteristics and physical weaknesses.

8. A proneness to enter into _____¹⁹

A person who has a spirit of anger also tends to have a spirit of argumentation. Verbal debates are further manifestations of a desire to dominate the people around him. He will argue, not to arrive at truth, but to overcome the reasoning of his opponent. God warns against arguing, because it is a fruitless exercise and leads to further strife. (See Proverbs 29:22, II Timothy 2:23–24.)

9. An inability to forgive or receive _____²⁰

A person with an angry spirit has floating bitterness toward life in general and ultimately toward God. The hurts of the past are associated with many people or groups of people. Therefore, it is hard for him to forgive a single individual or respond properly to one who asks him for forgiveness. A person who is dealing with unresolved anger usually balances guilt with blame. Therefore, if he does forgive somebody and does remove the blame, he is left with the guilt that justified his sustained anger and blame.

10. Harsh attitudes on the outside but sensitive feelings on the inside

Often the pain that originally initiates a spirit of anger in a person comes from rejection by a parent or other people who are important to that person. A spirit of anger can then become a shield to protect one from the further pain of rejection, yet there is still a strong longing and desire for acceptance and approval. When one with a spirit of anger begins to sense disapproval from someone, he will tend to quickly reject that person out of fear of being rejected. His action will bring about the rejection that he feared.

Visible Evidences of Anger

In addition to believing that “a little anger” is all right and denying the existence of unresolved anger, a person with a spirit of anger will manifest many evidences of wrath and other sinful responses but will refuse to admit that they come from unresolved anger. If parents are asked if they have a problem with anger, they might be quick to say anger is not a problem, but their children will be equally quick to remind them of some of the following symptoms.

Irritability

A buildup of inward tension causes an angry person to become irritated with situations and circumstances that would otherwise not bother him.

Impatience

Unresolved anger reduces tolerance for the weaknesses and limitations of others. An angry person will often demand an instant response to his instructions. He is upset when his instructions are not understood.

Raised Voice

Unresolved anger accompanied by impatience will often be expressed in loudness of voice. The tone will communicate harshness and lack of love.

Glaring Eyes

An angry look is characterized by penetrating eyes, a pronounced frown, furrowed brows, tense facial muscles, flushed complexion, prominent veins, and enlarged pupils.

Hurtful Words

A parent may wrongly express unresolved anger to a child by using harsh, unkind words and statements such as “You are good for nothing” or “You idiot” or “I wish you were never born” or “Why can’t you be like others?”

Explosive Actions

Using extra force to put down an object, slamming doors, or throwing things are clear evidences of unresolved anger.

Closing Off Spirit

An angry person will usually close his spirit toward the one who offended or hurt him—as evidenced by silence, poor eye contact, or avoidance.

Attitude of Superiority

Wounded pride will motivate an angry person to challenge the opinions, ideas, or instructions of those around him, especially of those in authority over him.

Tension From Anger

Unresolved anger causes the jaw muscles to tighten. This brings great pressure on the teeth when they come together. The result is the clenching or grinding of one’s teeth.

Increased Heart Rate

Unresolved anger causes a more rapid heartbeat which, in turn, requires more oxygen and causes heavy breathing.

It also results in the production of adrenaline, which causes the heart to pump faster. This enlarges the veins, which often stand out in the neck.

Why All Wrath Is Wrong

Since one of the primary characteristics of a spirit of anger is adopting the false idea that some unresolved anger is appropriate if properly controlled, we must refute this wrong conclusion in order to remove the spirit of anger.

1. The only One Who has a right to be angry is _____²¹.

Allowing anger to become wrath is putting ourselves in the place of _____²².

Since God created the heavens and the earth and all of us who are in the earth, He has ownership rights, and we are all answerable to Him for our actions. Then, because He sent His Son to pay the penalty for our transgressions, He also has redemptive rights. Those who deny His ownership and reject His redemption are subject to His anger and wrath.

God's wrath is reflected in the dysfunction and the ultimate destruction of one's physical and spiritual life, because He designed us to prosper by living according to His ways. By rejecting His ways, a sequence of destruction begins and is consummated in physical death and eternal judgment. "This ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the **wrath of God** upon the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 5:5-6).

This important point is further clarified in many passages of Scripture, such as the following: "The **wrath of God** is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Romans 1:18). "God judgeth the righteous, and **God is angry** with the wicked every day" (Psalm 7:11). "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the **wrath of God** abideth on him" (John 3:36).

2. Expressing unresolved anger is a form of _____²³.

If the anger of God is like the gathering of storm clouds, His vengeance is like the lightning and hailstones that come from those clouds. Vengeance is the actual punishment for the wrongs that were done.

Many people use wrath to punish those who have hurt them. Thus, they are taking upon themselves a duty that belongs to only God. He has stated, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay" (Romans 12:19). Rather than bringing vengeance on others through our wrath, we should extend forgiveness and help where appropriate. In this way, we fulfill the instruction "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21). When we usurp the authority of God by meting out vengeance, we actually damage ourselves because of the physical consequences.

3. Wrath is in the same classification as _____²⁴ and

_____²⁵.

Those who argue that wrath (one of the manifestations of unresolved anger) is permissible must explain why God classifies it with blasphemy and filthy language in

Colossians 3:8 and why He put it in the middle of another list of serious sins.

The Companion Lineup With Wrath

The presence of a spirit of anger means that the Spirit of God is not in full control of a person's life. Instead, the works of the flesh begin to rule. In Galatians 5:19–21, we are

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adultery | <input type="checkbox"/> Hatred | <input type="checkbox"/> Heresies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fornication | <input type="checkbox"/> Variance | <input type="checkbox"/> Envyings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Uncleaness | <input type="checkbox"/> Emulations | <input type="checkbox"/> Murders |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lasciviousness | <input type="checkbox"/> Wrath | <input type="checkbox"/> Drunkenness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Idolatry | <input type="checkbox"/> Strife | <input type="checkbox"/> Revellings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Witchcraft | <input type="checkbox"/> Seditions | <input type="checkbox"/> And such like |

given the following list. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these . . ."

4. All anger must be _____²⁶.

Anger is like fire; if allowed to continue, it will produce the infernos of bitterness, wrath, and "evil speaking." All these are to "be put away from you, with all malice." (See Ephesians 4:31.) The volatile nature of unresolved anger is further confirmed in the following verses.

"As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife" (Proverbs 26:21). "An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression" (Proverbs 29:22).

"To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath" (Romans 2:7–8).

5. Wrath never produces God's _____²⁷.

The inability to produce the righteousness of God through our wrath is clearly stated in Scripture: "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God" (James 1:20). Based on this fact, it is always wrong to deal in wrath. Various rationalizations such as the following have been used to justify wrath, which is prolonged anger:

- **Anger is the only way to bring some people into line.** This may be true if the goal is to bring them in line with the one getting angry, but this is not true to bring them in line with God's righteous ways of life. Moses used wrath in an attempt to bring the people in line.
- **Angry outbursts release tension.** Angry outbursts release tension but then create new tensions from the guilt of unresolved anger. Thus, the final result is an increase in tension.

Common Justifications for Being Angry

1. What about “righteous _____²⁸”?

- The phrase *righteous indignation* is not used in Scripture, nor does God ever use the words *righteous* or *indignation* to justify a man’s unresolved anger or wrath. For God to encourage us to do this would be to go against His own Word.
- The phrase *great indignation* is used three times in Scripture. Once it is used to describe the righteous indignation of God. (See Deuteronomy 29:28.)
- The other two times *great indignation* is used, it describes the wrath of man and the evil deeds connected with it. (See II Kings 3:27 and Nehemiah 4:1.)

When we get angry for what we think are righteous reasons, we usually have a mixture of pride, personal hurts, and tension from past guilt; these magnify and distort the initial response of anger, turning it into unrighteous indignation.

2. Didn’t Jesus get “ _____²⁹”?

When Jesus did get angry (see Mark 3:5), it was acceptable because He is God and vengeance belongs to Him. However, when He laid aside His glory to be born into the world, He also laid aside His independent right to use vengeance, and He did nothing except that which His heavenly Father told Him to do.

- The incident of Jesus’ driving out the money changers with a whip has the appearance of anger. However, before Jesus cleansed the Temple, He had the emotion of love, not anger. “He beheld the city, and wept over it And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein” (Luke 19:41–45).
- Vengeance belongs to God. However, He has appointed government rulers to carry out His vengeance on those who do evil. “He is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil” (Romans 13:4).
- Even though God delegates authority for vengeance, He does not give freedom for unresolved anger or for wrath. If a judge becomes emotionally involved in a case and has an angry outburst, he will reveal his inability to be impartial, and justice will be distorted. If such a situation occurs, it is grounds for the case to be thrown out.

3. Can’t anger be used to protect _____³⁰ when they are attacked?

When the lives of others are in danger, we do not need anger to protect them, but rather courage, wisdom, and discernment. In fact, a spirit of anger will only make the situation more dangerous, because angry words stir up strife. “A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger” (Proverbs 15:1). Anger that has progressed beyond the initial feeling of anger and has become wrath usually results in actions of rage rather than reason during a crisis, and the one who is full of wrath often violates Scripture in trying to carry out the will of the Lord. This was the result when David displayed wrath toward the man who stole the sheep.

What About Anger in the Pulpit?

1. A spirit of anger is wrong anywhere, even in the _____³¹.

The great prophets of old were sent by God to warn the people of God's coming judgment. They spoke of God's anger and wrath, but they themselves were messengers of appeal and hope. They were awed by the holiness of God and repulsed by the sin of the people, but they were representatives of God's mercy and love, not His anger and wrath. An exception may have been Jonah, who was bitter because God did not bring judgment upon Nineveh. In this case, God showed Jonah how wrong he was to be bitter and appealed to him to have mercy for the city that had repented.

2. A spirit of anger can be _____³².

If a pastor exhibits a spirit of anger from the pulpit, his people will tend to reproduce that attitude in their lives, because a spirit of anger can be contagious. This fact is pointed out in Scripture: "Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul" (Proverbs 22:24-25).

3. Anger is the opposite of love and causes people to reject the truth.

God compares a pastor to the shepherd of a flock, not to the barking dogs that corral the sheep. The gentle demeanor of the shepherd and his willingness to lay down his life for the sheep should be the nature of a pastor in the pulpit. If a pastor promotes a spirit of anger from the pulpit, his people will become judgmental and cause others to reject the Word of God.

4. Jeremiah was a weeping prophet; Jonah was angry.

Scripture instructs all of us to speak the truth in love. (See Ephesians 4:15.) Truth without love is harshness, but love without truth is compromise. The prophet Jeremiah demonstrated the balance of truth with love as he delivered God's warnings to the nation of Israel; however, Jonah was rebuked for his selfishness and lack of concern for the people of Nineveh. (See Jonah 4:9.) Likewise, a spirit of anger in the pulpit will be interpreted by many in the church as a lack of love.

5. The message of Jesus is not vengeance, but mercy.

Every pastor is an under-shepherd of the Lord and must, therefore, represent His nature as well as His message. Jesus described Himself as being "meek and lowly in heart" (see Matthew 11:29), not harsh and angry in spirit. Those who heard Jesus speak "wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth" (Luke 4:22).

Scripture gives clear instruction as to the type of attitude all believers are to have in representing the message of the Gospel, whether in or out of the pulpit. "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (I Peter 3:15).

The warning in Scripture that "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God" (James 1:20) also applies to a pastor in the pulpit. He has a responsibility to preach

against sin and hypocrisy. It was the hypocrisy of the Pharisees that angered Jesus, but He taught His disciples to defend truth with love, not with the sword.

What About the Verse “Be Ye Angry, and Sin Not”?

The following verse is one of the most common justifications for a spirit of anger: “Be ye angry, and sin not” (Ephesians 4:26). To properly understand this verse, we must look at it in context and define the difference between anger and a spirit of anger.

Anger is a signal that something is wrong. It tends to be the immediate emotional reaction to a real or supposed offense. If properly understood and dealt with, this initial anger can be a valuable alarm system to keep us from becoming bitter or wrathful. As indicated in the verse, it does not have to turn into wrath.

A spirit of anger is the result of not properly dealing with the initial reaction of anger. It develops as the initial emotion of anger is prolonged. Never in Scripture does God command us to have a spirit of anger. In fact, this is the very reason why He warns us: “Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.”

What This Verse Actually Means

This verse is a command to heed the signal of anger and choose a righteous way to deal with the situation that is arousing the anger. It is not an excuse to justify wrath, bitterness, or other wrong responses to the initial reaction of anger. No anger should be allowed to continue overnight. Allowing anger to turn into wrath is sin.

It is significant to note Ephesians 4:26 in context of the verse that follows: “Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil” (Ephesians 4:26–27). The initial emotion of anger is not sin, but if the anger is expressed or allowed to continue and deepen into wrath, it becomes sin, and Satan is given a foothold.

Anger reveals pride.

- “Proud and haughty scorner is his name, who dealeth in proud wrath” (Proverbs 21:24).
- “Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil” (Psalm 37:8).
- “Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools” (Ecclesiastes 7:9).
- “A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment: for if thou deliver him, yet thou must do it again” (Proverbs 19:19).

My Personal Commitment

- I affirm that all unresolved anger is wrong and therefore purpose to resolve it in my life and help others do the same.



A Personal Evaluation for Anger Resolution

1. Has anyone told me that I was angry when I was not aware of any anger?

Yes No

2. Do I ever experience unexplainable surges of anger, lust, or depression?

Yes No

3. Do I have any addictions or habits that I cannot overcome?

Yes No

4. Do I have a spirit of anger?

Yes No

5. What people or situations cause me to be angry?

- _____
- _____
- _____

6. What symptoms of anger do I demonstrate?

<input type="checkbox"/> Irritability	<input type="checkbox"/> Glaring eyes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rejection
<input type="checkbox"/> Impatience	<input type="checkbox"/> Hurtful words	<input type="checkbox"/> Argumentation
<input type="checkbox"/> Raised voice	<input type="checkbox"/> Explosive actions	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

7. How often do I get angry?

Once a day Once a week Once a month

8. How long do I stay angry?

A few minutes Hours Days

9. How do I resolve an outburst of anger?

<input type="checkbox"/> Leave the room	<input type="checkbox"/> Bring up past offenses
<input type="checkbox"/> Retaliate with silence	<input type="checkbox"/> Ask forgiveness for being angry
<input type="checkbox"/> Argue out my point	<input type="checkbox"/> _____