

## A Biblical Approach to Counseling Sinfully Angry People

ACBC counseling question 4: Provide a biblical definition of anger. Describe manifestations of anger in both the inner and outer man. Explain the biblical factors that drive anger. Detail several biblical strategies to respond to anger.

Introduction: "road rage"

### I. Sinful Anger Displeases God

A. Psalm 37:8

B. Proverbs 14:29

### II. Definition

A. Definition from *Uprooting Anger* (Robert Jones, Page 14): "Our anger is our whole-personed active response of negative moral judgment against perceived evil."

- Whole-personed
- Active response
- Negative moral judgment
- Against perceived evil

B. Righteous anger (Mark 11:15-18)

C. Unrighteous anger

- Vented Anger (Prov. 29:11 versus 19:11)
- The Slow Burn

#### Vented Anger

Yelling/screaming  
Slamming things around  
Cursing  
Telling someone off  
Attacking verbally/name-calling  
Hitting

#### The Slow Burn

Clamming up/moodiness  
Being Frustrated  
Being Irritated  
Glaring  
Huffing/snorting  
Seething

1. Identifying Sinful Anger (let's pull the cover back)

**Eph. 5: 11, "And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them."**

a. It is a deed of the flesh (Galatian 5:19-20)

b. Anger is natural to the human heart (Genesis 6:5; Matthew 15:18-19; Titus 3:3).

c. Anger is always involves thoughts and intentions (Proverbs 4:23; Ephesians 4:17-18).

- d. Anger is caused by not being able to attain our prideful and/or selfish goals (James 4:1-3). See also the box diagram
- e. Anger never accomplishes God's righteous ends (Proverbs 11:23; James 1:20).
- f. Anger is expressed in our thoughts, body language, speech, and actions (Psalm 19:14; Romans 6:12-13).
- g. Anger involves a lack of self-control (Proverbs 17:27; 25:8; 29:11, 2 Peter 1:6).
- h. Anger is always accompanied by other sins when it is tolerated (Proverbs 29:22).
- i. If not dealt with, anger will turn into something worse (Job 4:8, Ezekiel 18:30).

### III. Examination/ becoming more self-aware (Psalms 139:23-24)

- A. Is there anyone I am presently angry or frustrated with?
- B. What am I angry with them about?
- C. How have I dealt with and responded to that person (or those persons)?
- D. What do I typically do when I am angry? How might God be trying to reveal an anger problem to me?
- E. What have been some results of my anger?
- F. Do others see me as a critical or impatient person? (Be brave: Ask them!)
- G. When were the last five times I was angry?
- H. What was my thinking at the time?
- I. What kinds of things provoke me to anger? Homework: Look at the "fruit of the Spirit" list and see where you are weak and trace them back to the roots.
- J. Do I need to keep track in the next few weeks of when and why I become angry? (When you feel irritated and frustrate, as if you are churning inside or ready to blow up, write down what you are thinking and wanting). **See also the "Getting the Big Picture" homework assignment.**

K. How many of these situations are precipitated by something else I am doing wrong? (My irresponsibility, laziness, poor time or money management, wrong treatment of others, etc.)

L. Are there “rights” I believe I deserve? (eg. “I deserve peace and quiet.” “I deserve respect.” “I deserve an orderly home.”

#### IV. Transformation

##### A. Before-Before anger hits again

1. Confess past sins of anger to God and others (Matthew 5:23-24).
2. Pray for God’s help (2 Corinthians 9:8).
3. Write out the biblical thoughts to replace wrong thoughts (Romans 12:2).
4. Memorize appropriate verse (Ephesians 4:23).
5. Seek to put on loving and humble thoughts and actions (John 13:35; 1 Corinthians 14:4-7; 1 Peter 5:5).
  - a. Make a list of times and ways you can show love and humility
6. Determine godly desires and goals to be fixed upon (Psalm 40:8; 1 Corinthians 10:31)
7. Study God’s patience and long-suffering (Numbers 14:18; Psalm 145:8; 2 Timothy 2:15; *The MacArthur Topical Bible* under God’s patience, longsuffering, and grace).
8. Be alert, ready to exercise self-control and to change your thinking. Watch out for the situations and thoughts you have discovered. Make a concise list of each one (1 Peter 1:13).
9. Ask others to hold you accountable for your anger (Galatians 6:1-2; Hebrews 10:24-25).
10. Do not associate with angry individuals, unless they are seeking to change (Proverbs 22:24-25).
11. Learn to handle relationship issues biblically. (For example, learn to use the PAUSE principle from Peacemaker Ministries. Phil. 2:3-4)

P  
A  
U  
S  
E

##### B. During-At the time you are tempted to become angry or are beginning to become angry (**Homework: develop a temptation plan using ANTHEM by John Piper**).

1. Pray for God’s help (Hebrews 4:16) and focus on true worship.
2. Put off being angry (Proverbs 14:17). Repent of false worship (eg. LORD, forgive me for trying to control my own world.” Or, “I have been wrong to view others as interruptions or view responsibilities as a hassle.”
  - a. Ask yourself, “What is it I am wanting so badly?” Let go of it as something you must have. The only desire you must have is to glorify God!

- b. Ask yourself, “What am I thinking that is wrong?”
- 3. Put on proper worship that will lead to gentleness, patience, and humility (Proverbs 16:32; James 1:19)
  - a. Ask yourself, “What should I be thinking?” Use your new thoughts and Scripture
  - b. Ask yourself, “What is the right goal?”
  - c. Ask yourself, “How can I be patient and think of others?”
  - d. Ask yourself, “What do God and others want?” And “How can I serve them?”
  - e. Ask yourself, “Is there something right that I should do about the problem or issue?” (Address someone’s sin in the right way, plan a solution, get counsel, etc.)
- C. After- If you fail and become sinfully angry.
  - a. Ask yourself, “How did I sin?” be specific.
  - b. Ask yourself, ‘If I had this to do over again, what should I think and do differently?’
  - c. Take care of your sin of anger as soon as possible (Ephesians 4:26).
  - d. Confess and ask forgiveness of God and anyone else who may have been aware of or the recipient of our sinful anger. Be specific about how you were sinfully angry; wrong thinking, wrong actions, lack of love, etc. (Psalms 32:5; James 5:16). Use the 7A’s of confession from Peacemaker Ministries.
    - A
    - A
    - A
    - A
    - A
    - A
    - A
  - e. Tell God and others what you can to do in the future instead of becoming sinfully angry (Psalm 119:59-60).
  - f. Be on guard once again (1 Peter 5:8). Use your “temptation plan.”

### Recommended Resources

- Lou Priolo, *The Heart of Anger* (Amityville, New York, 1997)
- Robert D. Jones, *Uprooting Anger* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey, 2005)
- Robert D. Jones, *Angry at God* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey, 2003)
- Jim Newheiser, *Help! My Anger is Out of Control* (Wapwallopen, Pennsylvania, 2014)
- Edward T. Welch, *Just One More, When Desires Don’t Take No for an Answer* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey, 2002)
- Edward T. Welch, *Motives, Why Do I Do the Things I Do?* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey, 2003)
- David Powlison, *Anger, Escaping the Maze* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey, 2000)

Dr. Ernie Baker  
 Pastor of Counseling and Discipleship  
 First Baptist, Jacksonville  
 Chair, On-line BA in Biblical counseling  
 The Master’s University