

The Most Excellent Way

*The Christian Solution to Chemical Dependency
"Becoming GOD-Dependent"*

I. UNDERSTANDING ANGER

**II. OVERCOMING SINFUL ANGER,
BITTERNESS, RESENTMENT**

Bible Studies for Christian Maturity

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UNDERSTANDING ANGER

The bumper sticker says, “Don’t get mad, get even!” The world teaches us to take revenge. Movies, television, and politics show young and old alike that it’s okay to get angry, and to get even. We only get angry because of our pride.

A. There are three Greek words for anger used in the New Testament:

1. Anger — KARAGAMOS: to be irritated; i.e., something bugs you but not enough to say or do anything about it, except maybe to your spouse or a friend.
2. Anger — ORGAE: to be temperamental; more easily angered; i.e., you will let the person who angered you know you are upset.
3. Rage — THUMOS: turbulent anger; i.e., flying into a rage; can lead to violence, even murder.

B. There are three facts about anger we should know:

1. **ANGER IS FUTILE**

- a. JAMES 1:19-20 — *My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man’s anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.*

Anger never produces the response we want from the other person. What does it produce? Anger. And more anger.

Anger is destructive to relationships. Anger is self-destructive; unhealthy.

- b. PROVERBS 16:32 — *Better a patient man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city.*

Patience is an attribute of God — a God-given attribute of man. Intimidation and forcefulness is not of God, and should not be of man.

2. **ANGER IS FOOLISH**

- a. PROVERBS 14:29 — *A patient man has great understanding, but a quick-tempered man displays folly.*

A fool in Scripture is a person who does not have God in his/her life, an unbeliever, or a believer who is not using godly principles in life.

A fool is a person who doesn't think first. Today we might call him an airhead or an idiot.

- b. MATTHEW 5:21-22 — *[Jesus said:] “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone Who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.”*

These are strong words from our Lord. We do well if we adhere to his command.

“Raca” is a term used in those days; today’s meaning is “jerk” or “fool.” “Fool” was a term meaning “empty headed;” in our time, “stupid” or “idiot.”

A few years ago, my wife and I were standing and waiting in line outside a nice Japanese restaurant waiting to be seated. Suddenly there was a loud commotion at the front of the line. A man was yelling at three employees who were trying to escort him out of the restaurant. He was totally obnoxious, saying they had poisoned him the night before, and he wanted his money back. They obviously were not giving into the demands, and the angry man was cursing and fighting not to be pushed out. We, and everyone else within ear shot, were disgusted by the scene the man was making. Many may have thought “what an idiot!” There surely was a better way to handle the problem.

A fool gives full vent to his anger. He reacts instantly when he doesn't get his way or if his pride is hurt by someone. He *reacts* — he doesn't *respond*.

- c. Scripture says, “In your anger do not sin.” This could be re-phrased to say, “In your anger do not *react*.”

Some suggested ways to *respond*:

- (1) walk away to cool off;
- (2) get control your emotions;
- (3) try to see the other person's side of the problem;
- (4) pray for self-control;
- (5) ask the Lord to show you what to do;
- (6) pray for the other person.

- d. Have you heard of the infamous Hatfield and McCoy feud? In 1880, a dispute broke out between these two mountain families that lasted nearly 100 years. The feud cost the lives of over 100 men, women, and children. Finally, in

1976, Jim Hatfield and Tom McCoy met and shook hands, ending the feud. When asked by a reporter what had started the feud, neither man knew the answer. Foolishness!

- e. PROVERBS 22:24 — *Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared.*

Anger is infectious — it spreads like wildfire. Just look at the white supremacy groups, the skinheads. Once these angry people get started acting out at someone, it can result in uncontrolled rage, violence, even murder.

You do not want to associate with others who continually voice anger. Leave them and pray for them. Tell them they need to seek counseling and the Lord Jesus Christ. In a loving way, explain why you must disassociate with them until they change their attitude.

3. **ANGER IS FORBIDDEN**

- a. COLOSSIANS 3:8 — *But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.*
- b. EPHESIANS 4:31 — *Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.*
- c. EPHESIANS 4:26-27 — *In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.*

We need to reconcile with anyone we have been angry with during the day. Seek forgiveness if applicable, but make peace before going to bed that very night. If we don't do this, we are giving the devil a foothold. He will use anger time and time again to drive a wedge between spouses, parents and children, employer and employee, friends, etc. The devil uses our anger to destroy relationships.

Ask God to forgive you and help you to submit to His Word and His will for your life. All anger is forbidden in Scripture. It appears that only God can have righteous anger, express His wrath. There are differing viewpoints on whether we are allowed righteous indignation.

We are not saying that men and women should never be angry. We ARE saying: in your anger do not sin. The Lord gave us many emotions as we are made in His image and likeness. He gets angry. But He also gave us self-control through His

Spirit that lives within us. We must call upon Him for His help and power to overcome feelings of anger.

C. There are four things we can do with anger.

1. EXPRESS IT.

Go ahead and show your anger. Tell off the person and you'll *feel better*, for a little while anyway. Expressing anger with anger leads no where but to more anger. Yet this is what psychiatrists, psychologists and therapists tell us to do.

We were not created to be vengeful — the guilt and shame it produces destroys.

2. REPRESS IT.

Bury your anger — don't express it. Try to forget about it.

This will eventually kill you. Anger, hate, bitterness, and rage, produce much energy ... If the energy is not handled in a healthy way, it can affect the heart rate, blood pressure, and can cause a coronary, and other physical problems.

3. SUPPRESS IT.

This is anger under control — you don't express it when you first feel it, but it eventually comes out.

Cain was angry at God, but he took it out on his brother. Cain murdered Abel. Saul hated David, but took his hatred out on his own son, Jonathan.

You may be angry over what happened at work, so you go home and yell at the wife and kids, and kick the poor dog.

4. CONFESS IT.

We must confess our anger rather than allow ourselves to over-react. "Honey, I'm angry about what you just told me. I'm sorry, but I am angry; let me tell you why." This is a *mature response* to anger.

First, we need to admit to ourselves that we are angry — then admit it to the other person.

We need to confess to God we are angry, and ask Him to forgive us and help us resolve the problem that brought on the anger. It's possible that our anger is not appropriate — rather a childish reaction to hurt pride.

If anger is a reoccurring problem, talk it over with a trusted, Christian friend to gain an impartial perspective. If the problem is serious, seek pastoral counseling.

Memorize — arm yourself — with a few Scriptures dealing with anger so the Holy Spirit will have ammunition within your mind to empower you to control your anger.

D. Here are just a few of many Scriptures worth memorizing to help overcome anger:

EPHESIANS 4:31-32 — *Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*

EPHESIANS 4:2 — *Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.*

EPHESIANS 4:22-24 — *You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

EPHESIANS 4:29 — *Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.*

COLOSSIANS 3:8 — *Now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.*

COLOSSIANS 3:12-14 — *Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.*



***May the Lord bless you abundantly spiritually,
and meet all your needs in Christ Jesus.***

— Glenn Wright

ANGER

Overcoming Sinful Anger, Bitterness, Resentment

Anger, like every other emotion, may be a good and useful emotion when put to constructive, godly use. Or it may be a sinful emotion, which is used in ungodly, harmful and destructive ways. This study is designed to help you discern between sinful and righteous anger, and to aid you in overcoming the sinful expressions of anger which are harmful and destructive.

- **MARK 3:5** — *He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored.*
- **PSALMS 7:11** — *God is a righteous judge, a God who expresses his wrath every day.*
- **EPHESIANS 4:26** — *In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry,*

A. At whom or what is your anger most frequently directed?

Other people? Who? _____

Your circumstances or environment? _____

Yourself? _____

God? _____

B. Describe the last three times you became angry.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

C. Discern and write your understanding about what the following verses say about the WRONG way to handle anger. Choose to learn the biblical response to anger, and to respond in a godly way.

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- **EPHESIANS 4:26-27** — *“In your anger do not sin”*: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.

Response example: I must admit I am angry, and not pretend otherwise by clamming up and trying to act as though nothing is wrong.

- **PROVERBS 17:14** — *Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam; so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out.*

Response example: I must not pick a fight as soon as I can and I must not be as mean as I can.

- **PROVERBS 29:11, 20** — *A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control. Do you see a man who speaks in haste? There is more hope for a fool than for him.*

- **MATTHEW 5:21-22** — *“You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca, is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.”*
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- **EPHESIANS 4:31** — *Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.*
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- **PROVERBS 26:21** — *As charcoal to embers and as wood to fire, so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife.*
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- **PROVERBS 15:1** — *A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.*

- **COLOSSIANS 3:8** — *But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.*

- **ROMANS 12:17, 19** — *Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. / Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.*

- **1 PETER 3:9** — *Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.*

- **1 CORINTHIANS 13:5** — *It [love] is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.*

- **PHILIPPIANS 4:8** — *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.*

- D. Discern and write what the following verses say about the *right* way to handle anger. Continually review what God says about the right way of handling anger and deliberately seek to obey Him.**

- **ROMANS 12:19-20** — *Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

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Response example: I must never take revenge — the right response is to trust God to deal with the other person. I must seek to help my enemy by . . .

- **EPHESIANS 4:26** — *In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, . . .*

Example: I must acknowledge that I am angry and seek to solve the problem immediately. I must not allow unresolved problems to pile up.

- **EPHESIANS 4:29** — *Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.*

- **EPHESIANS 4:32** — *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*

- **MATTHEW 5:43-44** — *You have heard that it was said, “Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.” But I [Jesus] tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, . . .*

- **PROVERBS 19:11** — *A man’s wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense.*

- **PROVERBS 15:1** — *A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.*

- **PROVERBS 15:28** — *The heart of the righteous weighs its answers, but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil.*

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- **PROVERBS 16:32** — *Better a patient man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city.*

- **PROVERBS 25:28** — *Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control.*

- **PROVERBS 14:29** — *A patient man has great understanding, but a quick-tempered man displays folly.*

- **PROVERBS 29:11** — *A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.*

- **1 PETER 3:9** — *Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.*

- **GALATIANS 5:16-23** — *So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*

¹⁷*For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.*

¹⁸*But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.*

¹⁹*The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery;*

²⁰*Idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions*

²¹*And envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

²²*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,*

²³*Gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. (23)*

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- **ROMANS 8:28-29** — *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.*

- **1 THESSALONIANS 5:18** — *Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

- **EPHESIANS 5:20** — *Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

- **1 CORINTHIANS 10:13** — *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

- **GENESIS 50:20** — *You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.*

- **JAMES 4:6** — *But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."*

- **ROMANS 12:14** — *Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.*

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- **MATTHEW 18:21-35** — *Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?”*
 - ²²*Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.*
 - ²³*“Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.*
 - ²⁴*As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him.*
 - ²⁵*Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.*
 - ²⁶*“The servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’*
 - ²⁷*The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.*
 - ²⁸*“But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded.*
 - ²⁹*“His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.’*
 - ³⁰*“But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt.*
 - ³¹*When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened.*
 - ³²*“Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to.’*
 - ³³*“Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?”*
 - ³⁴*“In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.*
 - ³⁵*“This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.”*

- **PSALMS 37:1-11** — *Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of those who do wrong;*
 - ²*For like the grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away.*
 - ³*Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.*
 - ⁴*Delight yourself in the LORD and He will give you the desires of your heart.*
 - ⁵*Commit your way to the LORD; trust in Him and He will do this:*
 - ⁶*He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.*
 - ⁷*Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for Him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes.*
 - ⁸*Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret—it leads only to evil.*
 - ⁹*For evil men will be cut off, but those who hope in the LORD will inherit the land.*

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¹⁰ *A little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look for them, they will not be found.*

¹¹ *But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace.*

E. Examine your own life in the light of the following Scripture passage, and list the qualities mentioned which are most lacking in your life.

- **GALATIANS 5:22-23** — *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*

- **MATTHEW 5:1-12** — *Now when he [Jesus] saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him,*
² *And he began to teach them, saying:*
³ *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
⁴ *Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*
⁵ *Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*
⁶ *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*
⁷ *Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.*
⁸ *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*
⁹ *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.*
¹⁰ *Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
¹¹ *Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.*
¹² *Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

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- **2 PETER 1:5-8** — *For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; And to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; And to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Ask a trusted Christian friend for his or her evaluation of your responses. God wants to use all circumstances to develop godly attitudes, motives and actions in your life. Sinful anger always short-circuits our relationships with others and with God.

- F. Consider how God may use your present irritations and annoyances to reveal the lack of these qualities in your life, and His desire to help you develop these godly qualities. When you are tempted to react with sinful anger, consider God’s purpose for allowing the situation or trial to occur. Write the Scripture verses that are relevant to your response:**

- G. Renew your thinking! Meditate on the following Scripture verses, then write some of the benefits that your problems and irritations may bring to you. Remember, God has a good purpose for everything that comes into a Christian's life.**

- *Romans 8:28* — *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

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- **JOB 23:10** — *But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold.*

- **ISAIAH 43:1-3** — *But now, this is what the LORD says—He who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.
For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; . . . ”*

Response example: I need deeper communion and fellowship with God.

- **1 CORINTHIANS 11:31-32** — *But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.*

Response example: I need to examine myself to insure my attitude and actions are pleasing to the Lord.

- **PSALMS 119:71**— *It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees.*

Response example: I need new insights about myself that are found in God's Word.

- **ROMANS 5:2-4** — *Through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.*

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- **2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-6** — *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, (3)
Who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. (4)
For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. (5)
If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. (6)*
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- **HEBREWS 12:5-11** — *And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: “My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when He rebukes you,
⁶Because the Lord disciplines those He loves, and He punishes everyone He accepts as a son.”
Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons.
⁷For what son is not disciplined by his father?
⁸If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons.
⁹Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live!
¹⁰Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness.
¹¹No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.*
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- **1 PETER 4:12-16** — *Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you.*

¹³But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

¹⁴If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

¹⁵If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler.

¹⁶However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.

- **PSALMS 119:67** — *Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word.*
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- **PSALMS 50:15** — *And call upon Me [your God] in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor Me.*
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- **PHILIPPIANS 3:10** — *I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, . . .*
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- **JAMES 1:2-5** — *Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, Because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.*
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- **1 PETER 1:6-7** — *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

**H. PERSONAL RIGHTS — Which of the following do you consider to be your “rights”?
Write your name beside each right that you claim for yourself.**

1. Right to have and control personal belongings _____
2. Right to privacy _____
3. Right to have and express personal opinions _____
4. Right to earn and spend my own money _____
5. Right to plan my own schedule _____
6. Right to be respected for who I am _____
7. Right to have and choose my own friends _____
8. Right to belong and be accepted just as I am _____
9. Right to be understood _____
10. Right to be supported (financially, emotionally, ...) _____
11. Right to determine my own future _____
12. Right to be healthy _____
13. Right to make my own decisions _____
14. Right to control what happens to my own body _____
15. Right to have children _____
16. Right to be loved just as I am _____
17. Right to be considered worthwhile and important _____
18. Right to be protected and cared for _____
19. Right to be appreciated _____
20. Right to be a beautiful person _____
21. Right to have a good education _____
22. Right to be treated fairly _____
23. Right to be desired _____
24. Right to have fun _____
25. Right to raise my children my way _____
26. Right to security and safety _____
27. Right to fulfilled hopes and aspirations _____
28. Right to have certain expectations _____

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- 29. Right to be successful _____
- 30. Right to have others obey me _____
- 31. Right to have my own way _____
- 32. Right to be free of difficulties and problems _____
- 33. Right to enjoy physical pleasure _____
- 34. Right to _____
- 35. Right to _____

Usually we become sinfully angry when we think some right is being denied to us.

I. How many of the *rights* that you claimed above are being denied to you, and who is denying them to you?

- 1. Right to _____
Denied by _____
- 2. Right to _____
Denied by _____
- 3. Right to _____
Denied by _____
- 4. Right to _____
Denied by _____
- 5. Right to _____
Denied by _____
- 6. Right to _____
Denied by _____
- 7. Right to _____
Denied by _____
- 8. Right to _____
Denied by _____
- 9. Right to _____
Denied by _____
- 10. Right to _____
Denied by _____

Something to think about: In demanding your rights, do you deny the same rights to others closest to you? Explain:

J. If you are a Christian, you have no “rights”.

- **PSALMS 24:1-5** — *The earth is the LORD'S, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; For he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters. Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul or an idol or swear by what is false. He will receive blessing from the LORD and vindication from God his Savior.*
- **1 CORINTHIANS 6:19-20** — *Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.*
- **ROMANS 12:1** — *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.*

If you are a Christian, you must trust God to take care of HIS property — you, your loved ones, even your *rights*.

K. Renew your thinking! Stop thinking in terms of your rights, and concentrate on God's will and purposes and promises. Acknowledge your powerlessness to out-smart God, and dedicate all you are and all you have, including your rights, to God. For a while, you may need to dedicate specific “rights” to God on regular basis, until the fact that ALL your “rights” belong to Him is active in your renewed way of thinking.

Turning your rights over to God DOES NOT mean you must become a doormat. It does not mean you never make your desires known, or that you never oppose, rebuke, insist, exhort, or seek to correct a person.

Turning your rights over to God DOES mean that you seek to do whatever you do in a Biblical, God-honoring way; for Biblical, God-honoring reasons; out of Biblical, God-honoring motives. Turning your rights over to God DOES mean that after you have done all that you may legitimately do, you leave the results with God and believe that He will bring to pass what is right and good for you. You must fulfill your Biblical responsibilities and then leave your “rights” with God. When He gives them back to you, consider them to be “privileges” or “blessings” and thank Him for them.

- **PHILIPPIANS 4:19** — *And my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.*
- **PSALMS 34:8-10** — *Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in ^him. Fear the LORD, you His saints, for those who fear Him lack nothing. The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.*
- **MATTHEW 6:25-33** — *[Jesus said:] “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?”*

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²⁶*Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?*

²⁷*Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?*

²⁸*And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow.*

They do not labor or spin.

²⁹*Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.*

³⁰*If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?*

³¹*So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'*

³²*For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.*

³³*But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

Write a prayer to the Lord seeking His help to overcome self-centeredness about your rights.

L. Seek God-honoring company to overcome anger. If you recognize you are a walking time bomb, ready to explode at the slightest provocation, attempt to talk with those who are calm, self-controlled, handling problems God's way. You will learn from them, be strengthened and encouraged by them in the right way, and become like them.

- **PROVERBS 13:20** — *He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.*
- **HEBREWS 10:24-25** — *And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*
- **PROVERBS 22:24-25** — *Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared.*
- **PROVERBS 29:22** — *An angry man stirs up dissension, and a hot-tempered one commits many sins.*
- **1 CORINTHIANS 15:33** — *Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character."*
- **HEBREWS 3:12-13** — *See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.*
- **PROVERBS 27:17** — *As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.*

- M. PUT OFF SINFUL ANGER.** The following procedure may help you if you desire to “put off” the sinful, destructive, unbiblical use of anger, and “put on” the biblical, constructive use of anger.

When something occurs which might lead to bitterness (clamming up, internalization of anger, resentment, hurt feelings, hostility, a grudge, judging another), or an explosion (angry words, verbal abuse, accusations, physical abuse, gossip, slander, retaliation in some way, blaming, sarcasm, put downs, exaggeration, shouting), you can immediately choose to put this alternative action into practice. You must run away from temper and turn to this procedure *every time* you are tempted to be sinfully angry.

Remember God's promises:

- **1 CORINTHIANS 10:13** — *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*
- **GALATIANS 5:22-23** — *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*
- **2 TIMOTHY 1:7** — *For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.*

**There are no excuses for defeat with promises like these from a God who cannot lie!
There is every reason for victory over sinful anger.**

PROCEDURE FOR VICTORY OVER ANGER

When a potentially distressing, fretful circumstances occur:

- 1. Immediately ask God to help you handle the situation in a God-honoring, Biblical way.**
- 2. Remind yourself that God is sovereign** — He could have prevented the problem from arising. He can now empower you to face it His way. If you follow His will, the problem will serve a positive and constructive purpose in your life.
- 3. Thank God for the victory He is going to give you, and the blessing He is going to bring into your life through this trial.**
- 4. Think about how you can:**
 - a. Demonstrate the sufficiency of Christ in your life;
 - b. the reality and power of your faith, and
 - c. the tremendous relevance and practicality of the Word of God in a fantastic way.

Others are watching you! Consider what witness, service, modeling opportunities this situation may provide.

5. Put off childish thinking and put on maturity.

- **1 CORINTHIANS 13:11** — *When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me.*

6. Examine yourself to see if you have done anything to promote or aggravate the situation.

Have you been lazy, irresponsible, stubborn, critical, wasteful, ungrateful, bossy, haughty, overly demanding, nagging, inconsiderate, unwilling to change your opinion or actions, unwilling to give in to others, unmerciful, rude, crude, proud, too stern or unbending, unfriendly, boastful, deceitful, sloppy, disorganized, jealous or envious, unmannerly, manipulative, suspicious, selfish, morose, solemn, overly sensitive, negative and/or pessimistic?

So often we are disappointed by others because of what we see of ourselves in their attitudes and actions.

Remember:

- **GALATIANS 6:7** — *Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.*
- **HOSEA 8:7** — *They sow the wind and reap the whirlwind.*
- **PROVERBS 26:27** — *If a man digs a pit, he will fall into it; if a man rolls a stone, it will roll back on him.*

7. Consider what character quality God may want to develop in you through the situation you are being unjustly accused. He may be trying to develop in you meekness or love or joy or patience or self-control or forgiveness or poverty of spirit. Your initial, natural response to a situation may pin-point a deficiency and reveal what God wants to do in your life. Acknowledge the deficiency and ask God to use the circumstances to develop Christian traits to overcome these deficiencies.

8. Discern which of your “rights” you believe are being denied or neglected in this situation.

Do you think you have a right to be respected, and is that why you are upset with your spouse? Do you think your good deed has gone unnoticed and you are unappreciated? Identify what you think you are being denied and then turn the matter over to God. You belong to Him. Refer to H above.

9. Talk to someone you trust about your hard feelings, and seek their support and prayers as you seek to put on God-honoring attitudes and actions for each situation.

10. What does God want you to do and how does He want you to go doing it at this time?

Reflect on Biblical illustrations and exhortations that are applicable to your situation. Go over the passages under C, D, E and G of this study. Seek to obey these Biblical insights and instructions

implicitly. Anything less is disobedience — sin. Anything less will not solve, but compound, the problem.

The question is — How does *God* want you to handle the situation? Certain things you must NOT DO. Certain things you must DO. Plan a God-honoring course of action.

- ◆ Do you need to confess your sin?
- ◆ Do you need to make restitution?
- ◆ Have you taken something that you never returned?
- ◆ Have you gossiped?
- ◆ Have you withheld something that you should have given?
- ◆ Should you agree to separate and give the matter some thought and prayer, and then try to resolve the difficulty?
- ◆ What words would solve the problem rather than attack the other person, or compound the situation. **EPHESIANS 4:32-33** — *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children . . .*
- ◆ Should you be willing to compromise or even give in to the other person?
- ◆ Have you tried to look at the situation from the other person's point of view?
- ◆ Have you put the best possible interpretation on what the other person has said or done?
- ◆ Do you need to seek the counsel of a Christian friend or pastor to help you discover God's way to handle the situation?
- ◆ How can you express kindness and concern for the person with whom you are having problems?
- **ROMANS 12:14-21** — *Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. (14)
Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. (15)
Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. (16)
Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. (17)
If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. (18)
Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written:
"It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. (19)
On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." (20)
Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (22)*

11. PUT OFF emotional reactions and PUT ON Biblical Attitudes.

Emotional anger is a natural habit of the sin nature. Christians must not harbor resentments that lead to angry outbursts, and must not give full vent to their anger. Christians must LEARN how to control anger and use it for constructive purposes.

Controlled release of anger can be done only if you DO NOT allow your feelings to activate your words and actions.

Controlled release of anger can be done only if you DO learn the habit of being guided by a mind that is controlled, marinated in and instructed by solid Biblical principles.

To make sure you change the sinful habit patterns which have become deeply ingrained, it may be helpful for a time to actually write down how you should deal with tough situations, how you should respond, exactly what you should say. After you have made your plan, discuss it with someone who is wise in spiritual matters. If he/she agrees that your plan is Biblical, put your plan into action. Do this again and again until it becomes easier and easier to surrender your anger to the Lord before you react.

This plan for overcoming sinful anger will work if you will put it to work. It is work, but it's worth it. God wants you to live in accordance with His principles, and He will empower you and bless you as you make steps in His direction. Your relationships will improve. Your health may even improve. You will experience joy knowing you are pleasing God. And your testimony for Jesus Christ will be much more powerful — especially to those whom you love the most.

12. Practice makes permanent

Habit patterns and responses that have been part of us for years are not always easy to change. In fact, the reverse is more accurate. Nevertheless, by the power of God, we can change. We can control our anger. We don't need to continue to explode or become bitter.

We have seen that to change we must plan ahead, we must THINK Biblically, and exercise self-control when stressful situations arise. We must put-off childish temper tantrums because we don't get our way or others don't live up to our expectations. We must put-on obedience to God and His will by faith in the power of our Savior, Jesus Christ.



May the Lord richly bless you as you put-off anger and put-on His Love!

