

## **Anger**

James 1:19-20

July 5, 2020, Quentin Smith

I want to welcome you if you're joining us on the internet, to your Sunday morning and our Saturday evening. Thank you for tuning in, and I pray that you'll be blessed at home watching as much as we will be here tonight.

The MacArthur New Testament commentary on James records this story. When a famous Roman orator was asked by a young man to teach him the art of public speaking, the young man continued an incessant flow of meaningless talk that allowed the great teacher no opportunity to interject a single word. When they finally reached the point of discussing a fee, the artist said, "Young man, to instruct you in oratory, I'll have to charge you a double fee." And when asked why he explained, "Because I will have to teach you two skills, how to hold your tongue and the second, how to use it."

We've been talking about taming the tongue. We've been talking about communication. Communication is something that we all do even when we don't speak. And then sometimes we open our mouths and we use words, and we make it worse. We started off looking at communication in the context of the heart and as we talked about James 1:19-20 we realize that it sits in the context of the chapter. Just like every conversation, every piece of communication has context. And that really communication is about what's happening in your heart because what's happening in your heart at that particular time is going to come out and be communicated.

So, we talked about heart conditions in our first session. We talked about humility, acknowledging that we are starting from a point of being a low, a slave of Christ. We talked secondly, about insight. Insight into God's sovereignty, such an important doctrine, to know that the things that are happening to us, the things that we might be tempted to be angry about, are happening for a reason. Thirdly, stability, not tossed to and fro. Recognizing that we don't need to go anywhere else for wisdom, and we need to ask God to give us the wisdom, and we need to stick with Jesus because He has the words of eternal life. Perspective that everything is temporary, and to live our lives and communicate with one another constantly remembering that things may not be as important if you look at it from an eternal perspective. And honesty that sin originates in us when we are tempted to blame shift. An understanding of how much we are loved by God. When you think about the intention of His will to save us, and that when you think about your salvation, there's not much else that matters once you recognize the enormity of the blessing we have. A determination to put off sin. To put aside wickedness and to put on the humility to receive the word implanted which is able to save our souls and has the power to change us. And finally, understanding all of that, we talked about authenticity. We talked about

being the genuine article, doers of the word. Not sitting in the pews, being merely over educated listeners, hearers; those who know a lot about Bible but don't live it out.

You see, it's that picture of humility and calmness and having your heart immersed in God's sovereignty with the perspective of all things being temporary. Now open your mouth.

Last week we spoke about being quick to hear, teachable, and then slow to speak, hesitant. Understanding that words really reveal the heart because they overflow from the heart. We saw how potentially dangerous and destructive words are if they're used carelessly, but at the same time, they can be powerful and influential for good. So, this will be our third and final look at communication from James chapter 1:19-20 and tonight, we want to talk about anger. James 1:19-20 reads like this,

This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

We made the point that when James is talking, he's talking to brethren and that ought to encourage you. That ought to be convicting in itself, but also encouraging because your struggle with words and with speaking too much and with anger is common to me and to everybody else in this room, to everybody else who's watching. We don't struggle alone, therefore we can be real with one another. And that's really important to recognize because we are in process. Even though your status is as a child of the King, you are living out your life here. We are saved but we're being sanctified. The influence of the flesh has been reduced, but not removed. We've been given the power to resist temptation, to say "no." We have the ability to no longer be ruled by sin, but it would be foolish and proud to pretend that we don't sin. First John 1 says that to say that we have not sinned is to really say that we're not saved. We're a liar and the truth is not in us, if that's what we claim.

So the passage says, "But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, for" here comes the reason, "the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God." That word "achieve" is the word for work or labor, *ergazomai*. It's the word from which we get ergonomic. You see, what he's saying is that our anger doesn't work. It doesn't produce, it doesn't result in that which is right in God's eyes.

Let me give you some examples. So examples of things that God sees for our lives that He considers are right. Okay, three examples as we intro this topic. Firstly, it's right from God's perspective that we love one another. Okay, John 13:34-35,

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another... by this all men will know that you are My disciples, by the way you have love for one another.

Anger doesn't achieve that.

Number two, it's right in God's eyes, It's his plan for our life that we display the fruit of the Spirit. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Anger is not on that list.

Third example, It's right in God's eyes. It's the righteousness of God that our lives bring glory to Him that we are distinct from the world. Philippians 2:15 says this,

So that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, holding fast, the word of life.

Anger looks like the world. Anger is not distinct from the world.

So, I'm sure there's many other examples but you get what I'm where I'm going with this. You're tracking with me that if we're not achieving the righteousness of God, if we're not working out and if our lives are not resulting in that which God considers right, then we're standing in opposition. We are opposing. We're a stumbling block to God's agenda. And what happened when Peter stood in opposition to the Lord? The Lord referred to him as Satan. So whose agenda does anger fulfill? You've got it.

You see, if I'm angry with my wife, how am I obeying Ephesians 5:25, "Husbands love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her."? I'm not. Wives if you're angry with your husband, how are you doing and achieving Titus 2:4-5? "So that they may encourage the younger women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored." You're not.

Romans 14:15,

For if because of food, your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died.

Now, I know that the example that Paul is giving here is talking about exercising liberty with regard to food, but here's the point. The emphasis of that verse is on the *lack of love* with which you exercise that liberty, and the same can be said of anger. There's a distinct lack of love. You

might be exercising your liberty to have an opinion, but the way you do it in frustration, irritation, anger, lacks love. Paul says we can destroy a brother if we don't love them. So, there's a lot more here than first meets the eye. The Spirit of God is grieved. God's reputation is affected because we are supposed to be ambassadors of Christ, we represent the Lord Jesus, and yet we're not achieving the righteousness of God.

Proverbs 14:29 says

He who is slow to anger has great understanding.

So, let's dive in. What is this thing called anger? Randy Patton says this, "Anger is a strong feeling of displeasure or hostility caused by a real or perceived offence, injury, or unmet desire to oneself or others, usually accompanied by a desire to retaliate or seek revenge." Let me say that again. "Anger is a strong feeling of displeasure or hostility caused by a real or perceived offense, injury, or unmet desire to oneself or others, usually accompanied by a desire to retaliate or seek revenge." So, I want to talk about anger, and if you're taking notes, I'm going to give you five points. And then we're going to make seven applications. Hopefully practical applications for you.

Number one, anger in itself is not sinful. So, that's interesting because I just got through telling you that our anger does not achieve the righteousness of God, but by definition, it's not sinful. You see, anger is just a response to what is wrong and offensive. We could use the word "indignation" and we know what it feels like. It's that which rises up inside us in response to what we know is wrong. Does God get angry? You bet. Let me give you some verses,

Psalm 5:5, "The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes. You hate all who do iniquity." So, hate describes a very intense anger. We don't use that word lightly, but it says, "You hate all who do iniquity." That is God's anger rising up.

Psalm 7:11, "God is a righteous judge, and a God who has indignation every day." That word indignation is used elsewhere in Daniel 11:30 and it means "enraged." That's something that we don't actually think about. We don't think that God is a righteous judge and a God who is enraged every day.

Jeremiah 6:11, "But I am full of the wrath of the Lord. I am weary of holding it in." That word for wrath is fury.

Romans 1:18, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men."

You see, God's wrath is not volatile anger. God's wrath is rather the manifestation of His justice. His anger is synonymous with His justice. It's one of His attributes. And in his anger, He will make things right. He will judge human evil; He will judge human rebellion, yet He is quick to relent if our hearts are sincerely repentant, sincerely genuine. What about Jesus? Was Jesus angry? Absolutely.

Mark 3:5, "After looking around at them with anger, grieved at there their hardness of heart.", Notice what he's angry about, the stubborn hardness of man's heart. "He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored."

John 2:14, "And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. And He made a scourge of chords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and He overturned the tables; and to those who were selling the doves He said, 'Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a place of business.'" Now, it's interesting that the passage and also this passage in Mark and Luke's account doesn't mention anger at all. But a couple of verses down from that, it talks about how zeal for God's house would consume Him. And that word "zeal" means jealous. So, here you have the ability of God and Jesus, the Godhead, to be perfectly angry and perfectly jealous, and yet not sin.

That's a real struggle for us because Ephesians 4:26 says, "Be angry, and yet do not sin." But what do we do? We're often angry and we sin. You know, righteous anger, the kind of indignation about an issue can be the very thing that moves us to action. If you think about any cause or any movement that has been sparked in the world, probably ever, it's been sparked by some sort of indignation, some sort of anger over an injustice. Someone decided to act despite the consequences because what they saw happening was not right. And they drew a line in the sand, and they said "enough." Be angry; be moved to anger in the right way, but don't let what you're saying. About make you feel justified in responding sinfully. So, although anger in itself is not sinful, and indignation about circumstances can bring about a lot of change, often for good, unfortunately, that's not where most of us live. Is it?

So, point number two, our anger is selfish. God has righteous anger. He can be perfectly jealous and angry at the same time and not sin. But for most of us, our anger is, by definition, usually selfish. It's self-focused. Turn over the page to James chapter four. We're just going to read the first three verses there.

What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not

have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

See, you lust, and you don't have so, consequence, you commit murder. We know that murder begins with anger in the heart, doesn't it? You're envious; you can't obtain, so you fight and quarrel. "I don't get what I want, so I'm angry." You see, lust that is unfulfilled produces a chain reaction. It goes like this. Desire is thwarted in some way. It's denied, and so that leads to a heart of anger because that's what you want. And the heart of anger produces a behavior of quarrels and conflicts and fights. And so, at its core, anger is a response to not getting what we want.

We keep getting interrupted with a task, we become irritated. Why? Well, because the task is prolonged, and we needed some quiet time to get the job done. And the kids keep interrupting me. Our lawn mower won't start no matter how many times we reef on that cord and we become frustrated. Why? Because we've set aside this time to cut the lawn, and I've got customers and the rain is coming, or I've got people coming over for a barbecue and it's going to get done. The server got our order wrong for the third time; we become exasperated. Why? Because our get-together in the restaurant is spoiled and not everybody can eat together. Our parents changed their mind again. They treated one child differently from the other and we get resentful and then bitter because Little Miss Perfect here gets away with stuff that I don't get away with. The one spouse expresses tiredness late at night; so, the other spouse sighs loudly, turns over heavily and goes into silent glow in the dark growl mode. Why? Because he or she had imagined the evening turning out differently. We call customer service we get into a voicemail loop. It leads nowhere. We're blocked from getting the refund that we want. They've got our money, we didn't get service. We're exasperated. Why? Because we need that off our to do list.

You see, a lot of our anger has to do with us being thwarted, being blocked, not getting what we desire. And because it's self-centered, therefore, point number three is that it's a challenge to God's sovereignty. It's a response to things not working out the way we want them to work out. We don't like what God has chosen for our path. This is not what I signed on for. This is not how I planned things to be. They didn't turn out the way I anticipated and sometimes we get angry with ourselves, angry about choices that we made, because of how things have turned out as a result of that choice that we made. We never anticipated this result. That investment was a sure thing, and we just lost \$20,000

You know in Genesis chapter 45:5 & 8, Joseph's brothers come to Egypt in the middle of a famine to buy grain, you know the story. Joseph sold into slavery, rises up in Potiphar's household, ends up in jail because he avoids the advances of Potiphar's wife, spends probably two years in jail for doing nothing wrong, comes out and becomes second to Pharaoh when he interprets Pharaoh's dream about the seven years of plenty and the seven years of famine. Here we're in the seven years of famine. Joseph's family is struggling and suffering and they come to

Egypt to get grain. And Joseph reveals himself to them. Can you imagine the terror? Can you imagine the regret? What's going through their mind at lightning speed? "What did we do? This is the second most powerful man in Egypt, and we blew it." Here's Joseph's response.

Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life... God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance.

Praise God. Perhaps you have regret for acting hastily in something. Perhaps you have regret for not counting the cost, for not looking before you leap, for being an unwise steward. And you know, I think we can all relate. I can. "Yes, yes, yes, yes." Checkmarks all across. So, it really is important to learn from that and to take time to make decisions carefully, to pray about them to ask God to unfold that. But even after carefully examining something that you make a decision about and it turns out to be the "wrong decision," I want to just encourage you that God uses even that in the most wonderful, incomprehensible matrix of His sovereignty. Don't ask me how. I have not a clue. But God can weave those circumstances, those bad decisions, those regretful decisions of yours, those sinful decisions into a beautiful Kaleidoscope, that only He knows how to.

So ask yourself, If God never frustrated your plans, where would you learn patience? If you never had to wait, sometimes in difficult circumstances, where would you ever learn long suffering? If you never had to go without anything, when would you learn to be satisfied in God alone? So, number three, anger can be a challenge to God's sovereignty.

Number four, and if I can have that PowerPoint up, (seek link attached to sermon for PowerPoint), number four is anger. It comes in different forms.

"What's the matter honey?" "Nothing." "Well, I don't know. You seem angry." "I'm not angry. I'm frustrated."

There are certainly different points on the spectrum of anger, right? We talk about irritability, and frustration and exasperation and disrespect and cruelty, argumentativeness, or just full on rage. But it's all anger. It's all anger that's just dressed up differently, isn't it? In the Bible there are three predominant words that describe anger.

The first one is to most *thumos*, *Thumos* is that explosive anger. It's the boiling over anger. It's the agitation of the feelings and the passion of anger. It's that explosive. And in Ephesians 4:31 it says, "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger..." this is wrath. This is anger going outward. This is the volcano. This is road rage. *Thumos*.

Number two, *orge*. This is that that abiding, settled attitude of indignation. This is the anger in that same verse. It'll bitterness and wrath and anger, this anger. This is the slow burn. This is the simmering anger. the word used for God's wrath in Romans one, and it's the anger that Jesus had over the hardness of heart with the man with the withered hand. In our case much less perfectly, it's often that internalized, buried, boiling anger. It's the clamping up. It's the "What's the matter, honey?" "nothing!"

Thirdly, *parorgismos*. That's the irritability, the desperation, the anger we feel when we're provoked by something. So, this is Ephesians 4:26. "Be angry and yet do not sin." When you're provoked, whatever it is you're provoked by, don't sin in your response. Ephesians 6:4, "Fathers, do not exasperate your children. Do not provoke your children to anger." *Parorgismos*.

It has different forms, but really one of the things about growing as a Christian, we want to call things by biblical names. So, if we're irritable and frustrated, we have to recognize that that's anger. If we're wrathful and we've got that road rage, that's anger. Let's call it by what it is because then we have a chance of being able to find the solution for that anger biblically.

Number five, anger has consequences. There are far reaching serious effects and to put it bluntly and colloquially, there is roadkill.

Number one, under anger has consequences, it's used as a weapon. Anger can be used to manipulate and to intimidate other people to get what we want. Or to punish when we don't get what we want; and I'm telling you, men are really bad at this in a domestic violence situation. This is what happens. Men are bigger. They're intimidating. They use anger to put down and to make sure they get what they want, to keep the wife subservient. It's a weapon.

Number two, it leads to murder. Matthew 5:21 says,

You have heard that the ancients were told, "You shall not commit murder" and "Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court." But I say to you that everyone is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, "You good for nothing," shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, "You fool," shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.

If you're angry with your brother, you're guilty before the court. Jesus taught that lust in our hearts is the first step towards adultery. You have committed that adultery if you lust in your heart, and in the same way, anger in the heart renders us guilty of murder before the court. And we've all had murderous intentions. We've all been so angry at some point. I believe that anybody is capable of murder when they can become angry like that. I think it would be very difficult for us not to be if we were provoked and provoked and provoked. Then

there's all the wars and mass killings and riots, and these are all manifestations of anger and hatred. Manifestations of that anger and hatred deep inside that was acted on. Beliefs and idols of the heart, people are not prepared to give those up. They go to war on the basis of what they feel and are not prepared to give up; and that leads to character assassination.

Number three, when we use derogatory names, "Good for nothing. You fool." When we belittle others, when we call them names, we expose our pride in full force. The truth is, folks, in this whole aspect of anger, what we're seeing in our world today, the truth is that all lives matter. All lives matter to God. All lives were created by God in His image, and they matter so much to God that Jesus gave his life. Remember that, "For God so loved *the world*" the world, not a people group. "For God so loved the world. He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." Anger doesn't give; it takes. In our hands it is almost always destructive.

The fourth consequence of anger is it leads to bitterness. The Bible says, "Don't let the sun go down on your anger. Don't give the devil a foothold." Why? Well, because anger that is unresolved settles in, it lies on the couch, it gets all comfy in front of the fire; and then it changes and becomes bitter. And it especially leads to embittered children.

I want to spend a bit more time on embitterment in children. There are two verses in the entire New Testament that help to understand how to child raise. They are Ephesians 6:4

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

And you really could say there's one verse because Colossians 3:21 is the brother verse of that and it says this,

Fathers do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart.

Very similar nuances of the same message. Fathers, don't provoke your children to anger. Why? Because your children will become embittered.

Lou Priolo, in his book called *The Heart of Anger*, provides multiple ways that we provoke our children. I'm going to read you 24; pick up your pen and write these down if you can keep up. If not, I'll get Natasha to send it out.

Number one, lack of marital harmony. Children see who we are at home. You cannot pretend with a child; the child lives in the home, and they pick up very quickly on strife, and they pick up very quickly on hypocrisy; and that leads to bitterness and ultimately rebellion.

Number two, establishing and maintaining a child centered home where the child rules and gets what the child wants.

Number three, modeling sinful anger. If you have a habit of being angry, you are going to provoke anger in your child.

Number four, habitually disciplining while angry.

Number five, being inconsistent with discipline. Mary gets away with everything. Susie gets hammered, because Susie is older; and Mary is kind of a pet. And Susie is not stupid; she can see that the rules are different for her and Mary. What do you think's gonna happen in Susie's heart?

Which leads to number six, having double standards, rules for you and other rules for your children.

Number seven, being legalistic. We talked about playing church; being a hearer, not a doer.

Number eight, not admitting you're wrong and not asking for forgiveness. You expect them to say sorry, you expect them to ask for forgiveness, but you're above that.

Number nine, constantly finding fault. Picky, perfectionistic; you'll discourage them. You'll provoke them to anger. They can never do anything right.

Number ten, parents reversing God given roles. A dad who is not leading, a mom who steps in there to take care of things.

Number eleven, not listening to a child's opinion or taking his or her side of the story seriously.

Number twelve, comparing them to others. "Why can't you just be like Peter? Peter sits still, Peter listens."

Number thirteen, not making time to just talk, to connect. They're little people. Little people love to connect. We were up on Mount Thom recently and taking a hike and we came across this man with his two boys. And they were chatty, so we stopped to chat. And I think he was five, and he looked at me and he said, "What happened to your tooth? Did you lose a tooth?" So, I have this big gap, right? And so, we had a chat about that. And when he realized that he had made a mistake, he got all embarrassed and started doing his karate moves and, you know, going through the motions of that and being a ninja. But the point is, we talked. We talked together; we had a

conversation, and I'm a complete stranger. And it was funny when we left that, Tanya and I cracked up. But if you're a parent, talk with your kids.

Number fourteen, not praising or encouraging a child.

Fifteen, failing to keep your promises

Sixteen, chastening in front of others. It's embarrassing. It's humiliating. You don't like to be corrected in front of somebody else.

Seventeen, not allowing enough freedom

Eighteen, allowing too much freedom. There is a tension there, there is a sweet spot.

Number nineteen, mocking your child. Dads, this is fathers do not provoke your children to anger. If you mock your children, it is not funny. When you exasperate your child, and then you think you can make it all better by just saying, "just kidding," that's not funny. Don't do that. Because "just kidding" is not some sort of magic wand that takes away that humiliation that you just caused. Recognize if you've done that, sit down and say, "Son, I am really sorry, I should not have said that. Daddy was wrong and I love you, and I want to ask you please to forgive me for that."

Number twenty, abusing them physically.

Number twenty-one, ridiculing or name calling.

Number twenty-two, unrealistic expectations

Twenty-three, practicing favouritism

Twenty-four, child training with worldly methods inconsistent with God's word.

You see, it's a long list. These are subtle ways in which we provoke them to anger and anger becomes bitter; and you wonder why they don't have anything to do with God. Children have a sense of what is right and good. You probably taught them that, but they also come prewired to a certain extent. They particularly respond in provocation and anger when they see something that they don't feel is right, but they feel powerless to do anything about. And so, if you're a dad who is treating your wife badly, and your seven-year-old boy sees that, he's going to be provoked. But you, being the big dad in the house, you're going to put him down and send him to his room. And

he has no power to make right what he just experienced. That's why marital harmony is number one on the list. And they will model that when they grow up.

Proverbs 22:24 says “Do not associate with a man given to anger or go with a hot-tempered man, you will learn his ways and find a snare for yourself.

So, five points, let's summarize. Anger in itself is not sinful. It can motivate us to correct what is wrong, do what is right. God is angry and jealous all the time, but yet He doesn't sin. He does it perfectly. Number two, our anger though, is usually selfish. It's around not really getting what we want. And because of that anger is a challenge to God's sovereignty. It's a response that says “I don't like my circumstances. I don't like I did not sign on for this.” It comes in different forms, number four, irritation, frustration, bitterness, or unbridled rage. We ought not to downplay it like that. It's anger. Let's not cut ourselves any slack. Just say, “Well, we're just frustrated.” And number five, anger has some deep reaching serious consequences and it can have a profound and lasting impact, particularly on our children.

So, what are we to do? What are we to do? Well, if you're someone who struggles with anger, I want to give you some hope today. We all struggle with this, but God has given us two amazing gifts. One is grace, and two is repentance. I want you to ask yourself the question, application number one, ask yourself the question, “Do I have idols in my heart that needs to be routed out? Do I have desires and expectations that I'm prepared to protect and defend and get angry about when they are threatened?” And that leads into the question, “Am I really saved? Do I truly belong to Him? Is what I'm seeing in my life, the fruit of salvation?”

Let me pause there, Jesus said in John 14:15, He says, “If you love Me you will obey My commandments.” Okay? And what we do is we try and obey the commandments. And we think that that's going to prove something. That it's gonna prove that we love Him. If we just obey the commandments, that's going to somehow be a light to the world that we love Him. It's not what the verse means at all. We've got it backwards. “If you love Me, the fruit of that love will be that you obey My commandments.” So you could say, in a sense, “Because you love Me” or “As you love Me” or “Since you love Me”.

It's a little bit like saying this. The wife says, “If you really loved me, you'd give me flowers on Valentine's Day. So what happens next Valentine's Day? The dude goes out and he buys flowers because he thinks it's the right thing to do. And so we live in the drudgery of legalism because we keep doing the things that we think is the right thing to do to prove to somebody that we love them. Instead of the love driving that instinct to buy the flowers.

“When you love Me, since you love Me, you'll obey.” You'll buy those flowers because it's the joyful instinct and overflow of your heart. Heartfelt thankfulness to God comes first, and it

drives that obedience. So I want to ask us, some of us are seasoned Christians and we need to ask ourselves the question. We need to examine ourselves to see if we are truly in the faith. We need the gospel every day. We need not only to be saved by grace, but we need to be *living* in grace every day. Grace does not achieve justification and then go away. Grace has to be that which lines our every sanctification.

Number two, second application, determine to address situations more quickly. We need to do this we need to choose to cover or we need to gently confront in love. The Bible's encouragement is don't let the sun go down on that anger. Why? Because you give the devil a foothold. So, don't let that irritation or that frustration suddenly become embedded in bitterness and resentment. Keep things current; keep short accounts.

Number three, if you have blown up or are in the habit of clamping up, if you've attacked a substitute, if you've kicked the dog when the dog did nothing, if you are known as being easily frustrated and angry, make it right with those around you. Just go to the Lord and ask Him to forgive you. Now that your eyes have been opened, confess that sin to your spouse, your children; ask them to forgive you. And make sure that what you expect of others you apply to yourself. Have you ever noticed that our expectations of others are much higher than the expectations of ourselves? Some of you who are in the service industry, understand that. What you expect of your bank or your grocer or whatever the service industry is, is so high; but you give yourself all kinds of slack, personally.

Number four, go to the Lord and ask Him to help you be that authentic, sincere Christian. Don't play church. Root out double standards. Be that doer of the word, but make sure it's coming from the right motivation. The message tonight is not that we go out and do, do, do. The message is that you have been loved by God so much in the Gospel that you understand how much you needed Christ, and your heart is soft and changed because of that and now we obey. And we are slow to anger because we understand that the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. And, pray and ask Him how you can be useful in the body of Christ as a doer with that motivation.

Number five, what happens if you are the target of somebody anger? That's a tough one. Somebody is enraged at you. Well, I think we should have a T-shirt that says, "Stay calm and trust the Word of God." Because proverbs 15:1 says, "A gentle answer turns away wrath." That is the word for rage. A gentle answer turns away rage. That is the power of the wisdom of God. "But a harsh word stirs up anger."

I was in the emergency room once and the police brought in a man who had been so stirred up by the way they treated him, but he was also probably at fault because of some substances. They had him in a four-point restraint, and I'm the doctor who's got to go look after this guy and he is

yelling. And this verse came to my mind, and I sat down on the bed next to him and said, “Listen, I know you don't want to be here,” and I spoke very softly so that he had to stop yelling to hear me. And I just responded with a quiet word, and he calmed right down. No sedation, a gentle word.

First Peter three, “To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted and humble in spirit.” Okay, that's the foundation. We talked about the heart. That's where we ought to be and then it says, “Not returning evil for evil.” If that's your heart, you're not going to return evil for evil. You see that? “...or insult for insult but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.” That's right in God's eyes, first the heart, then you operate the mouth. And you're not going to want to return evil for evil, or insult for insult.

Another thing you can do is pray for that person. “But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father Who is in heaven.” Jesus is on the cross and there's a raging crowd in front of him, and what does he do? He prays for them, “Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do.” And if He can do that, we can do that.

Number six, what do you do if you've been wronged and you feel angry yourself? If you have that wall of rage and outrage and indignation that wells up within you because of what you've experienced or what you've seen, trust God's sovereignty. If you've been wronged and you feel that anger, you have to trust God's sovereignty. Ask what it is that He wants you to learn; repent if you've done something wrong for sure. But if it's unjust suffering, 1 Peter tells us what to do. First Peter, chapter 2:18,

Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable.

You can imagine you're a servant or a slave. Your master is unreasonable; you might be angry about that. “For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience towards God, a person bears upon the sorrows when suffering unjustly.” God is glorified if you do it right when you suffer unjustly; 1 Peter 2:20:

For what credit is there if, when you sin, and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.

You're displaying the righteousness of God under those circumstances. 1 Peter 2:21-

For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but He kept in trusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds, wounds you were healed.

Remember Romans 12:19,

Never take your own revenge... "VENGEANCE IS MINE," says the Lord. [And on the contrary,] "IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOUR HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Finally, number seven, if you have struggled with anger, start serving others and start considering them more important than yourself; And their needs above your own. Philippians 2:3

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

Why do I say that? Well, here's the logic. Anger is selfish; we've said that. It's often a response to not getting what we want. It's a result of expectations and desires that go unmet. So, if we replace thoughts of our own expectations with thoughts about how we can serve others, there will be fewer of those expectations to go unmet. You tracking with me> If you're thinking more about others than yourself, you're not going to have as many times where you feel "Wow I deserved that. I earned that. It's not happening. I sure am mad about that." We'll be less self-focused less self-absorbed; there'll be less disappointment possible.

Well, there it is.

There was a hymn written in 1867, unknown author, and I want to just close by reading to you the three stanzas.

Angry words! O let them never  
From the tongue unbridled slip;  
May the heart's best impulse ever  
Check them ere they soil the lip

Love is much too pure and holy,  
Friendship is too sacred far,  
For a moment's reckless folly  
Thus to decimate and mar.

Angry words are lightly spoken,  
Bitterest thoughts are rashly stirred,  
Brightest links of life are broken  
by a single, angry word.

Father, we are just so humbled to look at a topic like anger and recognize that we are that person. Father, we are so encouraged, and we just want to bow before You and worship You tonight. Because, though we stand convicted, Father, You have declared us righteous. You have loved us when we were yet unlovable. Before we knew You Father, you went to the cross. You sacrificed yourself and You have given us so much hope. Because Father, it is not about how we can change to be worthy, we will never be worthy. And Lord, I pray that that would stick with us. I pray that the gospel, the reality that we are never worthy, that we can never be worthy, would be what drives us to love You and therefore, obey Your commands.

And I pray Father that that tonight our hearts would leave this place worshiping. Worshiping a God who is so big and so kind and so patient that He would love us so much that even though He is angry and jealous for His name, all the time, that He would choose to save us who do not deserve any grace and mercy.

And Father, I just pray for all of our hearts tonight. I pray, Lord, that we would be convicted that what's going on in the heart, the love of the world, idols that we have, times we forget that this is all so temporary, it's not going to matter at all in eternity, we could just let it go. We could have that compassion and love to consider others' needs above our own. That we'll be far less tempted to be disappointed. So, Father, we lift our hearts before You today. We ask You to change us by helping us to focus on how loved we are in Christ.

We thank You for this opportunity to be in Your word. We pray this all in the name of Him who saved us, Jesus Christ, amen.

Well, I want to thank everybody for being here this evening; and thank you for joining us over the internet. And as we always say, if you have a need or if you would like to be contacted, please just go to our website, send us an email, reach out to us. And if there's any of the resources that can be helpful for you, please just take a look on [gracefellowshipchilliwack.com](http://gracefellowshipchilliwack.com) Thank you for being with us this evening and on Sunday morning.