



Unit 1—Anger

- (4) Proverbs teaches that the nature and goal of our anger depends entirely on the orientation of our hearts to God. Live in the fear of the Lord and you will be angry and not sin. Live outside of that fabric of life, and in your anger you will destroy yourself and the lives of those around you.
- (5-6) **The danger of anger**—disintegrates the body, community, and wisdom—your ability to make wise choices, to live well.... distorts your view of things, your view of the situation, yourself, the world, and others. It drives you to make foolish and stupid choices.
- (6) **The addictive nature of anger**— The more you have anger — and the problems that anger brings into your life (disintegration of body, community, wisdom) — the more you need to get angry at other things in order to keep up the pretence that the problem is not with you.... The more you are angry, the more you need to be angry.... The more you are angry, the more you will lose control. And the more you lose control, the more you lose total perspective on life. And the bitterness begins to eat you up inside.
- (7) Tim Keller says this: “Anger is love in motion towards someone or something that you love when it is under threat. That means that anger is a form of love.”
- (9) Sinful anger has a distorted cause, a distorted nature and a distorted goal:
 - The distorted cause is not the glory of God and the good of others, but our glory.
 - The distorted nature is not ‘slow-to’ anger, but no anger (indifference) or blow-up anger.
 - The distorted goal is not the problem, but often the whole person.
- (9) **The cross of Christ** is the ultimate surgical strike. God takes out the power of sin without destroying the sinner. Jesus absorbs both our anger and God’s anger, so that God can embrace sinners. That is the good of anger. That is “slow-to” anger. That is what the Bible commends.
- (10) In other words, **to be angry is to act foolishly: an angry person is a fool.** The fool in the book of Proverbs is the one who bases his security, significance and identity outside of God. We fail to get angry, or we blow up in anger because we are not looking and interpreting the world around us through a fear of the Lord. We are not shaping our lives around the truth of Jesus crucified, risen, crowned and with us.
- (10) **We need to admit it**—People may want to lose some negative consequences of their anger, but they may not really want to lose the power, control, prestige or authority that their anger brings. So we need to keep asking an angry person: “Do you really want to change?”

Question—Share how anger makes you stupid, hurts relationships, and reveals what you truly love.

Unit 2—Conflict

- (18) When our desires rule us, and when we do not get what we want, we pursue them in conflict.
- (18) As David Powlison puts it, “In an argument, you offend ME by crossing my will. I respond by confessing YOUR offences to you. At the same time, I explain to you how all MY failings are really YOUR fault.”
- (19) My desire for a good thing→ becomes a need → becomes a demand. (20) We have to see that our desires are ruling instead of Christ.
- (20) We need to recognize the problem, then do something about it:

We need to submit to God (4:7)	Instead of submitting to the rule of our desires
We need to run from the devil (4:7)	Instead of imitating him
We need to come near to God (4:8)	Instead of playing God

- (21) Conflict resolution as a gospel opportunity

Question—What driving desires are causing conflict in your life?



Unit 3—Fearing People

- (24) We crave the approval of other people or we fear their rejection. We ‘need’ the acceptance of others and so we are controlled by them.
- (26) The underlying idol is self. When we crave approval and affirmation from other people we are, in effect, wanting them to worship me.
- The fear of God liberates us (becoming God-centered, not me-centered). The fear of God sets us free to love other people. The fear of God sets us free to be ourselves.

Question—How might Jim & Jane struggle with the fear of man?

Unit 4—Humility

- (29) The route to the throne is via the cross.
- (30) Pride wrecks our walk with God. Pride is the main impediment to Christian growth. “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble” (Jas. 4:6).
- (31) Grace makes us humble; humility makes us receptive to grace.
- (31) Pride makes holiness my boast ... pride hides sin from others ... pride leads to self-justification, self-righteousness, self-improvement ... pride blinds me to my sin ... pride minimizes and excuses sin.
- Humility cannot be achieved. (33) Puritan John Owen may help us. He said: “There are two things that are suited to humble the souls of men, and they are, first, a due consideration of God, and then of themselves – of God, in his greatness, glory, holiness, power, majesty, and authority; of ourselves, in our mean, abject, and sinful condition.”
- (34) Pride is not just a sin, but part of the very definition of sin. Pride puts us in the place of God. We turn from our chief end of glorifying God and make our chief end glorifying ourselves.... This is why humility is a paradigm of repentance. To humble ourselves before God is to repent of our god-complex.
- (38) The secret of humility is this: never stray far from the cross.

Question—Look at the list on page 31 and share which ways your pride shows itself. How does your pride show itself in conflict?

Unit 5—Gifts and Service

- (39) Church activity should be people-centered rather than program-centered.... When square pegs are driven into round holes ... the ministry in question suffers, the individual suffers and genuine gospel opportunities go begging.
- (40) the same Spirit → many gifts → one purpose: the common good.
- (41) Gifts are given for the community no for self-fulfillment.... Gifts are not exercised in isolation, but as a part of a co-operating body. They are not given for self-indulgence, but to build up the church and its mission.
- (42) Paul does not tell individual Christians to identify their gifting and stick to it. He tells Christians to be servants, looking to the interests of others and modeling ourselves on the self-giving of the cross. More important than highly gifted individuals are individuals who are servant-hearted.

Question—Share your top 3 areas of giftedness (45)