



### Some Common Struggles and Questions About Anger ...

1. Angry? I'm Not Angry!
2. Angry? What do you tend to get angry about?
3. Is my anger sin? If yes, why?
4. What should I listen for?
5. What should I explore to get to the root of my anger?
6. How can I proclaim the gospel into my anger?
7. What does repentance, faith, and worship look like in the face of my anger?

#### 1. Angry? I'm Not Angry!

Are you angry person? If you say "yes," let's move on to the next point.

If you say "no," let's stop for a moment and think broadly. Do you **grumble**? Do you find yourself **judging others**? Have ever been **irritated**? Do you find yourself **bitter** about something? Do you struggle with being **critical**? Do you find yourself **negative** of others?

Well, if you answer "yes" to one or more to the above questions, then you struggle with anger.

#### 2. Angry? What Do You Tend to Get Angry About?

**Anger and God**—God did not do what I **thought** he should or the **way** he should do it or **when** he should do it.

**Anger and Others**—Why are you **judging** me? She is so **unfair**. I always get **criticized**. Why don't I get the **respect** I deserve from my spouse? Why is he so **manipulative**? Why does she **not work as diligent** as I do? It's so hard to **confront** others or let others know what I really want—He/she will never **change**—I get **defensive** when someone corrects me, disagrees with me or thinks I'm wrong.

**Anger and Circumstances**— What if I'm no longer **successful** and **affirmed** at work? Why the **traffic jam** when I have an important appointment at noon? If I had better job, I would not be in this **financial mess**. If I was not **sick** with a flu, I would not be as moody and impatient.

**Anger and Time/Reality**—We either get angry because of a **past experience**, our **present reality** or a **future possibility**.

#### 3. Is Anger Sin?

Yes and no.

**Anger is not sin** when we have a biblical perspective and understanding of evil and sin. Anything that violates God's commandments would fall into this category (ex. murder, covetousness, lying). It's helpful to know if our anger is righteous if it coexists with other Christ-like characteristics and expresses itself in God-ward ways. In addition, righteous anger always focuses on God and His agenda (not on us and our agendas). Does our anger compliment the fruit of the Spirit or oppose it?

**Anger becomes sin** when our own personal preferences or desires are undermined, instead of God's will and word. Anger becomes sin when God-centered motives are replaced with self-centered motives. An example of this would be when I've corrected my children for disobedience primarily because they've disrespected me, not our holy God. Anger becomes sin when my name and self-proclaimed kingdom is thwarted, instead of God's name and His kingdom.

#### 4. What should I listen for? (see Table )

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from "Lord, Heal my Hurts" by Kay Arthur.



**5. What should I explore to get to the root of my anger?** (see Table )

**6. How can I proclaim the gospel into my anger?** (see Table )

We need to **understand** our need for the gospel and how to **proclaim** the gospel to ourselves. We do this by being aware of what is going on in our heart and in our relationships. When we learn how to do this for ourselves, we can better help others to do the same.

Understanding My Heart	Understanding My Relationships	Proclaiming the Gospel
<p><b>Anger Drives My Emotions/Affections...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ I start despairing and get bitter.</li> <li>▪ I get critical when anyone corrects me or crosses my will.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Anger Drives How I see God...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ He is My god—He should do whatever I want, the way I want it and when I need him.</li> <li>▪ Where is He when I need Him?</li> <li>▪ Is God real? He may be real for you but not for me!</li> <li>▪ God is silent. He does not hear my prayers.</li> </ul>	<p><b>The Gospel and Angry Emotions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ God does love me—evidenced in His forgiveness and redemption</li> <li>▪ I confess and repent of my failure to rejoice because my hope and joy is driven by my circumstances &amp; by what I treasure &amp; worship.</li> <li>▪ Forgive me for not finding my satisfaction and joy in You and in my intimate relationship with You.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Anger Drives My Thoughts...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “Why me?” “Why now?”</li> <li>▪ I justify myself—“You would fall short in these areas too if...” “Do you blame me!”</li> <li>▪ I think about my Rights—“I deserve ...” “I don’t deserve ...”</li> <li>▪ I rehearse my sense of superiority—“Can you believe this guy ... Who does this guy think he is judging me. He does not know !</li> </ul>	<p><b>Anger Drives How I see Myself...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Don’t you know who I am?</li> <li>▪ I am significant and important!</li> <li>▪ It is all about me! I am at the center of the universe!</li> </ul>	<p><b>The Gospel and Angry Thoughts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What am I not believing about God, His gospel truths and promises? Christ is for me. Jesus Christ has justified me. (Rom. 5:1; 8:31-32;38-39)</li> <li>▪ My view of God, self and others is all distorted! I am full of pride! (Jas. 4:1-12)</li> <li>▪ All throughout the gospel story God declares who He is, who I really am, who others are and how I should relate to God &amp; others. (Col. 1:15-20)</li> <li>▪ In God’s love, God’s judgment for my sin fell on Jesus Christ. (2 Cor. 5:21)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Anger Drives My Will &amp; Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ I get defensive</li> <li>▪ I start to judge the other person</li> <li>▪ I get even—return evil for evil</li> <li>▪ I withdraw</li> <li>▪ I get into a self-protective / defensive position</li> </ul>	<p><b>Anger Drives How I See Others...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ They are the ones with the issues and problems!</li> </ul>	<p><b>The Gospel and Angry Living</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Christ did not return evil for evil but died for His enemies so that we might be made right with God (1 Pet. 2:23).</li> <li>▪ For me to live by faith is to trust and obey Christ? (Rom. 12:19-21)</li> <li>▪ I am called to love and forgive like Christ? (Eph. 4:31-5:2)</li> <li>▪ Lord, my sinful anger and my resultant thoughts and actions contradict the gospel message. Instead loving and forgiving like Christ, I am boiling in bitterness and desiring to return evil for evil.</li> <li>▪ How do my attitude and actions hinder others from seeing and experiencing the goodness and grace of Christ?</li> </ul>



**What does repentance, faith, & worship look like in the face of my anger?**

Psalm 73 provides a helpful guide in knowing how to pray and repent from sinful anger.

<p><b>Psalm 73</b> of David</p> <p><sup>1</sup> Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart.</p> <p><sup>2</sup> But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold.</p> <p><sup>3</sup> For I <b>envied</b> the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.</p> <p><sup>4</sup> They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong.</p> <p><sup>5</sup> They are free from common human burdens; they are not plagued by human ills.</p> <p><sup>6</sup> Therefore pride is their necklace; they clothe themselves with violence.</p> <p><sup>7</sup> From their callous hearts comes iniquity; their evil imaginations have no limits.</p> <p><sup>8</sup> They scoff, and speak with malice; with arrogance they threaten oppression.</p> <p><sup>9</sup> Their mouths lay claim to heaven, and their tongues take possession of the earth.</p> <p><sup>10</sup> Therefore their people turn to them and drink up waters in abundance.</p> <p><sup>11</sup> They say, "How would God know? Does the Most High know anything?"</p> <p><sup>12</sup> This is what the wicked are like— always free of care, they go on amassing wealth.</p> <p><sup>13</sup> Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure and have washed my hands in innocence.</p> <p><sup>14</sup> All day long I have been afflicted, and every morning brings new punishments.</p> <p><sup>15</sup> If I had spoken out like that, I would have betrayed your children.</p>	<p><sup>16</sup> When I tried to understand all this, it troubled me deeply</p> <p><sup>17</sup> till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny.</p> <p><sup>18</sup> Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin.</p> <p><sup>19</sup> How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors!</p> <p><sup>20</sup> They are like a dream when one awakes; when you arise, Lord, you will despise them as fantasies.</p> <p><sup>21</sup> When my heart was <b>grieved</b> and my spirit <b>embittered</b>,</p> <p><sup>22</sup> I was <b>senseless</b> and <b>ignorant</b>; I was a brute beast before you.</p> <p><sup>23</sup> Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand.</p> <p><sup>24</sup> You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory.</p> <p><sup>25</sup> Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you.</p> <p><sup>26</sup> My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.</p> <p><sup>27</sup> Those who are far from you will perish; you destroy all who are unfaithful to you.</p> <p><sup>28</sup> But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign LORD my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds.</p>
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I. Heart-Focused Intimacy (v. 1)- The pathway to intimacy with God comes through a pure heart in Christ. Only when we focus on and treasure God’s goodness does He have our hearts.

- *Reflect on God’s goodness today in your life. Only those who are washed by the blood of Christ have a pure heart.*

II. Man-Focused Intimacy (vv. 2-12) - Our greatest problem is the sin of focusing on others and ourselves. Too often we intimately focus on realities that will one day fade away.

- The Prosperous Wicked (vv. 2-5)
  - *Confess and repent how you have envied the prosperity of the wicked in your heart. Thank God and rejoice in the riches of God’s forgiveness and mercy!!!*
- The Proudful Wicked (vv. 6-9)
  - *How have you worn pride as necklace this past week? Ask God to reveal and crush pride in your heart. Remember God stands against the proud, but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6).*
- The Presumptuous Wicked (vv.10-12)
  - *Pray for family members, relatives, friends, neighbors who mock God’s omniscience with their words and actions.*
- The Pitiful Psalmist (vv. 13-15)
  - *Confess and repent over your unbelief to God this past week.*



III. God-Focused Intimacy (vv. 16-28) - If we truly desire to grow intimate with God, our heart's focus must not be on man, but on God.

- Worship (vv. 16-17)
  - *Praise God for his abiding presence in Christ. Christians were once far from God, but now are brought near to Christ. Your final destiny was death, but through Christ it is eternal life with God.*
- Awaken (vv. 18-20)
  - *May your heart break for those whose judgment is near. Their final and true destiny will be forever visible as they face a holy God.*
- Confession (vv. 21-22)
  - *How often do we humble ourselves before God? Savor the fact that God's intimate nearness is your good and the Sovereign LORD is your good.*

***“A Prayer About Jesus’ Tenacious Questioning.”***  
**(Scotty Smith)**

*Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.”*  
(Genesis 4:6-7)

Jesus, we're always vulnerable to the destructive power of sin, but it seems like we're **especially** vulnerable when there's some kind of emotional upheaval in our hearts. Like Cain, when we're angry and sulking about something or someone (Abel), we can be easily “had” by sin, giving into its desire—its seductive and destructive ways. O for the Day when the season of sin's pleasure will be ended forever (Heb. 11:25; Rev. 21:1-5).

Jesus, thank you for tenaciously pursuing us and asking searching questions like, “**Why are you angry?**”, or, “**Why are you so downcast?**”, or “What do you fear?”, or “Why are you so quiet and distant?” Though you know the answer to these and every question you ask, we probably don't. Gracious heart-knower, show us our hearts... show me my heart. What are these emotions really saying? What sins are waiting to take these feelings and have a destructive field day?

I wish we only had to think about the sin that's crouching just **outside** the door—the tempter and temptress without just waiting to pounce. But the truth is, Jesus, until you return to finish making all things new, we've got to be wise to the sin that's crouching **inside** of us, as well. Like Paul, the very things we **don't want to do**, we still do... and the very things **we want to do**, they're not easily done. We long for more freedom to live and to love as we're loved by you.

How I praise you there's no condemnation hanging over me for my sin... for you hung on the cross in my place. How I praise you that to be tempted is not an act of sin, for even you, Jesus, were tempted. I would despair if this were not the case. **You have mastered sin for us.** You've exhausted its penalty and broken its power. Sin will not have dominion over us ever again.

In this good news... in this gospel.. I trust today. As you show me my vulnerable heart, Jesus, show me your compassionate and loving heart **ten times over**. That will more than meet my need. So very Amen, I pray, in your strong, present and redeeming name.

One of the most convicting, yet precious passages in Scripture explains the reason behind God's command to not get angry in a gospel intimate, relational way:

“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. Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” (Ephesians 4:31-5:2)