



Part 1: Overcoming Anger

INTRODUCTION – Aggression, Judgment, and Gender

The Bible on Anger...

- God is angry about sin – his anger is mentioned over 50 times in the book of Romans alone (e.g., **Romans 1:18**).
- God's anger is an expression of his love (**Hebrews 12:5-11**; **1 John 4:16**).
- Anger is the emotion associated with judgment; therefore it is condemned when held onto by anyone who is not God (**Genesis 4:5-6**; **Colossians 3:8**; **Revelation 12:12**).
- When anger does arise within us, we are called to put it aside as quickly as possible (**Ephesians 4:25-32**; **James 1:19-20**).
- Instead, we are to follow the way of love (**1 Corinthians 13:4-7**) and the fruit of the Spirit (**Galatians 5:22-23**).

CAUTION: Evangelical church culture has unbiblically tolerated and even encouraged religious anger as evidence of a holy zeal, especially for men. Those who appear to preach from the Bible the most and the loudest have missed the target on this issue.

LOOK TO THE BOOK – The Plank-Eye Process

Matthew 7:1-6

- We are called to judge in the sense of discerning, assessing, and evaluating (see **Matthew 7:15-20**; **John 7:24**; **1 John 4:1**).
- We cannot judge a person's soul, which is God's role alone (**Matthew 13:24-30**; **Romans 2:1**; **14:4**, **10-13**; **1 Corinthians 4:5**; etc.)
- How we judge others will influence how God judges us (**Matthew 6:14-15**; **Luke 6:37-38**).
- Also see **John 9:41**; **1 Corinthians 11:31**; **James 3:13-4:12**; **1 John 1:8**

TAKEOUT – I'll Have That to Go Please

TAKEOUT #1 – Anger is inappropriate for "real" people

Anger is always, to some extent, a departure from reality. It assumes a position of exalted judgment that is not humbled by our own failure and need for mercy. Rejecting religious anger is biblically accurate, spiritually healthy, and psychologically freeing.

TAKEOUT #2 - The next time someone makes you angry...

A) Stop before reacting. B) Step outside of your reacting self and think from beyond your emotions, from your spirit, as the one observing and assessing your emotions. C) Try to imagine the perpetrator's perspective, motivation, and mentality. Recall a time when you have been in their shoes. D) Recall the forgiveness you received from God and offer the same to the person who has made you angry. E) Now, if they are a brother or sister, go and talk to them about their splinter, and your plank.

TAKEOUT #3 – Judgmental people are not following Jesus

Anger and judgment usually go together. Find a judgmental person or a person who is always looking for debate and you will often find a person with latent anger issues. The fact that many of these people are attracted to religious arguments and doctrinal debates does not make it better, but worse. Avoid angry arguments with debate-addicts.

TAKEOUT #4 – Christian ethics are for Christians

The commitment to help remove splinters from eyes is between brothers and sisters. If we lead with Christian morality in our conversations with our world, or try to enforce Christian standards on our culture, we will misrepresent the Gospel, and what is precious will be trampled.

TAKEOUT #5 – The Gospel is for open minds and soft hearts

Jesus regularly said his teachings were for "whoever has ears to hear". He never bothered to win an argument or persuade the mind of someone who wasn't showing signs of a soft heart and an open mind. If someone seems more dedicated to debate than dialogue, more eager to argue than learn, then stop investing your time. Somewhere someone else is ready to hear the gospel.

Matthew 15:14; **21:23-27**; **Luke 22:67-69**; **23:8-9**; **Acts 13:46**; **18:5-6**; **Proverbs 23:9**

CONCLUSION – Removing the Splinter

Galatians 6:1-2

HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS

Warming Up...

1. Do you recall the original "The Way" series? If so, what memories come to mind?
2. Have you noticed how religion excuses and even enflames anger rather than helps people let it go? Talk about some examples.

Look to the Book...

3. *Overcoming Anger*: Read **Ephesians 4:25-32**. a) What verse or idea stands out to you the most? Why? b) List as many principles as you can see in this passage that can help us deal with our anger rightly. c) Are there parallels between anger and lust/desire that can help us understand anger as sin and how to respond to it?
4. *Displacing Anger*: Read **1 Corinthians 13:4-7**; **Galatians 5:22-23**; **2 Peter 5-8**, in multiple translations if you have time. a) How might each quality listed help us displace any anger that arises within us? Talk about examples.
5. *Pearls To Pigs*: Read the Scriptures listed after TAKEOUT #5. a) What verse or idea stands out to you the most? Why? b) Notice that in **Matthew 21:23-27** Jesus used a technique to discern if his questioners really wanted to learn or just wanted to win an argument. Brainstorm what techniques you might use to discern the same thing with people in your life.

So What?...

6. Read **Galatians 6:1-2**. a) What are some practical ways we can share each other's burdens? b) What burden or sin or temptation or struggle do you need help with? c) Talk about practical ways you can help and encourage each other. Commit to a simple plan. And in this way "fulfill the law of Christ".