

FBC POWELL, 5-20-18 AM  
"Anger: The Poison that Destroys Families"  
Various Passages in Proverbs  
# 6 in Series, "Proverbs: Wisdom for the Family"

**Genesis 4:5b (NASB)** "...but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became **very angry** and his countenance fell."

**Genesis 4:8b (NASB)** "...and it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him."

"When anger gets the best of you it reveals the worst of you... It turns kindness into cruelty, love into hatred, radiance into remorse, and sweetness into sourness. When anger gets the best of you, it disfigures your face, defeats your faith, demoralizes your life... destroys your poise, and debilitates your strength. When anger gets the best of you it makes you a barrier, not a bridge; a hindrance, not a help; a stumbling block, not a stepping stone; a witness against Christ, not a witness for Christ."

- Michael Guido

**Proverbs 14:29 (NASB)** "He who is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who is quick-tempered exalts folly."

**Proverbs 15:18 (NASB)** "A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but the slow to anger calms a dispute."

**Proverbs 16:32 (NASB)** "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city."

**Proverbs 19:19 (NASB)** "A man of great anger will bear the penalty, for if you rescue *him*, you will only have to do it again."

**Proverbs 22:24 (NASB)** "Do not associate with a man *given* to anger; or go with a hot-tempered man."

"...when we get angry at a person, we are displeased with a choice they made and an act they performed. Anger always implies strong disapproval. If you are angry at me, you think I have done something I should not have done. This is why being angry with God is never right. It is wrong – always wrong – to disapprove of God because of what He does and permits. 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?' (Genesis 18:25). It is arrogant for finite, sinful creatures to disapprove of God for what He does and permits. We may weep over the pain. We may be angry at sin and Satan. But God does only what is right. **Revelation 16:7b (NASB)** 'Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments.'" - John Piper

**Job 13:15a (NKJV)** "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him..."

## I. The Categories of Anger

### A. Sanctified Anger

**Psalms 7:11 (NKJV)** "God is a just judge, and God is angry *with the wicked* every day."

**Ephesians 4:26a (NASB)** "Be angry, and *yet* do not sin..."

**1 Peter 2:23 (NASB)** "and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who judges righteously".

### B. Sinful Anger

**Ephesians 4:26b-27 (NASB)** <sup>26</sup>"...do not let the sun go down on your anger, <sup>27</sup>and do not give the devil an opportunity."

**Hebrews 12:15 (NASB)** "See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled."

## II. The Consequences of Sinful Anger

### A. Sinful Anger Is a Demonstration of Foolishness

**Proverbs 12:16 (NASB)** “A fool's anger is known at once, but a prudent man conceals dishonor.”

**Proverbs 14:17 (NASB)** “A quick-tempered man acts foolishly, and a man of evil devices is hated.”

### B. Sinful Anger Brings Destruction of Peace

**Proverbs 15:18 (NASB)** “A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but the slow to anger calms a dispute.”

**Proverbs 29:22 (NASB)** “An angry man stirs up strife, and a hot-tempered man abounds in transgression.”

### C. Sinful Anger Brings Desertion of Love

**Proverbs 21:19 (NKJV)** “Better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and angry woman.”

**Proverbs 22:24 (NASB)** “Do not associate with a man *given* to anger; or go with a hot-tempered man.”

### D. Sinful Anger Brings the Discipline of God

**Proverbs 19:19 (KJV)** “A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment: for if thou deliver *him*, yet thou must do it again.”

## III. The Control of Anger

**Proverbs 16:32 (NASB)** “He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city.”

### A. Classify It

### B. Confess It

**1 John 1:9 (NASB)** “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

### C. Crucify It

**Luke 9:23 (NASB)** “And He was saying to *them* all, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.’”

**Galatians 5:24 (NASB)** “Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”

**Romans 6:11 (NASB)** “Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

### D. Consider It

**Romans 6:11-14 (NASB)** <sup>11</sup>“Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. <sup>12</sup>Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, <sup>13</sup>and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. <sup>14</sup>For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.”

## Sermon 6: Anger: The Poison that Destroys Families

### Various Passages in Proverbs

Some have called our times “the age of rage”. Since sin came into the world, destructive, out of control anger has been a huge problem. The first example of the problem of anger is seen in the very first family – Adam and Eve’s sons, Cain and Abel. Genesis 4:5b: “...but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So, Cain became *very angry* and his countenance fell.” Genesis 4:8b: “...and it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.” As horrible as the consequences of anger were in the times of Adam and Eve, it is obvious that things haven’t gotten any better today. It seems that almost all the mass shootings and acts of terror have out of control anger as the main motivator. In 2017 it is estimated that one in four women experienced severe physical violence (driven by out of control anger) by “an intimate partner” [The *Safe Horizon* website] Almost every incident of domestic family violence is driven by out of control anger. That anger truly is a poison that is destroying families.

Have you ever noticed that people tend to lose the ability to be rational when they are extremely angry? I was reading about a NASCAR incident that took place several years ago. This is crazy! The second-place car was trying to pass the first-place car on the final stretch. The lead car drifted inside and forced the passing car into the infield grass. The offended driver got back on the track and caught up with the lead car just before it crossed the finish line and forced it into the outside wall. The two drivers jumped out of their cars and the fisticuffs were on. As they were punching away at each other, the third car driver cruised to an easy win. Out of control anger always makes us a loser! One man put it this way: “When anger gets the best of you it reveals the worst of you... It turns kindness into cruelty, love into hatred, radiance into remorse, and sweetness into sourness. When anger gets the best of you, it disfigures your face, defeats your faith, demoralizes your life... destroys your poise, and debilitates your strength. When anger gets the best of you it makes you a barrier, not a bridge; a hindrance, not a help; a stumbling block, not a stepping stone; a witness against Christ, not a witness for Christ.” [Michael Guido, *Taming the Temper*, page 1]

Charles Spurgeon defined anger as “temporary insanity.” So many families are broken by that “temporary insanity.”

In the NASB, I counted fifteen verses in the book of Proverbs that deal specifically with anger. Here are a few of those verses.

Proverbs 14:29: “He who is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who is quick-tempered exalts folly.”

Proverbs 15:18: “A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but the slow to anger calms a dispute.”

Proverbs 16:32: “He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city.”

Proverbs 19:19: “A *man of* great anger will bear the penalty, for if you rescue *him*, you will only have to do it again.”

Proverbs 22:24: “Do not associate with a man *given* to anger; or go with a hot-tempered man.”

Our focus in this message is anger directed toward family members but let me acknowledge that many people are also angry with God. I have read some of the silliest things people have written about anger toward God. They say something like, “It’s OK to be angry with God. He can handle it; he understands.” I want to say that if you are angry with God (usually because He didn’t choose to answer a prayer the way you desired Him to), you need to repent. It is not OK to be angry with God. John Piper has some clear words that express my heart about being angry with God.

...when we get angry at a person, we are displeased with a choice they made and an act they performed. Anger always implies strong disapproval. If you are angry at me, you think I have done something I should not have done. This is why being angry with God is never right. It is wrong – always wrong – to disapprove of God because of what He does and permits. “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?” (Genesis 18:25). It is arrogant for finite, sinful creatures to disapprove of God for what He does and permits. We may weep over the pain. We may be angry at sin and Satan. But God does only what is right. Revelation 16:7b: “Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments.”  
[John Piper]

If you are angry with God, it evidences that you have not surrendered to and trusted in the One who “does all things well”. The root of anger toward God is the twin sins of pride and unbelief. This anger indicates that we think that we know more than God knows about what needs to happen or not happen. It may be that some here are angry with God for a family breakup. It may be a spouse that cheated you, a parent who abandoned you, or any number of painful circumstances. The bottom line is that we must come to the place in our pain and disappointment that Job came to when he said in Job 13:15a (NKJV): “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him...”

## **I. The Categories of Anger**

Anger is like a fire. When a fire is in the fireplace on a cold winter night, it is good; it supplies warmth, coziness, and a sense of well-being. However, when fire is outside the fireplace, going up the curtains, and burning up the house, it is a really bad thing. Some anger is needed and called for. Some anger is extremely dangerous. Let’s look at the two broad categories of anger and make application to the family.

### **A. Sanctified Anger**

To be “sanctified” means to be set apart to God and His purposes. We know that all anger is not sin. Some anger is pleasing to God. God Himself is angry! Psalms 7:11 (NKJV): “God is a just judge, and God is angry *with the wicked* every day.” When God the Son, Jesus Christ walked on this earth, He displayed anger and yet He was without sin. When you read the accounts of Jesus turning over the tables of the money changers and chasing out the animals, I think it would be safe to say that He didn’t have a smile on His face. He was not out of control, but He certainly was angry. Many times, anger, sanctified (set apart to God) anger moves and motivates us to action. Ephesians 4:26a: “Be angry, and *yet* do not sin...” We should be angry over the legalized killing of children while they are in what ought to be the safest place on earth – their mother’s womb. That anger should not be out of control. It doesn’t justify physical harm to those who take

the lives of babies. It should never be an excuse for demeaning behavior, hatred, or unkindness toward those whose eyes are blinded or were blinded when they sinned against God and their unborn child. Our message is to be one of forgiveness and restoration through their repentance and receiving the powerful Gospel. These people are not the enemy; they are captives of the enemy – Satan. We should have a sanctified, God like anger, for those in authority who allow and even promote and even celebrate these murderous actions.

Having said these true things about anger, I believe that in our world and our homes, good anger among fallen people is somewhat rare. Analyze your anger. Are you angry over the same things God is angry over? If not, then what you think is sanctified anger is, in reality, sinful anger. Sanctified anger is always under control. It is never “righteous, God pleasing anger” when the person is controlled by their emotions instead of their will that is submitted to God’s will. Sanctified anger is unselfish. It is never only because our ego has been squeezed and our goals were blocked. Jesus was angry when His Father’s house that was meant to be a house of prayer had been turned into a circus, but when He went to the cross, we are told that in 1 Peter 2:23: “and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who judges righteously.” We must be anger analyzers.

## **B. Sinful Anger**

We all know someone who is like a loaded shotgun with a hair trigger. It doesn’t take much to set them off. Sinful anger is actually just the opposite of sanctified anger. Sinful anger is when my rights are not respected as I thought they should have been and my goals have been blocked. It is when I am no longer under the Holy Spirit’s control. Sinful anger is like an acid that scars the ones on whom it is poured and destroys the container in which it is stored.

Sinful anger opens the door to the devil and allows him an opportunity to wreak havoc in us and through us. Ephesians 4:26b-27: “...do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity.” Sinful anger that is harbored in us leads to bitterness that Hebrews 12:15 warns us about. “See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled.” That defiling, trouble causing bitterness starts out with sinful anger that is not repented of. In so many families, this sinful anger is as common as the sun rising and setting. So many homes have been controlled by anger so long that the members of the family begin to think it is normal.

## **II. The Consequences of Sinful Anger**

From the book of Proverbs, I want to share with you some of the many consequences of allowing sinful anger to set up a stronghold in your personal life and in your family.

### **A. Sinful Anger Is a Demonstration of Foolishness (Proverbs 12:16; 14:17)**

Proverbs 12:16: “A fool's anger is known at once, but a prudent man conceals dishonor.” Proverbs 14:17: “A quick-tempered man acts foolishly, and a man of evil devices is hated.” Both verses are telling us that a person who has sinful anger is a person who is out of control. We often call what is described in these verses “losing your temper” but, in reality, they have found their temper – found it real fast! The picture in these verses is an out of control situation. So many families are controlled by the anger of one or both parents. So many children live in fear of an anger filled abusive family member. This is an epidemic in our culture. What fools we become

when we continually succumb to the temptation of lashing out in anger. I've been a pastor for a long time and I can assure you that with this many people in a room, there are some families here that are dealing with out of control, foolish anger in their home. Don't buy in to the stereotype of an angry person with a scowl who yells at everybody. They may look pleasant and hold hands with their spouse in public, but that is not who they really are. I want to give you hope and give your beleaguered family hope that God has the solution.

### **B. Sinful Anger Brings Destruction of Peace (Proverbs 15:8; 29:22)**

Proverbs 15:18: "A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but the slow to anger calms a dispute." Proverbs 29:22: "An angry man stirs up strife, and a hot-tempered man abounds in transgression." The home of a Christian ought to be a refuge, a safe place where children are being disciplined by word and example. How incredibly sad when the home becomes a place of turmoil instead of peace. If you are an angry person who causes your family to exist in fear and turmoil because of your volatile temper, I urge you to stop the insanity today (in a moment I will tell you how).

### **C. Sinful Anger Brings Desertion of Love (Proverbs 21:19; 22:24)**

Proverbs 21:19 (NKJV): "Better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and angry woman." Proverbs 22:24: "Do not associate with a man *given* to anger; or go with a hot-tempered man." No one – I mean no one wants to be around an angry person. If you are an angry parent, and angry spouse, an angry employee, you will likely lose the respect and care of your spouse, children, and coworkers. Unless you repent, your own family will be glad when you die. How incredibly sad!

### **D. Sinful Anger Brings the Discipline of God (Proverbs 19:19)**

Proverbs 19:19 (KJV): "A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment: for if thou deliver *him*, yet thou must do it again." If you are an angry person who has failed to love your family by putting them above yourself, you will be dealt with by God. He knows how to get your attention and to break you. To fall under the disciplining hand of God is much worse than the hand of worldly authorities.

## **III. The Control of Anger (Proverbs 16:32)**

Proverbs 16:32: "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city." For this last point, I want to move to the New Testament and the power of the Gospel to see how we can "rule our spirit". What Proverbs 16:32 is saying is that it is easier to capture an enemy city than it is to "rule [your] spirit." In other words, it is impossible to control your anger in the power of the flesh. As I prepared this message, I looked on the *Psychology Today* web-site. Their counsel wasn't horrible. But it was like putting Vicks VapoRub on a terminal open cancer. Secular psychology can put a band aid on your anger, but secular psychology has no permanent fix. What man cannot do, our God can do!!! He can heal a spouse or child who has been deeply scarred by the out of control anger of a spouse or parent.

He can also give victory to someone who has been controlled by sinful anger for most of their life. I am going to spend most of the rest of my time on the angry person, but I want to say a few words to those who have been scarred by growing up in a family or being married to a person who is controlled by sinful anger.

Allow me to say first to wives, if the anger leads to physical abuse get out of the house and call the authorities. If the spouse is a church member, this abuse becomes a matter of church discipline. But what if it's anger coming out in hatefulness, yelling, and constant unkindness? I am not implying that this is *no big deal*. The first thing you must beware of and avoid is bitterness toward the one who is always angry. Second, pray and recruit others to pray with you for them. Third, this also is a matter for church discipline. Let one of the elders know. We will make a contact. This is a serious issue that the church is to deal with firmly.

Let's focus on when you are struggling with anger yourself. I am not giving you a little formula that you can do a "push, pull, click, click" and see immediate results. Here are some principles to apply to your life by the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

### **A. Classify It**

What kind of anger is it? Is it sanctified anger? If so, ask the Holy Spirit's guidance to show you how to turn it to prayer and perhaps action. If it is sinful anger, stop all efforts to rationalize it, blame others for it or minimize the evil of it. Call it what it is – sin. Maybe it was because your pride was pricked, your feelings were hurt, or your goals were blocked. Never try to justify sinful anger!

### **B. Confess It**

Confession is more than admitting you were wrong. The word for "confess" in the New Testament literally means to agree with. Confession involves looking at our sin and then calling it what God calls it. Everything is stripped away; every excuse is rejected; every justification is pushed aside. 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Genuine confession assumes genuine repentance and genuine repentance assumes genuine confession. To repent literally means to turn around or turn away from sin. That involves confession (agreeing with and calling it what God calls it).

### **C. Crucify It**

Luke 9:23: "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me." The "cross" is not a burden you must bear; it is an instrument of death! Galatians 5:19-21 lists some typical fleshly deeds that must be nailed to the cross with Jesus. In verse 20 we see strife, outbursts of anger, and disputes. All of those involve sinful anger. Taking up our cross involves putting our goals, our dreams, our vision, all of which doesn't mesh with God's plan and God's path of the cross. Galatians 5:24: "Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." Romans 6:11: "Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus."

### **D. Consider It**

Romans 6:11-14:

Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin *as* instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

The word translated “consider” means to reckon or count as true because God says it is true. By faith, I consider my flesh to be dead to sinful anger and say “no” in the power of the Holy Spirit to that anger that has been controlling me. As I walk in the fullness and power of the Holy Spirit, I walk in victory over this enslaving sin called anger.

## **Conclusion**

You don't have to live as a slave to anger (or any other sin for that matter). In Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit who lives in you, there can be permanent change in your life. When it comes to this poison that destroys families, classify it (call it what it is – sin), confess it, crucify it, and consider it as having no power over you because you are in Christ and the empowering Spirit of Christ is in you and will live out Christ's life through you. That is a picture of victory!

### **NASB** (New American Standard Bible)

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