



**Proverbs 13:10, 14:17, Ephesians 4:26**  
**“God’s Design for Emotional Stability”**  
**By Mike Clark**

**Proverbs 3:5-8, 13** - *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones. Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding.*

**Proverbs 13:10** - *By insolence comes nothing but strife, but with those who take advice is wisdom.*

**Proverbs 14:17** - *A man of quick temper acts foolishly, and a man of evil devices is hated.*

**Ephesians 4:26** - *Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger.*

## **INTRODUCTION –**

In 2003, a movie came out called “Anger Management” with Adam Sandler and Jack Nicholson. Did you see this movie?

The movie is about a businessman who is sentenced to an anger management program after an incident on an airplane under a renowned therapist, Nicholson, who has some unconventional methods.

Nicholson imposes radical around the clock therapy by living with Sandler and even going to work with him and constantly tries to push Sandler’s buttons which only cause him to be passive aggressive.

Nicholson tells his patients that when you feel anger coming on, you say goosfraba or goosblahblah. That’s a word that Eskimo mothers use to calm their children Nicholson says.

Or if you’re around my age or older, you may remember the famous tirade of John Macenroe yelling at the judge that the ball was on the line!

We hear about the increases of road rage where some people even lose their lives as a result.

Before I was a Christian, I myself, struggled with anger. I struggled with easily getting angered while driving and I would say that it’s only by God’s grace that I was able to overcome that.



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Now that doesn't mean that I don't struggle with it at times now, especially when I'm late to get somewhere and someone is slowing you up.

But you have to realize getting into an argument with someone is not worth it, especially with the prevalence of people carrying guns in their cars.

It's not worth losing your life over traffic headaches.

But we live in a time where anger is widespread in our society. And it's not just the world, but Christians struggle with anger as well.

And the world's solutions to anger is to punch things (not people they say) and yell loudly when you are punching to get it out of your system.

Psychologists encourage their patients to manager their anger through expressing, suppressing, and calming.

But secular psychology fails to understand the nature of mankind.

We are fallen and sinful by nature. Secular psychology is powerless to address the sin/heart issues and to effect true inward spiritual change.

At the heart of anger is this - that you want something too much and are not getting it.

A good question to ask yourself when you feel yourself becoming angry is "What is it that I want so much?"

When we believe that others are failing to meet what we believe as legitimate desires, we can become angry.

And a legitimate desire can become a sinfully idolatrous desire when it becomes a controlling desire.

And we know a desire is idolatrous when we are willing to sin in order to get what we want or we become sinfully angry if we don't get what we want.

But we have to give our desires to God as we seek our ultimate satisfaction in Him.

And the question we have to ask is how can a sinfully angry person become a person of grace? The answer is that the Gospel of Jesus Christ transforms angry people into gracious people.



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The gospel is the key to overcoming anger. As Christians we have to remember what God has done for us.

We need to fill our minds with biblical truth so that we can overcome anger in our hearts and become people of grace.

We need to realize that we are not God and we are not the Judge. We need to have the same mentality as Paul did when he saw himself as the chief of sinners.

We need to remember that we have been forgiven an overwhelming debt. When we do that, our hearts will be moved to show grace to those who have wronged us.

When we remember and meditate on the mercy that God has shown us at such a great price by which Jesus paid our infinite debt on the cross, we can't stay angry at people.

And remember this – that when people fail you and circumstances go against you, God is at work. He uses trials to produce maturity and Christlikeness in His people.

Now let's talk firstly by defining what anger is. Psychologists might define anger as an emotional state that varies in intensity from mild irritation to intense fury and rage.

From a biblical perspective we could say that anger is our whole-personed active response of negative moral judgment against perceived evil.

In other words, anger is an emotion which arises out of a judgment.

All of us have a sense of justice because we are made in God's image. But because we are fallen, our view of justice is distorted.

And because of the fall, we are usually most offended by the injustice of our personal rights being violated.

Anger also has a physical aspect to it. We have both a body and a soul. What affects the soul also affects the body and vice versa.

Physically speaking when you get angry, what happens? – Your heart rate and blood pressure go up as do the levels of your energy hormones such as adrenaline.



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We see an example of this in Genesis 4 when Cain became angry and what happened? – The Scripture says his countenance fell.

Other examples include the body trembling or nostrils being flared or grinding teeth. Anger can also lead to breaking several of God's commandments.

In anger people have stolen, lied, and murdered.

Anger is often related to other harmful emotions such as bitterness, depression, anxiety, and fear.

And anger can often lead to stress, lack of peace, financial loss, and broken relationships as a result. Angry people will often find themselves alone.

Now just to review once again, we began in our study in Proverbs 3 where we learned about the true pursuit of happiness.

Pastor Jody taught us that it all starts with trusting God.

Then we went to Daniel 4 and talked about pride versus humility. In week 3 we saw how Solomon under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote about God's sovereignty and specifically the sovereign peace of God.

And for the past 3 weeks Pastor Jody has showed us God's design for communication, work, and sex.

Now we come to God's design for emotions, and we're going to learn what Proverbs teaches us about our emotions.

Now the main point that I want you to see today is that our emotions are a gift from God and our emotions can be used for both good and evil. And Proverbs helps us see how emotions, and specifically anger can be used for both good and bad.

**Point 1 – Pride leads to conflict, but humility leads to wisdom.**

***Proverbs 13:10 - By insolence comes nothing but strife, but with those who take advice is wisdom.***

Have you ever noticed that the angry person is usually self-centered and proud? And the angry person also tends to minimize his or her own sin and then magnify the sins of others.



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Now notice the contrasts here in this verse. The first is insolence or pride and is contrasted with those who take advice.

Prideful people usually have an exaggerated opinion of their self-importance and therefore refuse to take counsel.

**Proverbs 21:24** - *"Scoffer" is the name of the arrogant, haughty man who acts with arrogant pride.*

Strife is also contrasted with wisdom.

Wisdom is characterized by peace and strife does not lead to wisdom.

Strife refers to the way guilty people with a huge ego respond to moral rebuke.

Where there is strife, there is usually pride.

**1 Timothy 6:3-4** - *If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, <sup>4</sup> he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions.*

A prideful person speaks only from above and doesn't listen. Rebuking him results in fruitless and sometimes violent arguments and a disturbed community.

That's why Proverbs 26:4 says, "Answer not a fool according to his folly."

The arrogant fool is neither prepared nor able to take up better convictions than his own and therefore to give in and receive correction.

**Proverbs 17:14** - *The beginning of strife is like letting out water, so quit before the quarrel breaks out.*

**James 3:13-14** - <sup>13</sup> *Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. <sup>14</sup> But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth.*

And so with those who take advice or counsel, these have the modesty to acknowledge the limitations of their knowledge and the humility to allow themselves to be corrected, criticized, and led to a better plan of action.



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**Proverbs 12:15-16** – *The way of a fool is right in his own eyes but a wise man listens to advice. The vexation of a fool is known at once, but the prudent ignores an insult.*

With those who take advice there is wisdom, the knowledge of reality and right order and acting accordingly which leads to peace.

**Point 2 – Losing self-control leads to foolishness and enmity with people.**

**Proverbs 14:17** - *A man of quick temper acts foolishly, and a man of evil devices is hated.*

The Bible has many examples of people being sinfully angry.

There's the story of Haman's anger for Mordecai in the book of Esther. King Saul in his anger tries to not only kill David several times, but also hurls a spear at his own son Jonathan in a fit of rage.

**Proverbs 29:22** - *A man of wrath stirs up strife, and one given to anger causes much transgression.*

A quick-tempered person who acts rashly or hotheadedly commits foolishness.

Foolishness would include many specific acts of moral insolence.

This kind of person is undisciplined and out of control. His or her unpredictable and passionate hot-head clouds his judgment and robs him of all sense of proportion so that they overreact, bringing ruin on the community and/or himself.

**Proverbs 15:18** - *A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention.*

This is the opposite of a quiet man who doesn't err in anger.

In addition, a man of evil devices calculates how to achieve his malevolent goal and deliberately brings it to pass.

The man of evil devices, in contrast with the quick-tempered person, is disciplined and keeps a tight rein on his emotions.

This kind of person's purposeful cool head enables him to think clearly with forethought and act in cold blood to disadvantage others for his own sake, incurring their enmity.



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**Isaiah 32:7-8** - *As for the scoundrel—his devices are evil; he plans wicked schemes to ruin the poor with lying words, even when the plea of the needy is right.*

The quick-tempered person fails openly and loudly, while the person of evil devices fails secretly and indirectly.

Both are fools because they harm both themselves and others.

And the Scripture warns us about these kind of people -

**Proverbs 22:24-25** - *Make no friendship with a man given to anger, nor go with a wrathful man, lest you learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare.*

Don’t associate with people like that. They will only bring trouble.

And listen to Proverbs 6 where we read how the Lord feels about the quick-tempered man and the man of evil devices.

**Proverbs 6:16-19** - *There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.*

These things are an abomination to the Lord!

**Point 3 – Righteous anger is a good thing, but all anger should be dealt with before the end of the day.**

**Ephesians 4:26** - *Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger.*

“Be angry” is from the Greek word Parorgismos. It’s not momentary outward, boiling-over rage or inward, seething resentment, but rather a deep-seated, determined and settled conviction.

It can represent an emotion as good or bad.

Paul may be legitimatizing righteous indignation, anger at evil, at that which is done against the Person of the Lord and against His will and purpose.

It’s the anger of the Lord’s people who hate evil and abhor injustice, immorality, and ungodliness of all kinds.



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**Moses was angry with Pharaoh in Exodus 11:8 and it says he went out in hot anger with Pharaoh because he continued to harden his heart against him and the Lord.**

**Later in Exodus 32, Moses showed righteous anger at the Israelites for making the golden calf.**

**Exodus 32:19** - *And as soon as he came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses' anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain.*

**Jesus expressed righteous anger at the hard heartedness of the Pharisees who resented His healing the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath.**

**Mark 3:4-5** - *<sup>4</sup> And he said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. <sup>5</sup> And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.*

**Jesus also drove the moneychangers out of the temple in John 2:15. Jesus displayed righteous anger when he denounced the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 11.**

**Jesus was even angry with his disciples -**

**Mark 10:13-14** - *<sup>13</sup> And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. <sup>14</sup> But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.*

**Jesus was always angered when the Father was maligned or when others were mistreated, but He was never selfishly angry at what was done against Him, which really is the measure of righteous anger.**

**Hebrews 12:2-3** - *<sup>2</sup> Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. <sup>3</sup> Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself.*

**1 Peter 2:23** - *<sup>23</sup> When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.*





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Anger that is sin, on the other hand, is anger that is self-defensive and self-serving, that is resentful of what is done against oneself. It's the anger that leads to murder and to God's judgment.

Unrighteous anger is anger that focuses not on God and His kingdom and His rights and concerns, but on you and your kingdom and your rights and concerns.

Jesus taught that sinful anger is murdering someone in their heart.

*Matthew 5:21-22 - <sup>21</sup> "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' <sup>22</sup> But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire.*

The apostle John said that everyone who hates his brother is a murderer (1 John 3:15).

Anger that is selfish, undisciplined, and vindictive is sinful and has no place even temporarily for a Christian.

But anger that is unselfish and based on love for God and concern for others is not only allowed but commanded. Ask yourself – Am I angry with the things that anger God?

Later at the end of Ephesians 4, Paul continues the put off, put on concept that he talks about several times in verses 25-32.

*Ephesians 4:31-32 - <sup>31</sup> Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. <sup>32</sup> Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

So, we put off bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, and malice and we put on kindness, tenderheartedness, and forgiveness.

*Proverbs 19:11 - Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense.*

But even righteous anger can easily turn to bitterness, resentment, and self-righteousness.



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Even the best motivated anger can sour and so we are called to put it aside at the end of the day as verse 27 tells us.

If anger is prolonged, you may begin to seek vengeance and then violate the principles of –

**Romans 12:17-21** - *<sup>17</sup> Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. <sup>18</sup> If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. <sup>19</sup> Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." <sup>20</sup> To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." <sup>21</sup> Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

Because anger may come in a moment and overtake a believer, and because it has such a strong tendency to grow and fester.....

..... it should be dealt with immediately, confessed, and forsaken and given to God for cleansing before the end of the day.

Whether legitimate or not, if it's courted, Satan will take advantage of us and will feed our anger with self-pity, pride, self-righteousness.....

....., vengeance, defense of our rights, and every other sort of selfish sin and violation of God's holy will.

Now by way of some application, I would like to give you some practical ways you can overcome your anger. And the following is from one of my seminary professors, Dr. Jim Newheiser.

**1. God's grace enables you to exercise patience and self-control**

**Proverbs 19:11** - *Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense.*

**Proverbs 14:29** - *Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding.*

**Proverbs 16:32** - *Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.*

**James 1:19-21** - *<sup>19</sup> Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; <sup>20</sup> for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of*



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*God. <sup>21</sup> Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*

People will say that they can't control their temper, or that they aren't angry, they're just frustrated. But in reality, they sinfully choose not to control their anger. They will choose to do so only under certain circumstances.

For example, have you ever thought about how someone might say they would never raise his or her voice to their boss at work, but easily seem to give in to that around family members or friends?

Others may blame their circumstances or people for their anger. But these things don't make us sinfully angry, and are just exposing the sin that is already in our hearts.

You will also often hear someone say I didn't mean what I said, but in reality, we usually meant every word of it. That's why we have to be so very careful with our words.

Hateful words can never be taken back and can create wounds that are very difficult to heal.

When we sin with our words towards someone, we need to be quick to repent and ask for forgiveness and pray for the Lord to guard our tongues.

**2. God's grace enables you to speak with gentleness and grace.**

*Proverbs 15:1 - A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.*

Gentleness and humility can be disarming when other people are angry at you.

*Ephesians 4:29 - Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.*

**3. God's grace enables you to humbly receive correction even when done hurtfully.**

You might respond something like this – I am sure that you are right that I fall short of what I should be in so many ways and I am amazed at God's grace and I want to learn how to better serve Christ.



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**4. God's grace enables you to show love to those who hurt you.**

Think about Joseph – he forgave his brothers for the evil they did to him, but he not only forgave them but showed them great love and kindness.

We also need to remember the principle of Romans 12 -

*Romans 12:19-21 - <sup>19</sup> Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it<sup>[1]</sup> to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." <sup>20</sup> To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." <sup>21</sup> Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

**5. God's grace enables you to pursue the restoration of those who hurt you.**

*Galatians 6:1-2 - Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. <sup>2</sup> Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*

Anger may usefully energize us to address problems that we would otherwise ignore.

And if I can add a few more things here before we close -

Don't be quarrelsome.

*Proverbs 17:14 - The beginning of strife is like letting out water, so quit before the quarrel breaks out.*

*Proverbs 26:20 - For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, quarreling ceases.*

When you get into an argument, the most important issue is not the topic of the argument, but the way you treat each other in an argument. As Pastor Jody stated a few weeks ago, angry words can be felt long after the argument is over.

Deal with anger and conflict quickly.

*Matthew 5:23-24 - <sup>23</sup> So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, <sup>24</sup> leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.*



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Sometimes it may seem easier to leave conflict unresolved and deal with it at another time (and there are some occasions where that might be best, by waiting until the next day, but not too long).

But if you wait too long, the problem may have been forgotten, but the heart issues are still there. That can produce bitterness to grow and cause resentment.

Prepare for temptation.

**Proverbs 21:5** - *The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance.*

We need plans on how to deal with tempting situations. One possible plan is to memorize passages of Scripture that deal with anger and recall those when you feel anger rising up in your heart.

And lastly continually seek God's help through prayer.

Now before we close, I do want to address one question that may be on some of your minds and it's this –

Is it ever permissible to be angry with God?

People can become angry at God because they believe God didn't do what they thought he should have done or should not have done.

Think about the prophet Jonah. He was angry with God because God showed mercy to Israel's enemies and when the plant that gave him shade died and God showed remarkable restraint in His answer.

But I would submit to you that it's never ok to be angry with God. When we do that, we make the presumption that God has somehow been unjust.

In addition, we place ourselves above God as His judge when we are angry with him. That is both wrong and dangerous.

Listen, God has every right to be angry with us and to punish us for our sins.

God is angry with the wicked every day but remains holy. His anger is truly righteous indignation all the time.

Think about how God's anger burned with the Israelites several times and put many to death.



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**Romans 6:23 – *The wages of sin is death.***

Listen, we are free to respectfully express our questions to God and to weep in our sorrows as Habakkuk did, but ultimately, we have to submit ourselves to Him who is both sovereign and good, even when we don't understand His ways.

**Isaiah 55:8-9 - *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.***

And beloved yes God has righteous indignation with sinners, but he also shows amazing patience with sinners.

God has every right to throw the entire human race into hell.

But instead of doing that, He sent His Son to die on the cross so that whoever believes in Him will not perish but will have eternal life.

That is the good news of the gospel. When you repent of your sins and trust in what Jesus did on the cross, God is no longer your enemy, but your friend.

He will never be angry with you if you trust in Him.

Now that doesn't mean that as believers when we stumble into sin, that he is angry with us, but he can be displeased and as the Scriptures say, we can grieve the Holy Spirit.

But because he loves us, he disciplines us during those times.

But for those who refuse to believe in Him and accept His offer of free grace, if you die in your sins, never repenting or believing on Christ, then God's anger will forever be poured out upon you in eternal torment.

So, I plead with you, if that's you and maybe your watching online and that's you, I plead with you to repent and trust in Christ and receive God's forgiveness today.

Prayer