

Proverbs A La Carte: Anger

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Date: 16 August 2020

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[0:00] Well, as I'm sure many of you saw on the news or maybe saw in person this week, there was a significant fire in downtown Kenosha or uptown Kenosha, I should say, where multiple businesses and apartments were damaged at 22nd Avenue and 63rd Street.

According to the Kenosha News, there were nine fire departments that had to respond. It was a spectacle. And apparently the fire started. It's not confirmed yet, but apparently the fire started because someone was burning incense in one of the businesses in the early morning hours, and it turned into something disastrous.

So what started out as something legitimate and healthy and enjoyable turned into a raging, destructive force.

You know, anger and fire have a lot in common. If someone gets angry, they can be described as heated or fuming or fiery or inflamed or a hothead.

And there's a good reason for this. Both fire and anger are completely appropriate and constructive if experienced in the proper way.

[1:16] The fire on the stove that you use to cook a meal that your family gathers around and laughs and talks around is very useful. Anger, if rightly felt and rightly expressed, is useful.

It goads us into action to expose injustice or to address ungodliness in ourselves or in others. But the problem is both these two phenomena, anger and fire, are easily let go and have free reign, and the results are disastrous.

Burning incense can turn into a blaze that destroys lives and livelihoods. And the emotion of anger, if it's allowed, can also be just as damaging to individuals, to families, and to communities.

The past five months have had lots of fuel for anger. We see or we feel outrage, whether on social media or in the news, from all corners.

Everybody seems mad about something these days. And if it's not on social media or in the news, we see it in our families, differences of opinion within our families or within our church body.

[2:37] Wherever there is a difference of viewpoint or there's perceived slights or injustices, wherever there's overreaction, reaction, anger is not too far away.

And if there is anger, there's usually hurt and grievance and some form of relational damage.

Church, we really need God's wisdom to help us understand and address our anger.

If you've been around the past several months, you know we've been in the book of Proverbs for a while. It's this treasure chest full of wisdom to help us learn the skill of living well in God's world.

And we all need that, particularly in this area. And today, we're kind of shifting our series a little bit. We're kicking off our series on the second half of the book of Proverbs.

We're going to call it Proverbs a la carte, where we get to look at different topics through the lens of God's wisdom in the book of Proverbs, particularly in the second half of the book of Proverbs, chapters 10 to 31.

[3:41] So what does the second half of the book of Proverbs have to tell us about anger? Before we kind of dive into an assortment of wise sayings we see in Proverbs about anger, we need to kind of just be on the same page of what anger is.

So let me just give Billy's definition of anger. Anger is a passionate emotion triggered by a perceived wrongdoing. Anger is a passionate emotion triggered by a perceived wrongdoing.

Whenever we as humans perceive something wrong being done against us or others, anger tends to rise. Someone I read this week called anger the moral emotion.

It's pretty helpful. Anger has a lot to do with our sense of right and wrong, doesn't it? It has a lot to do with our morality. Whenever someone does something to us or to others that registers to us as wrong or offensive, an angry emotional reaction follows.

Sometimes that's good, but most of the time in our experience in the Bible we see it's not. So with that working definition, let's dive into Proverbs and see, okay, how can we handle this passionate emotion that is triggered by a perceived wrongdoing?

[5:01] First, I want to move into five principles that we see come out of the book of Proverbs, five principles that kind of the book, the bosom of Proverbs raises for us.

First, first, is this. Everybody experiences anger. Everybody experiences anger. Now that first principle is not necessarily like right on the surface of Proverbs, but we can use what we see in Proverbs to springboard into what Scripture tends to say about anger as a whole.

I'm going to listen. I'm going to read three Proverbs for us. And as I listen, kids, adults, everyone, listen for a phrase that these three Proverbs have in common.

First, Proverbs 14, 29. Proverbs 14, 29. Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly.

Now, Proverbs 15, 18. Just flip a page or so. Proverbs 15, 18. A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention.

[6:15] Okay? Last one. Proverbs 19, verse 11. Proverbs 19, verse 11. Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense.

So shout it out. What was the phrase they had in common? Slow to anger. Well done. Yes, that's a good phrase. Slow to anger. But it's even more fun in Hebrew. In Hebrew, what is translated into English slow to anger is actually long of nose.

It's pretty good. Isn't that great? Now, why long of nose? Is that talking about Pinocchio? Well, I don't think it's Pinocchio. It's talking about, well, when someone gets angry, their nostrils flare, or their nose snorts in anger.

You've probably seen this in others. We probably don't have a mirror raised in front of us when we do it in ourselves, but believe me, you do it too. When someone gets angry, you see it in their nose. Their nostrils flare.

Their nose contorts. Someone who is long of nose means it takes a long time for their nostrils to flare.

[7:27] It takes a long time for them to get to the point where they're snorting in rage or their nose is contorting. So the next time you see someone start to get angry, just say, hey, hey, slow down.

Get a long nose. Be slow to anger. Well, the very fact that these proverbs are in the Bible, we're going to talk about the slow to anger piece here in a little bit, but the very fact that these problems are in our Bible, be slow to anger versus being a hothead, it implies that we as humans all experience anger.

Most of that anger, according to the testimony of Scripture, is sinful. Most of the time when people get angry and we see in the Bible bad things happen. Some of it can be righteous.

Let me give you an example of both. The very first sin that is committed outside the Garden of Eden is Cain's murder of Abel in Genesis chapter 4. What prompts Cain's murder of Abel?

Well, Abel's sacrifice is approved of by God because he does a good job. He rightfully honors God with his giving of his sacrifice. Cain's is not.

[8:38] And Cain recognizes that Abel did a good job. He didn't. And for that reason, he is jealously angry at his brother and implied perhaps at God.

And Cain, the Bible says, got very angry and his face fell. And God stepped in and engaged him and warned him. He said, don't do anything in your anger. Sin is crouching at the door.

It's ready to pounce on you. Don't do anything with that. And Cain ignores it and he does. Sinful anger is, from the very beginning of the Bible, very present.

And we see it happen often. But there's a few instances of people using their anger rightly. Moses, for example, coming down in Exodus 32 from Mount Sinai.

And he sees what the children of Israel are doing, worshiping a golden calf instead of God, who's displaying his glory right there on the mountain for them. And he takes the Ten Commandments in his hands and in righteous indignation smashes the commandments of God that he's just received written by God's own hand.

[9:43] Because he's jealously angry that the people have blasphemed God's glory in this terrible way. So that was an appropriate expression of anger. It symbolized what Israel had just done.

They had smashed God's commands. So anger, whether sinful or righteous, is common to humanity. This is because we are made to be relational creatures who relate to one another through our emotions.

Imagine if we were all Spocks. If we were all like Commander Spock in Star Wars and we didn't feel much emotion, we wouldn't be relating to each other in a very, at least, interesting way, would we? But we are made as a relational and emotional creatures because we are made in God's image. And God himself is a relational being. He experiences emotion as he relates to himself and as he relates to us.

In the Bible, God experiences a wide range of emotions. He sings for joy over his redeemed people in Zephaniah 3. Or he is grieved and sorrowful in Genesis 6 when he sees what humanity is doing.

[10:53] Or in Proverbs 6, it says these are the sins that God hates. And all throughout the Bible, we see God experiencing holy anger over the sin and rebellion of his people.

Anger is an emotion that's hardwired into us by our good creator because we are made in his image. And I'm guessing at this, but it seems that the reason God might have put anger as a legitimate emotion within human beings, made in his image, is because he wants, in the same way that he wants, that wrongdoing registers deeply with him, he wants wrongdoing to register deeply with us too.

Because it is against his holy character. I remember in college watching the movie Hotel Rwanda. And I remember seeing, it's a true story of the Rwandan genocide back in the 90s.

And I remember being seething with anger at seeing this horrific thing happening. And it was right that I felt that anger in the face of such injustice and wrongdoing.

I was feeling the same anger that God was feeling, to a different degree, of course. But it was right for me, for that wrongdoing to register for me. But the problem is, our hearts are corrupted by sin.

[12:13] And therefore, we don't register. The things that register as wrongdoing to us are not the same that register as wrongdoing to God. Our sinful hearts value and treasure and worship self by default, not God.

And therefore, whenever self doesn't get what self wants, we perceive that wrong, we perceive that as wrong, and anger kicks in and often leads to destructive consequences. We don't get angry over the things that God gets angry at.

We tend to get angry at the things that are our own version of wrongdoing and right and wrong, with ourselves at the center, not with God at the center. That's why God wants us to hear his wisdom in the book of Proverbs, to be slow to anger.

So on that note, let's move to the second principle, which is this. First, everyone experiences anger. Second, anger must be ruled. Anger must be ruled.

We're going to spend a little more time here, as this really is quite important, not just for Proverbs, but for our lives. Take a look at Proverbs 16.32. Proverbs 16.32.

[13:17] There's that phrase again, slow to anger, long of nose.

Well, how does one slow down one's temper? Or if you prefer, how does one lengthen one's nose? Look at the last half of that proverb, he who rules his spirit.

There it is. Anger must be ruled. It must be governed. It must be controlled and restrained. But by what? Well, this particular proverb compares the one who rules his spirit with a warrior or with a military general who captures a city with armed force.

So, in other words, just as it takes discipline and training and energy to conquer an enemy stronghold, it requires the same to govern your emotions. In fact, this proverb seems to imply that it takes more discipline, more training, more energy to conquer self than it does to conquer another.

Well, that sounds good, but it also sounds hard. How do we do that? Does Proverbs help us out with some practical tips for how to govern our emotions, especially our anger?

[14:30] Well, it does. Flip a few pages over to Proverbs 19.11. Proverbs 19.11. Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense.

So, one of the ways we must rule our anger, according to Proverbs, is by overlooking offenses. That is not easy. Even in the most trivial of ways, it is not easy. For example, I have this really bad habit.

I have this since I began driving. If I am driving my car, and I see someone speeding up behind me in my rearview mirror, and I know that they are going to try to pass me, I do this terrible thing. My instant reaction in my anger is to slow down. Apparently, I am not the only one who does this. In my anger, I perceive an offensive action occurring behind me, and I instantly assume the role of judge.

I don't want to overlook the offense. I want to punish the offense. So, I have judged them for their wrongdoing, speeding, speeding behind me, really, and I deal out the punishment.

[15:39] I make them slow down by slowing down myself. Isn't that terrible? That is ugly. But what wisdom does God's word give to me? Overlook the offense, Billy.

Don't get hot and bothered. God's the judge. He will deal with their wrongdoing as he sees fit, if it is indeed wrongdoing. I need to overlook the offense, and by doing so, my nose lengthens.

My temper slows down. I show that I have insight and good sense. But this is much harder if the offense is personal, and it's from someone we love.

And it's even harder still if the offense is repeated chronically by someone we love. And yet, God's word compels us to seek to preserve peace with everyone who offends us, to keep a tight grip on our anger.

And a compelling reason for this can be found a few pages back in Proverbs 14, 29. Proverbs 14, 29. Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly.

[16:47] The person who is slow to anger, who rules their spirit, has great understanding. That word understanding is not just talking about mental capacity. It has more to do with a kind of competence and skill that helps a person get far in life.

In other words, the people who rule their anger, who govern their intense emotions, typically, they do better in life. They get further in life because they don't make rash, regrettable decisions in the moment because of their anger.

So instead of exploding at the waitress for dropping the salad in their lap, they respond graciously and their co-workers and their boss, who is at the dinner table, they notice.

The esteem with which this person is held goes up. Things go better for this person. Instead of raging at their children for being childish, the wise person who has slowed to anger builds a culture of mutual love and enjoyment in their home and trust is built for years to come with their children.

But if anger has free reign, relationships are harmed, opportunities are wasted, and most importantly, God's righteousness is not accomplished.

[17:58] The little book of James in your New Testament is kind of like the New Testament counterpart to Proverbs. It's a wonderfully helpful book. And listen to James 1, 19 and 20. Did you hear that little word?

The reason we are to govern our emotions is because human anger doesn't lead to what's right in God's sight. Well, why is that? Well, as we've already seen, we tend to think that if our children disrespect us or if our parents tell us what to do or if that person is taking too long in the checkout line, then the great offense is being done against us.

So we get angry. It offends our sense of righteousness. So we get angry and we think or we say or we do things that are really actually wrong in God's sight. Sometimes if my kids disobey me, I get angry.

My children disobey me. That is wrong in God's sight. They've disobeyed the fifth commandment, honor your father and mother. But I'm not angry because they disobeyed God's commandment.

I'm angry because they disrespected me. God doesn't have anything to do with it. That's the difference between sinful anger and righteous indignation. Even if you think you're getting angry for

the right reasons, you should be very suspicious of your anger.

[19:23] Our hearts are incredibly deceitful because of sin. It has a stronger hold than you think it does. The love of self goes very, very deep. So we must be slow to anger.

We must rule it and govern it, overlook offenses, and doing our utmost to preserve peace. And if you do get angry, and you will, you need to be careful to cool down before speaking and acting to address the wrongdoing.

Remember, the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord. The way to be wise with our anger is by taking God's commands very seriously to love our neighbor and be more concerned about loving and honoring him than exacting a kind of vigilante justice with our anger.

So, everybody experiences anger. Anger must be ruled. And now, thirdly, unruly anger destroys peace and leads to strife.

Unruly anger destroys peace and leads to strife. Take a look at Proverbs 15, 18. One more time. Proverbs 15, 18.

[20:35] I'm getting some amens back there. Thank you, Mr. Rooster. A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger, quiet contention.

Just in case you're unfamiliar with the word, that word strife is talking about fighting, conflict. And life is full of conflict, right? We are people that live in relationship with other people, and there's going to be stepping on each other's toes.

There's going to be conflict. But notice that it says a hot-tempered man stirs up strife. So, where there's no conflict, a hot-tempered person is going to find some way to create it.

And where there is conflict, as Proverbs 26, 21 says, So, as charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, a quarrelsome man is for kindling strife.

There's some people who can sniff out a fight a mile away, and they rush to throw fuel on the fire. And that can be in person. Oh, man, we really see this on social media, don't we? It's, oh, there's a conflict.

[21:35] I'm going to jump in. I'm going to throw fuel on it. Perhaps you know people like that. Perhaps you are a person like that. Listen to what Proverbs 17, 14, though, says about strife.

Proverbs 17, 14. The beginning of strife is like letting out water. So quit before the quarrel breaks out. A conflict might have humble beginnings, like a small hole in a big dam.

But if quarrelsome people get into an argument, that dam, that little hole gets bigger fast, and the dam may burst with devastating effects. Conflict and strife can grow quickly if there's fuel for the fire, if anger jumps in and takes over.

Sides get taken. And before you know it, the peace that used to exist in a community is now destroyed. Like the fire needs fuel, strife needs anger to sustain the fight.

And the past five months have been filled with lots of opportunities for our anger to flare and for strife to break out like a dam bursting, even perhaps in our church community.

[22:42] So let's just take stock for a minute of ourselves, particularly as a church body, with regard to this. Have you found yourself getting angry once or more than once with someone in this church or a group of people here in this church because of something that they've said or done or not said or not done, whether it was in person or it was online, over the past five months of this epic year of 2020?

Whatever the issue, whether it's over COVID or masks or over racism or politics, maybe it could be how they treated you in life group. Have you found yourself getting angry at some point?

Your temperature rising because of someone or a group of people in this church? God hates division and strife in his family.

And he particularly hates it when that strife happens and it's getting continued and fanned into flame because of a steady burning anger.

So, brother and sister, let's take stock of ourselves here. If you have been or you are getting sinfully angry with another member of our church family, then that means that the piece of Christ that binds us together is being threatened.

[24:08] So, let's take stock of ourselves, particularly with regard to our anger and the way it relates to this church community. Let's deal with that within ourselves. It might be that this person really did something wrong to you.

It might be that it was just a misunderstanding. And an honest, humble conversation can lead to much restoration and peace.

It can repair the tear in the social fabric of our fellowship. So, let's be particularly mindful of how our anger is affecting our church community in regard to this particular point.

Well, speaking of healing and repairing, let's move to the fourth principle, which is this. Wise people learn the skill of diffusing anger in others. Wise people learn the skill of diffusing anger in others. Head over to Proverbs 16, 14. Proverbs 16, 14. It says this. A king's wrath is a messenger of death and a wise man will appease it.

[25:15] Anybody who gets angry, that can lead to dangerous and destructive things. But if someone has great authority and responsibility and they get angry, really bad things can happen for a lot of people.

But if a wise person is nearby, he will do his best to diffuse the anger bomb before it goes off and causes destruction for others.

As God's people, we are called to pursue peace, not just between ourselves and others, but the best we can for all people that we know of. And so, if we see temperatures rising in other people, and we know that destructive things can happen when we see that temperature rise, it's right for us to step in as best we can to try to diffuse that anger.

And it takes some skill to do that. What kind of skill are we looking at? Well, according to our second principle, we can't let the anger of others produce anger in us.

We must rule our own anger as we start to see other people get angry. I can tell if I'm in a conversation with someone, or if I'm online chatting with someone over Facebook or something, I can tell when the heat starts to rise in them, and especially if that heat's directed toward me, that can cause the heat to rise in me pretty quickly as well.

[26:36] So, we must learn to be long of nose, slow to anger, govern our own emotions, and according to Proverbs 15, 18, he who is slow to anger will quiet contention.

So, our patience and our slowness will inevitably begin to throw some water on the heat of anger in others. And a particular way to do that is found in Proverbs 15, 1.

Proverbs 15, 1. You're probably pretty familiar with this one. A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. So, how can we diffuse anger in others?

By answering gently. When we're faced with an angry customer at work, or a furious child in our household, or whether or your spouse's passive-aggressive comment, we have a choice to make. We can stir up strife with a harsh word in retaliation, or we can try to diffuse the situation with a soft word. Back in May, the county sheriff in Flint, Michigan, was a wise man.

[27:40] He diffused hostility between protesters and the police with a very soft answer. Instead of remaining in a defensive posture against the protesters, with his riot gear on, he took his helmet off, he took off his riot gear, and he talked with them.

And it became a community event. We must pursue a similar course by not responding to an intense situation with harshness, but answering softly instead.

By doing that, he promoted peace in his community, and we can do the same in ours. It's good for us to take off our riot gear, to unfold our arms, to relax our defensive posture.

We must become low. We have to absorb some of the heat from others and squirt the water of gentle answers. Because we fear God, we love our neighbors. Lastly, the fifth principle Proverbs teaches us is this.

Our uncontrolled anger and its effects anger God. Our uncontrolled anger and its effects anger God. Take a look at Proverbs 29, 22.

[28:53] Proverbs 29, 22. A man of wrath stirs up strife, and one given to anger causes much transgression.

Not only do angry people destroy peace and kindle strife, but their anger brings about transgression. Because our anger doesn't just stay in emotion, does it?

It overflows into transgression. Transgression that destroys peace and relationships, that fuels thoughts of revenge, that throw barbed words that are intended to hurt, that can actually overflow into physical abuse.

Which one of us has not felt shame or guilt following an angry outburst? Which one of us has not felt regret at a hasty word or a choice we made because our anger finally boiled over?

But our transgression that is fueled by anger is not just destructive to those around us and to ourselves, it is offensive to God. When we allow our anger to have its way in our own hearts, it is personally offensive to God.

[30:07] Proverbs 6 shows us God hates the sowing of division among brothers. He gets righteously angry when we wrongfully get angry at others and take that anger out on them in some way.

Ultimately, our sinful anger is basically an arrogant way that we try to take God's place as lawgiver and judge. Do you remember the prophet Jonah? After he had delivered his message to the Ninevites, he's stewing in anger overlooking the city of Nineveh because God is not blowing them up in his anger.

He sits over the people of Nineveh in judgment and he's angry ultimately at God for not doing what he thought God should do. And God asks him this great question, do you do well to be angry? Are you angry for the right reason, Jonah? God is rightfully angry at our unrighteous anger because of our twisted sense of justice that does not align with and does not accomplish his righteousness. The Bible tells us that God is slow to anger. He is abounding in steadfast love. He does not delight in the death of the wicked. He does not wish that anyone should perish.

[31:20] But at the same time, Scripture is also not very shy at portraying about God as angry at our sin. Our sin offends God's holy justice. The reason the Bible is so clear about this is because God wants us to understand how serious our sin is.

It's not just that he's disappointed, he is angry. And he does well to be angry at our sin. Our wrongdoing registers deeply with him because our wrongdoing offends his righteousness and he must act to vindicate his righteousness.

And if he didn't do that, he wouldn't be good. The Bible calls this God's wrath. God's wrath seeks to reestablish his righteousness where there was unrighteousness.

Before we move on, we need to ponder this. Our unrighteous anger, we need to let this settle. Our temper flare-ups, our slow boils, they are worthy of God's eternal anger.

Our swift, unjust condemnation of others in the courts of our hearts because of their wrongs against us, it angers God. Our lack of mercy toward others angers God.

[32:34] And scripture tells us it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God because he is rightfully angry at us for our unrighteous anger. It is a dreadful thing, a fearful thing.

This is what Proverbs is talking about when it talks about the fear of the Lord. We must use the other emotion in us, fear, to help govern our anger because God is real. God is holy and our sinful anger truly is offensive to him.

We do not want to offend him. But at the same time, there are these precious promises in scripture like in Psalm 103 where it says that God's anger is not forever, at least for those who turn to him. In Psalm 103, he tells his covenant people he will not keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins nor repay us according to our iniquities. Now, that should make us scratch our heads.

It sounds like God's giving us a pass, giving us a break. If God's a righteous God who feels anger rightly, this seems kind of out of step with his character. But you see, God is not only righteously angry at sinners, he is also filled with compassion and mercy for sinners.

[33:42] And in his mercy, in his wisdom, he designed a way for his just anger and his mercy to meet in perfect harmony at the cross. When Jesus, the perfect son of God, hung on a cross as a substitute for sinners, he absorbed the righteous anger of God completely for all of us who would put our trust in him.

God's hot wrath was satisfied when Jesus offered himself to the Father as a sacrifice for our sin. And God's patient mercy for sinners was put on excellent display when we see Jesus hanging on

the tree and not us.

So friends, we deserve the eternal anger of God for our unrighteous anger and for the rest of our sin. But in God's mercy, Jesus absorbed it for us.

So if you're listening to God speak through his word this morning to you and you have never acknowledged your sin before God, you need to know that he is angry at your sin.

We don't like talking about this, but the Bible talks about it very clearly. He is angered by our sin and we do face an eternity of experiencing that anger if we do not turn to Jesus to see him as the one who absorbed God's wrath for us.

[34:59] So do that. If you have not done that today, know that God's anger is quenched if you turn to Christ and ask forgiveness for your sin, particularly for your unrighteous anger.

And for all of us who have done that, we no longer know the wrath of God, church. We now experience the Father's full forgiveness. He has not kept his anger forever. He was poured it out on Jesus.

So in light of this, in light of his goodness and his mercy to us, what kind of people should we be? A patient and merciful people, resembling the character of our good Father who is slow to anger. So, as we seek to respond to this, let me lead us in five questions to help us respond to our anger well.

Try to get in mind as I go through these questions the thing that most makes you angry, the most often makes you angry or frustrated. First, ask this question, what am I feeling?

[36:04] It sounds a little bit obvious, but it's good to actually name your emotions. It's actually pretty difficult. Naming your emotions kind of sits them in a chair and helps you talk about them objectively.

Sometimes we don't realize we're angry or sad or envious. We just feel. But wise people are aware of what they're feeling and why they're feeling it. So, ask yourself, what am I feeling?

Secondly, if it's anger that you're feeling, ask yourself this, why am I angry? Remember, anger is the moral emotion. You're probably angry because you are perceiving some kind of wrong being done.

There's been some kind of offense. James 4 is helpful here. James 4 helps us see that much of our anger comes from our hearts wanting something and not getting it and seeing other people as wronging us by keeping us from getting what we want.

If your heart desires quiet comfort, you get angry at the loud children depriving you of that or your loud neighbor or whatever. If your heart desires control, you get angry when someone's choice throws off your plan.

[37:16] It's necessary to identify the source of your anger so you can see, am I doing well to be angry? Which is the third question. Do I do well to be angry? It's God's question to Jonah.

Do you do well to be angry? In other words, are you getting angry for the right reason? Would this same thing make God angry as well or am I just using my own version of good and evil, not God's righteousness, as an artificial standard to judge this person in my heart?

Am I angry because God's righteousness is being violated or am I angry because my sense of righteousness is being violated? Now, it's good for us to feel anger over real unrighteousness. We must be angry when we see real injustice. But that righteous anger even can turn and morph into self-righteous anger. So we need to ask ourselves and be aware of our own hearts.

Do I do well to be angry? Fourth, how is my anger affecting others? How is my anger affecting others? Our anger affects others if they bear the brunt of it because we're angry with them or our anger can affect others because we infect others with our same anger and win them to our side to help them see how right we are and how wrong those people are.

[38:33] So if your anger burns others by, because of you being angry at them and you haven't dealt with that and you haven't confessed that to them, go and do that.

Or if your anger typically, you infect others with your anger and frustration, try to win them to your side rather than point them to God, then you probably need to confess that too.

Anger is a fire, remember? It will spread and destroy if it's not rained in. So lastly, last question is this. It's a good reminder. What did God do with his anger toward me?

What did God do with his anger toward me? God is the only person ever who has every right at all times to be angry and stay angry because his anger is holy anger that burns toward our sin. And yet, in his patience, in his mercy, he absorbed his anger at the cross of Christ and he is no longer angry toward us because of Jesus.

[39:37] God mercifully bore the brunt of his own anger in Christ and we must do the same toward those who offend us. We must be ready to forgive, we must be quick to listen, we must be slow to speak, slow to become angry because that's what our Heavenly Father has been like for us.

Church, everybody gets angry but angry, anger, if it's not carefully ruled by the fear of the Lord, is destructive fire. Let's be angry, church, but not sin.

Don't let the sun go down on your anger, Ephesians chapter 4. Seek to diffuse the anger bomb in others for the sake of others. Let's be a gentle, patient, long-nosed people so that we resemble our righteously angry and merciful and compassionate God.

Let's pray together. Lord, I can imagine I'm not the only one hearing this who feels the weight of unrighteous anger.

Lord, you know that I'm an angry person and I am often angry for the wrong reasons. Jesus, thank you for offering yourself as a sacrifice that the righteous wrath of God would be expended upon.

[41:01] Thank you, God, for absorbing your anger in Christ toward me.

Lord, help us to live as patient, gentle people because you have been that toward us sinners.

In Jesus' name, Amen.