

Four Styles of Handling Anger

1. **Prolonged anger**—the “simmering stew”—is held in for a long time. (Hebrews 12:15)
Example: “I’ll never forgive the way he talked to me years ago.”
2. **Pressed-down anger**—the “pressure cooker”—is denied or hidden anger. (1 Peter 3:10)
Example: “I never get angry—maybe just a little irritated at times.”
3. **Provoked anger**—the “short fuse”—is quick and impatient, instantly irritated or incensed. (Ecclesiastes 7:9)
Example: “I can’t believe you said that! You’re so childish!”
4. **Profuse anger**—the “volatile volcano”—is powerful, destructive, hard to control. (Matthew 5:22)
Example: “You fool—if you do that again, you’ll wish you’d never been born!”

Four Sources of Anger

1. **Hurt:** Your heart is wounded.
Biblical Example: The Sons of Jacob
(Genesis 37:3–4)
2. **Injustice:** Your right is violated.
Biblical Example: King Saul
(1 Samuel 20:32–34)
3. **Fear:** Your future is threatened.
Biblical Example: King Saul
(1 Samuel 18:8, 12)
4. **Frustration:** Your performance is not accepted.
Biblical Example: Cain
(Genesis 4:3–5, 8)

“The wise turn away anger.”
(Proverbs 29:8)

The Anger Quiz

- What triggers your anger?
- How do you generally express your anger?
- What do you desire when you are angry? Do you get what you desire?
- Do you ever lose control of your anger?
- Is your anger harming your relationships?
- Has your anger ever caused any health problems?
- Do others point out your anger even if you don’t see it? If so, when, and what do they say?
- Does your anger ever become physical?
- When you get angry, how safe do you feel?
- When you get angry, how safe do others feel?
- Did anyone in your childhood home have an anger problem?
- As a child, how did you feel when you were on the receiving end of someone’s anger?
- Do you think anger from your childhood could still be impacting you today?
- Do you have difficulty forgiving those toward whom you have anger?
- Do you have someone wise to talk with about your anger?
- Do you ever pray about your anger?
- What is your view of God in the midst of angering situations?
- How do you think you should respond to God when you feel angry?
- How do you think you should respond to others when you feel angry?
- What can you learn from a recent anger problem that will help you better handle your anger?

*“Better a patient person than a warrior,
one with self-control
than one who takes a city.”*
(Proverbs 16:32)

The Root Cause of Anger

Wrong Belief: “When I am hurt, fearful, frustrated, or treated unfairly, I have the right to be angry until the situation changes. It is only natural for me to be angry about the disappointments in my life and to express my anger in whatever way I choose.”

Right Belief: “Since I have trusted Christ with my life and have yielded my rights to Him, I choose not to be controlled by anger. My human disappointments are now God’s appointments to increase my faith and develop His character in me.” (See 1 Peter 1:6–7.)

Putting Away Past Anger

- **Realize** your unresolved anger. (Psalm 38:18)
- **Revisit** your root feelings. (Psalm 139:23–24)
- **Release** your rights regarding the offense. (Proverbs 17:9)
- **Recognize** your need to forgive. (Colossians 3:13)
- **Rejoice** in God’s purpose for allowing your pain. (1 Peter 5:10)
- **Restore** the relationship ... when appropriate. (Matthew 5:22–24)
- **Receive** God’s love for you ... personally. (Ephesians 3:17–19)
- **Reflect** Christ’s love. (John 13:34–35)

Alleviating Present Anger

- **Acknowledge** your anger. (Proverbs 28:13)
- **Ascertain** your style. (Psalm 26:2)
- **Assess** the source. (1 Chronicles 29:17)
- **Appraise** your thinking. (Proverbs 21:29)
- **Admit** your needs. (Philippians 4:19)
- **Abandon** your demands. (2 Corinthians 9:8)
- **Address** your anger. (Proverbs 25:15)
- **Alter** your attitudes. (Philippians 2:2–8)

How to Communicate Your Anger to Another

Choose to be proactive.

- Examine your motivation.
- Be realistic in your expectations.
- Assess the legitimacy of your request.
- Anticipate possible reactions from the other person.
- Decide whether you are willing to live with any negative repercussions.

Choose a time and place to talk.

- Select a time and place convenient for both of you, in an atmosphere conducive for listening and sharing.
- Meet on “neutral turf” so that both of you are likely to feel equal in power and importance.
- Allot sufficient time to address the concerns both of you have.
- Commit the time to God and seek His wisdom and understanding.

Choose to communicate your desires for open and honest communication and resolution.

- Express your pain and anger in a loving, non-accusatory way.
- Give opportunity for a response without interruption or defensiveness on your part.
- Request any desired changes in behavior that you believe will resolve the present problem and prevent future problems.
- Agree to change any problematic behavior on your part.
- Extend total forgiveness unreservedly and willingly.
- Value differences in goals, desires, and priorities.

“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.”
(Proverbs 25:11 KJV)

When Anger Is Getting Out of Control

Stop and take a deep breath.

- **Hold up your hands** to indicate you are “surrendering” for the time being by calling a halt to what is taking place.
- **State slowly in a low tone** of voice that either you are getting too upset to think clearly or that the conversation is not going in a positive direction and does not seem to be resolving anything.
- **Explain** that you need to calm down and regain a cool head. Then take a walk around the block, retreat to a quiet place to listen to music, or do whatever helps you regain your composure.
- **Agree on a time** to resume the conversation once you have regained your composure and have processed what has been said.

If you reach an impasse where agreement between the two of you is not possible ...

- **Agree** to have different opinions on the subject, but refuse to let those differences become a problem in the relationship.
- **Remember**, if two people agree on everything all the time, their relationship runs the high risk of becoming stagnant and void of growth.

- **Decide to engage** in stimulating conversations where varied opinions are expressed in order to develop listening skills, to learn from others, and to practice expressing your opinions to others in a clear and concise (non-offensive) manner.
- **Commit** to valuing, accepting, and respecting each other as you grow in your understanding of one another.

“Fools find no pleasure in understanding but delight in airing their own opinions. ... Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters.”
(Proverbs 18:2; Romans 14:1)

Key Verses to Memorize

“Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.”
(James 1:19–20)

Key Passage to Read

Ephesians 4:26–27, 29–32

God’s Aim for Anger

As you seek to allow God to direct your anger and use it for His purposes, remember ...

- **Anger** can bring your true feelings to light.
- **Anger** can uncover your need to set healthy boundaries.
- **Anger** can be used to bring positive change in your life.
- **Anger** can be the lens through which you gain insight into your past hurts.
- **Anger** can be the spark that encourages healthy, appropriate, honest communication in relationships.
- **Anger** can be used by God to convict others of sin.
- **Anger** can reveal your inappropriate ways of trying to meet your own needs.
- **Anger** can be used by God to motivate others to make responsible decisions.
- **Anger** can be the foundation on which forgiveness is built.
- **Anger** can help you realize your need for the Lord.

As you allow God to use your anger for good, you will become an example to others. ...

“Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”
(Matthew 5:16)

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