

“ Addressing, Working Through, and Overcoming Anger”

Theme: How Christians should address, work through, and overcome anger with both the world and other Christians.

Objective: To understand how Scripture teaches us to respond to anger—whether towards the world or fellow believers—and how we can apply these principles in our daily lives.

Introduction

Anger is an emotion everyone experiences, but how we deal with it can have lasting consequences. As Christians, we are called to be slow to anger, to forgive others, and to seek peace, especially with fellow believers and in a world full of sin. This study will explore what Scripture says about anger and how we can overcome it in a way that honors God.

1. Biblical Understanding of Anger

A. Anger Towards the World

Anger towards the world often stems from the injustice, suffering, and sin we encounter. While it is natural to feel anger over these things, we are still called to respond in a Christlike way.

Scriptures:

- **Psalm 37:8 (ESV):**
"Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil."
- **James 1:19-20 (ESV):**
"Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God."
- **Matthew 5:44 (ESV):**
"But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

Point:

God's Word instructs us to not let anger control us, but rather to respond with patience and love, even when faced with injustice or persecution. Jesus exemplified this on the cross, praying for His enemies.

B. Anger Towards Other Christians

Anger within the body of Christ can be especially damaging. It can lead to division and disrupt the unity of believers.

Scriptures:

- **Ephesians 4:26-27 (ESV):**
"Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil."
- **Colossians 3:12-13 (ESV):**
"Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive."
- **Matthew 18:15 (ESV):**
"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother."

Point:

When we experience anger towards another believer, Scripture calls us to handle the situation with humility and forgiveness. The goal is reconciliation, not retaliation.

2. How to Address and Overcome Anger

A. Self-Examination and Prayer

- **Psalms 139:23-24 (ESV):**
"Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts. And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Anger often masks deeper emotions such as hurt or fear. We need to examine our hearts through prayer and invite the Holy Spirit to reveal the root cause of our anger.

B. Forgiveness and Reconciliation

- **Matthew 5:23-24 (ESV):**

"So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."

- **Ephesians 4:32 (ESV):**

"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."

Forgiveness is the key to breaking the cycle of anger. God calls us to forgive others as He has forgiven us, seeking reconciliation when possible.

C. Cultivating Patience and Self-Control

- **Proverbs 15:1 (ESV):**

"A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."

- **Galatians 5:22-23 (ESV):**

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."

Patience and self-control are fruits of the Spirit, and we can ask God to help us develop these qualities in our relationships with others.

3. Real-Life Application

A. Practical Steps to Overcome Anger:

1. **Pause and Pray:** When you feel anger rising, take a moment to pause and pray, asking God to help you control your emotions and see the situation through His perspective.
2. **Seek Reconciliation:** If someone has wronged you or if you are angry with someone, follow Matthew 18:15 and approach them privately to address the issue lovingly.
3. **Practice Forgiveness:** Whether the person asks for forgiveness or not, choose to forgive. Remember, forgiveness releases both you and the other person from bitterness.
4. **Respond with Kindness:** In moments of conflict, try to respond with soft words or a calm demeanor. Let your responses be seasoned with grace and patience.
5. **Accountability Partner:** Find a trusted friend or mentor who can hold you accountable in how you handle anger. Sometimes, talking through your frustrations can bring clarity.

B. Reflecting on Jesus' Example:

Jesus' life serves as the ultimate example of how to handle anger. He was angry when He cleansed the temple (John 2:15-16), but His anger was righteous and aimed at restoring holiness. He also modeled forgiveness when He prayed for His persecutors on the cross (Luke 23:34).

We are called to emulate Christ in all things, including how we respond to injustice and hurt.

Discussion Questions:

- 1. What are some common triggers for anger in your life, whether with the world or fellow Christians?**
- 2. What are the consequences of holding onto anger rather than addressing it through forgiveness and reconciliation?**
- 3. How does Jesus' example of forgiveness on the cross influence how we approach anger and conflict in our relationships?**
- 4. What are some practical ways you can seek reconciliation in your current relationships?**
- 5. How can we cultivate patience and self-control when we feel anger rising?**