



OVERCOMING ANGER

GOD'S POWER IN YOUR LIFE

Anger is a powerful emotion. It can strike suddenly, taking over our thoughts with violent force. At times, it seems uncontrollable. And its devastating effects can leave your faith, your family, or your career in ruins.

But there's a way to break free from anger's grasp and learn how to handle the daily situations that can lead to anger.

GETTING TO THE SOURCE

There are as many causes and expressions of anger as there are people. But a common element is usually lurking beneath anger: things are not turning out the way we would like. Perhaps your boss did not deliver on a promised raise, or your child refused to listen to your repeated instructions, or your spouse just did not take the time to listen.

At first, this anger is usually directed toward others. But eventually, we begin to point a finger at God. Like Jobs' wife, when facing overwhelming anger, we want to *curse God and die!* (Job 2:9)

Unfortunately, despite all the energy we invest in anger, it cannot get us a raise, or make our children obey, or restore a broken marriage. More important, the Bible says, *for a man's anger does not bring about the righteousness of God* (James 1:20).

Even worse, anger eventually seeks an outlet in hurtful actions, breeding more anger and creating a destructive cycle for our lives. We are wise not to underestimate the power of anger.

FINDING FREEDOM

If anger is controlling you, there is only one way to find lasting freedom—by yielding control of your life to Jesus Christ. Anger is ultimately a matter of control. When we

feel out of control, we get angry, and our anger drives a wedge between us and God—keeping us from drawing closer to His love.

In our anger we are rejecting God's love, accusing God of not caring. But God is love (see 1 John 4:8), and the Bible says His plans for us are always good (see Jeremiah 29:11).

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—JOHN 3:16

This plan begins with a personal relationship with Jesus. John 3:16 says, *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life.* God desires that you will live with Him forever! When you come to God, repenting of your sin, God miraculously gives you new birth that will enable you to walk in His love.

OVERCOMING ANGER DAY BY DAY

Your new life in Christ will not immediately bring an end to your anger. Each day will bring situations tempting you to anger. Here are a few steps you can take to keep your anger under God's control:

1. Recognize the source of your anger. Is it a person? Or a situation? Or perhaps you're angry at God. Be honest with yourself and the Lord about what is making you angry.

2. Repent and ask God to cleanse you. Anger that is based in selfishness and control is sin, and the cure for sin is repentance. Ask God to forgive you for your anger and give you peace. *If we confess our sins*, the Bible says, *[God] is faithful and righteous, so that He will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness* (1 John 1:9).
3. Forgive, forgive, forgive. Forgiveness is perhaps the greatest remedy for anger. As He hung dying on the cross at Calvary, Jesus had every right to be angry toward those who placed Him there. Yet He asked His Father to forgive them. We are called to do the same.
4. Daily, give God control of your life. Job had every reason to be angry. But despite his circumstances, he refused to shake his fist at God. He responded, *“Shall we actually accept good from God but not accept adversity?”* (Job 2:10). The call of discipleship requires us to surrender control of our lives to God. He is faithful. You can trust that He will work out all things for good (see Romans 8:28).
5. Don't let anger fester. You may think that by suppressing your anger, it will simply go away. But anger must be dealt with or it will grow like a cancer. Especially in the relationships that are most precious to you, follow this simple advice from the Apostle Paul: *Do not let the sun go down on your anger* (Ephesians 4:26).

AS YOU PRAY

Has anger taken hold of your life? There's a simple solution: Hand over the reins of your heart to the Lord and walk every day in God's love and forgiveness. Take a few moments right now to pray and let go of your anger: "Father, forgive me for my anger against You and others. Please cleanse me as Your Word promises. I give You total control of my life—both the good and the bad. I also give You the hurts from the past. Thank You for forgiving me and for teaching me how to walk in love each and every day. In Jesus' name. Amen."



GOD'S WORD ON ANGER

BE ANGRY, AND YET DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity. ... Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. All bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and slander must be removed from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you (Ephesians 4:26-27, 30-32).

SCRIPTURES FOR STUDY

- The cause and cure of anger: James 4:1-12
- Anger promotes anger: Psalm 37:8; Proverbs 15:18
- Properly responding to trials: James 1:1-5
- Parenting and anger: Colossians 3:21

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