

# How to Handle Anger

LIFE FAITH FUSION  
DEVOTIONAL  
DAY ONE

## SCRIPTURE STUDY

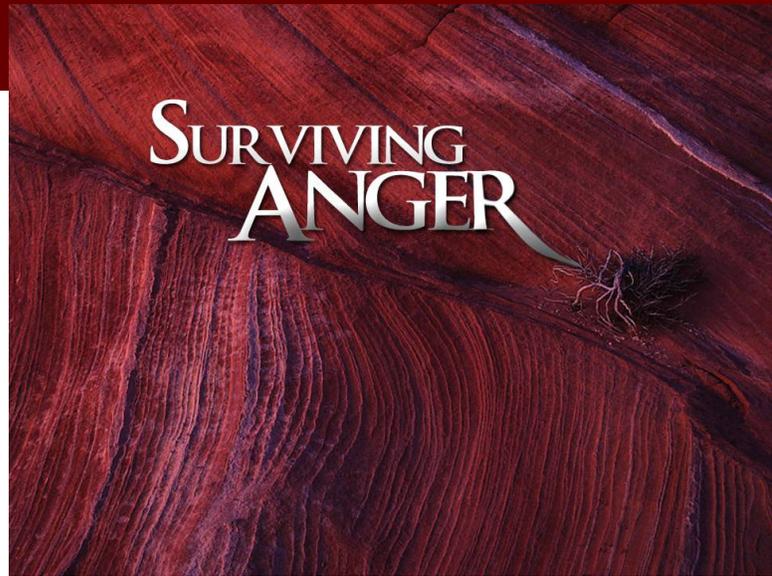
Mark 3:5  
Genesis 6:5-8  
Psalm 27:9-10  
Numbers 11:1-20  
2 Chronicles 6:36-40  
1 Kings 11:7-10  
Psalm 30:5  
Psalm 37:7-9  
Psalm 78:37-39

## DIGGING DEEPER

The views of God held by King David and his son Solomon were very different. From a rational perspective, they believed the same things. However, Father David father had a deep godly fear and a repentant heart, while Solomon knew the truth but lived in stubborn arrogance and selfishness.

## PRAYER FOCUS

Dear Jesus,  
Help us to know you in your love and holiness. Amen



## ANGER IS LEGITIMATE

Anger is an incredibly powerful emotion that can be used for good or evil. Anger is a God-given emotion. God could not be holy and just without having righteous indignation over sin. Everyone experiences anger though some refuse to admit it. Anger does not go away when we deny it and carefully stuff it down somewhere in our subconscious minds, it does not go away. Our ire continues to bubble and manifest itself in hundreds of subtle and not-so-subtle ways: road rage, temper, depression, over-eating and oversleeping, substance abuse, or a critical, cynical attitude. The first step toward healing an anger-filled individual is to face the fury and process it. Hurt precedes anger. In Mark 3:5, the gospel writer described Jesus' feelings as He experienced the Pharisees' stubborn attitudes when they chose the observation of the Sabbath over the healing of the man with the withered hand:

“And when He had looked around at them with *anger*, being *grieved* by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." NKJV

Jesus was grieved (or hurt) in His spirit, and He manifested anger toward the Pharisees. If we really want to begin to dissipate the stored-up anger in our emotional cups, we need to identify hurts, mourn them, receive comfort from an understanding friend, and forgive the offender. If this process is circumvented, then the subsequent healing will not occur. When our anger heats up and simmers into rage and bitterness, an unforgiving heart will alienate us from the Heavenly Father who wishes to bring healing and restoration.

- When is the last time you were truly angry? What were the circumstances? How did you process (or stuff) your anger?
- How do you handle conflict in your home? Do tempers flare? Is there healthy dialogue concerning the conflict, or stony silence over the touchy subject?
- What are some ways that you have successfully dealt with powerful emotions? Can you express them honestly to God? Do you believe He understands your anger? How have you received comfort over the hurts?

### GOD EXPERIENCES ANGER

We should not fear feeling anger. God's anger is an integral part of His character. As early as Genesis 6:5-8, God's wrath burned against man for his immorality and unbelief. Note that God grieved before He judged, and He provided a way of escape through the ark that Noah built:

“ Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.”NKJV

In Numbers 11, Moses painted the picture of whiny, ungrateful Israelites murmuring about God's insufficient care for them. Jehovah provided manna every morning to feed them and from their perspective, His provision wasn't enough. Their ungrateful outburst precipitated fire from heaven! (Numbers 11:1-20). King Solomon clearly understood God's holy wrath against sin, particularly idolatry. The Hebrew monarch uttered a powerful, insightful prayer upon the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem. From his words we can deduce that he knew God hated idolatry and responded with grace when His people truly repented. Here is an excerpt from his prayer of dedication:

"When they sin against you — for there is no one who does not sin — and you *become angry* with them and give them over to the enemy, who takes them captive to a land far away or near; and if they have a change of heart in the land where they are held captive, and repent and plead with you in the land of their captivity and say, 'We have sinned, we have done wrong and acted wickedly'; and if they turn back to you with all their heart and soul in the land of their captivity where they were taken, and pray toward the land you gave their fathers, toward the city you have chosen and toward the temple I have built for your Name; then from heaven, your dwelling place, hear their prayer and their pleas, and uphold their cause. And forgive your people, who have sinned against you. "Now, my God, may your eyes be open and your ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place.” 2 Chronicles 6:36-40 NKJV

Solomon knew exactly what to do to avoid God's righteous anger. He also clearly understood the consequences of his actions. Over and over in the scriptures, God expressed His hatred of idolatry. God was deeply wounded by man's infidelity toward Him. Perhaps Solomon's insight into God's will made Jehovah's grief seem even more keen:

“ On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites. He did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods. The LORD became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice.” 1 Kings 11:7-10

- According to scripture, what is the definition of idolatry? Do we have idols in today's society? How would idolatry manifest itself in modern-day culture?
- Do you confess your sins regularly to God? Try following the steps underlined in Solomon's prayer for confession and repentance.
- What does it do to your heart to know that God gave us our emotions, and we do not have to be afraid to experience them? Does it make you feel joyful, relieved, accepted, or comforted? List some feeling words here.

### **WRATH THAT LEADS TO SALVATION**

God's love becomes clearer when we understand the depth of His holiness and justice. Only a Heavenly Father who dwells in perfection could rescue us from hell and destruction. God had to punish sin. The debt of sin must be paid. Because of Jehovah's unfathomable love and forgiveness, He allowed His Son Jesus to receive all of the wrath, the rage, and the punishment for our sins. When Jesus was on the cross, He was under the judgment of God-not for Himself-but for us. King David, Solomon's father, did not know about the cross, but he knew that God's love for us was faithful and patient. He described Jehovah as a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness:

“Men's hearts were not loyal to him, they were not faithful to his covenant. Yet he was merciful; he forgave their iniquities and did not destroy them. Time after time he restrained his anger and did not stir up his full wrath. He remembered that they were but flesh, a passing breeze that does not return.” Psalm 78:37-39 NIV

King David, the man after God's own heart, revealed to us the heart of God. Solomon had only to read the psalms of his father David not only to know that God loved him, but also that He longed for an intimate relationship with him. Jesus told us in the beatitudes that the pure in heart see God; therefore, the more we see the seriousness of sin, the more we can enjoy the blessing of God's forgiveness and love. David's poem in Psalm 103 eloquently describes the delicate balance between love and justice, holiness and grace:

“The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.” Psalm 103:8-14 NIV

### **APPLYING THE SCRIPTURES**

*Read the following Psalms and record your observations about the character of God.*

Psalm 27:9-10, Psalm 30:5, Psalm 37:7-9, Psalm 78:37-39, Psalm 86:15, Psalm 90:7-12