



Anger & Stress Management

God's Way by Wayne A. Mack

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1. 🌿 Introduction: Is it always sinful to be angry?

The central question—"Is it always a sin to be angry?"—is answered biblically: No. Scripture teaches that anger can be either righteous or sinful depending on its cause and expression,

Some people believe anger is always wrong, but the Bible teaches that anger is sometimes ___righteous___.

[Ephesians 4:26](#) – *Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger.*

1.1. Anger is Not Always Sinful—But Often Is

The verses below tell us that there is a kind of anger that is sinful and must be excluded from the life of a believer.

[Ephesians 4:31](#) – *Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.*

[Colossians 3:8](#) - *But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.*

Examples in scripture that illustrate sinful anger.

- Genesis 4 – Cain's jealousy and murder.
- Samuel 18 & 20 – Saul's anger toward David and Jonathan.
- Mark 6:19 – Herodias' vindictive anger toward John the Baptist.
- Acts 7:54 – Jewish leaders' rage against Stephen.
- Acts 23:3 – Paul's outburst before the high priest, later acknowledged as sinful.

1.2. Biblical Examples of Righteous Anger

1.2.1. God Himself Expresses Righteous Anger

- [Psalms 7:11](#) – *God is a righteous judge, and a God who feels indignation every day*

God's anger is continual and righteous, directed against sin and injustice.



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- [Exodus 4:14](#) – Then the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses and he said, “Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well. Behold, he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart.

God's anger is holy and purposeful, even when directed toward His own servants.

- [Deuteronomy 29:27–28](#) – Therefore the anger of the Lord was kindled against this land, bringing upon it all the curses written in this book, 28 and the Lord uprooted them from their land in anger and fury and great wrath, and cast them into another land, as they are this day.’

God's wrath against Israel's covenant-breaking is just and severe, showing that divine anger is not arbitrary but covenantal.

1.2.2. Jesus Christ Demonstrated Righteous Anger

- Mark 3:5 – Jesus was angry at the Pharisees' hard hearts.

His anger was rooted in grief and justice, not personal offense.

- John 2:13–17 – Jesus drove out the money changers from the temple.

His zeal for His Father's house led to a righteous display of anger against corruption and irreverence.

- 1 John 3:5 – “In Him there is no sin.”

This confirms that Christ's anger was sinless and holy.

1.2.3. The Apostle Paul Expressed Righteous Anger

- Acts 17:16 – “His spirit was being provoked within him...”

Paul's anger was stirred by the idolatry in Athens. Despite physical and emotional exhaustion, his response was spiritually motivated and righteous.

1.2.4. The Corinthian Church Responded with Righteous Indignation

- 2 Corinthians 7:9–11 – “What indignation... what avenging of wrong!”

Paul commends the believers for their godly sorrow and zealous anger toward sin. Their indignation led to repentance and justice, not destruction.

1.3. Conclusion



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The passages above clearly indicate that there are two kinds of anger. There is a sinful anger that is destructive and ungodly, and there is a righteous kind of anger that is constructive and godly.

What then distinguishes godly anger from ungodly anger? When is our anger sinful and when is it righteous? How can we be sure our anger is used constructively rather than destructively?

2. When is Our Anger Sinful? What are the Characteristics of Sinful Anger?

2.1. Our Anger is Sinful When We Become Angry for the Wrong Reasons

2.1.1. Anger for Selfish Reasons

In many cases our anger is aroused because of our selfishness. Selfish anger is always a sin.

In [Genesis 4](#) we see Cain's anger towards his brother.

- Cain and Abel's offerings reveal the heart behind worship—Abel's was accepted because it was given in faith, while Cain's was rejected due to a corrupt heart (vv. 1–5).
- God graciously warns Cain about the danger of sin, urging him to master it before it masters him—showing that sinful anger is a spiritual threat, not just an emotional reaction (vv. 6–7).
- Cain's murder of Abel demonstrates how unchecked anger and jealousy can escalate into violence—sinful desire leads to destruction when not restrained by God's Word (vv. 8–10).
- God's judgment on Cain includes both justice and mercy—He punishes Cain's sin but also protects him from vengeance, revealing divine sovereignty and compassion (vv. 11–15).

When we become angry because someone else is receiving attention or appreciation, that we are not, our anger is sinful. How often do you get angry for this reason?



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2.1.2. King Ahab's Anger

In [1 Kings 21: 1-4](#) Ahab was controlled by his anger rather than in control of his anger.

- [1 Kings 21:1-4](#) - *Now Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard in Jezreel, beside the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. 2 And after this Ahab said to Naboth, "Give me your vineyard, that I may have it for a vegetable garden, because it is near my house, and I will give you a better vineyard for it; or, if it seems good to you, I will give you its value in money." 3 But Naboth said to Ahab, "The Lord forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers." 4 And Ahab went into his house vexed and sullen because of what Naboth the Jezreelite had said to him, for he had said, "I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers." And he lay down on his bed and turned away his face and would eat no food.*

Ahab's covetous desire for Naboth's vineyard reveals a heart ruled by entitlement, not submission to God's law. His sulking and refusal to eat shows how sinful anger often flows from frustrated desires.

Ahab was angry because he was denied the vineyard his heart coveted, and which he thought he had a right to. His anger was rooted in pride and selfishness.

This kind of anger is sinful anger. How often do we become angry because our "rights" have been denied.

2.1.3. Example: Wayne Mack's elevator example

- "I gave the man standing beside me a cheerful hello and asked him, 'How are you doing today?'"

This act of friendliness was sincere, but it carried an unspoken expectation of reciprocation—revealing how even kind gestures can be rooted in self-interest when we expect a return.

- "He just flat-out ignored me."

The man's silence was interpreted as a personal offense, exposing how quickly we assign motives and take offense when our perceived "rights" are denied.

- "In my sinful pride, I started to become angry."

The irritation wasn't just emotional, it was spiritual. Pride fueled the anger, showing how entitlement to recognition can lead to sinful responses when unmet.



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- "I thought I had a right to be treated as though I was worthwhile."

The root issue was not the man's silence but Wayne's belief in a personal right to be acknowledged—demonstrating how sinful anger often grows from prideful assumptions and self-centered expectations.

2.1.4. Example of a Parent & Child

- "Children are supposed to obey and show respect to their parents."

This expectation, while biblically grounded, can become distorted when parents equate imperfect obedience with personal disrespect—revealing how pride can twist legitimate authority into selfish demand (cf. [Ephesians 6:4](#)).

- "Never mind that the Bible says, 'Love suffers long and is kind; love . . . is not provoked. ([1 Corinthians 13:4–5](#) NKJV).'"

Parents often ignore biblical love when their perceived rights are denied, responding with irritation rather than patience—showing how sinful anger contradicts the character of Christ.

- "They become upset because the 'rights' they have, as the boss of their home, are being denied."

The anger is not about the child's spiritual good but about the parent's personal control—exposing how entitlement to authority can lead to selfish, sinful reactions when unmet.

- "That kind of anger is sinful, selfish anger."

The root issue is not the child's behavior but the parent's heart—when love is replaced by pride and control, anger becomes a tool of self-centeredness rather than a reflection of godly discipline.

2.1.5. Example of Herodias against John the Baptist ([Mark 6:14–29](#))

- "The anger of Herodias against John the Baptist was a sinful, selfish anger."

Herodias's hostility was not rooted in righteousness but in personal offense—she rejected God's truth because it confronted her sinful lifestyle (cf. [Mark 6:18–19](#)).

- "She felt that she had the 'right' to live as she pleased."



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Herodias's sense of entitlement led her to despise correction, showing how pride resists biblical authority and fuels vindictive anger.

2.1.6. Example of Saul against David ([1 Samuel 18:6-16](#))

- "Saul's anger against David was sinfully selfish."

Saul's jealousy over David's praise ("Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands.") reveals how comparison and insecurity can breed sinful anger, especially when others receive recognition we crave (cf. [1 Samuel 18:7-8v](#)).

- "He was jealous of the praise and recognition that David was getting."

Saul's anger was not about justice or truth—it was about losing status. He was sinfully angry.

2.1.7. Example of church service

- "How frequently do we become angry when someone else receives more credit than we do?"

This question exposes the hidden pride behind many church conflicts—when recognition becomes a measure of worth, sinful anger is often close behind.

- "We may think about how regularly we attend church services... or how much money we give to the work of the church."

Self-righteous comparison fuels resentment when others are praised—revealing a heart that serves for recognition rather than for Christ.

- "Then, when someone else is recognized... we respond with sinful, selfish anger."

The issue is not the recognition itself, but the belief that we deserve it more—this entitlement reflects a works-based view of ministry rather than grace-based service.

- "It's not fair! I deserve recognition, too!"

This cry of injustice is rooted in pride, not truth—when fairness is defined by personal expectations rather than God's glory, anger becomes a tool of self-exaltation.



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2.1.8. Example of the Prodigal Son

- “Let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead and is alive again.”

Restoration is marked by joy, not grudging acceptance—God delights in redeeming the lost and restoring fellowship (vv. 23–24).

- “He was angry and refused to go in.”

The older son's resentment reveals that a self-righteous heart—he sees grace as unfair and views obedience to earn favor (v. 28).

He was hurt by his father's attention to his younger brother a jealous of the honor that he was receiving. In other words, he was selfishly angry.

2.1.9. Conclusion

Our anger is always sinful when it's caused by our selfishness.

- Whether we have had or feelings hurt
- or we are jealous
- or we are not getting recognition,
- or we believe that our “rights” are being denied.

All of these things lead to sinful, selfish anger.

2.2. Our Anger is Sinful When We Become Angry Because We Believe Our Rights are being Denied

2.2.1. Your “Rights” ...

What does the issue of rights have to do with sinful anger? Which of the following do you consider to be your “rights”? Which of these “rights” are you being denied, and by whom? Discern which “rights” you think are being denied or neglected when you start to become angry.

- Right to have and control personal belongings
- Right to privacy
- Right to have and express personal opinions
- Right to earn and use money



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- Right to plan your own schedule
- Right to get respect from others and be obeyed by others
- Right to have and choose friends
- Right to belong, be loved, and be accepted
- Right to be understood and treated fairly
- Right to make your own decisions and determine your own future
- Right to be successful
- Right to have good health
- Right to date / be married
- Right to have children
- Right to be considered worthwhile and important
- Right to security and safety
- Right to travel
- Right to have the job you want
- Right to a good education
- Right to be a beautiful person and to be desired
- Right to have fun and be free of problems
- Right to raise your children your way

Are there any other items that are important and can be problematic to you?

2.2.2. You Are Not Your Own

Consciously recognize that, if you are a Christian, you and all that you have and are (including your rights) belong to God.

- [Psalm 24:1](#) – *The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein,*
- [Romans 12:1](#) - *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.*
- [1 Corinthians 6:19](#) - *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,*
- [Philippians 4:19](#) - *And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*



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He knows what you need. Trust Him to take of you and to provide whatever you need.

Believe that God is much wiser than you. Acknowledge this and dedicate all that you are and have, including your “rights”, to God.

Cease to think in terms of your “rights” and concentrate on God’s will and purpose and promises. Dedicate your “rights” to God on a regular basis.

2.2.3. It Doesn't Mean you are a Doormat

Turning over your “rights” to God doesn't mean that you must become a door mat. It doesn't mean that you never make your desires known, or that you never oppose, rebuke, insist, exhort, or seek to correct a person.

It does mean you seek to do what is Biblical and God honoring. That your motives are for biblical and unselfish reasons to glorify God.

Trust that God will bring to pass what is right and good for you.

Believe God's promise that those who fear the Lord shall not lack any good thing.

- [Psalm 34:8-10](#) – *Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good!*

Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!

9 Oh, fear the Lord, you his saints,

for those who fear him have no lack!

10 The young lions suffer want and hunger;

but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.

It means that what you formally considered to be your “rights” you now choose to think of as privileges instead.

2.3. Our Anger is Sinful When We Allow our Anger to Control Us

2.3.1. A person who controls his anger is better than a conquering general.

It's often harder to conquer our own passions than to conquer a city. An uncontrolled spirit can be as destructive to our souls as an attacking army is to a city.

- [Proverbs 16:32](#) – *Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.*
- [Proverbs 25:28](#) – *A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls.*



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These verses warn us against being controlled by our spirit, which is partly made up of our emotions, rather than being in control of our spirit.

Example: Have you heard people say or said yourself “I was so angry I just couldn’t help me self!”

In reality, they are excusing themselves for being out of control and from the actions that result. They are claiming no responsibility, because they were at the mercy of their anger.

The truth of course is that their actions were sinful. Any time we allow our anger to control us we are sinning.

2.3.2. King Ahab's Anger

In [1 Kings 21](#) Ahab was controlled by his anger rather than in control of his anger.

- Ahab's covetous desire for Naboth's vineyard reveals a heart ruled by entitlement, not submission to God's law — his sulking and refusal to eat show how sinful anger often flows from frustrated desires (vv. 1–4).
- Jezebel's manipulation and false accusations expose the destructive power of sinful anger when paired with unrighteous authority — she orchestrates Naboth's death to satisfy Ahab's selfish craving (vv. 5–16).
- God sends Elijah to confront Ahab, declaring divine judgment for the murder and theft — the Lord holds Ahab accountable, showing that no earthly power can escape His justice (vv. 17–24).
- Ahab's temporary humility before God demonstrates that even the wicked may respond to divine warning — yet his repentance is shallow, and judgment is only delayed, not removed (vv. 27–29)

2.3.3. Example Father

The book provides an example of a Man/Father coming home from work with expectations and getting anger when they aren't met.

2.3.4. Conclusion

Whenever we allow our anger to dictate how we act and to keep us from fulfilling our biblical responsibilities, our anger is sinful.



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2.4. Our Anger is Sinful When it Becomes the Dominate Feature of Our Lives

2.4.1. Touchy, irritable, or easily annoyed?

Do they say you are touchy, irritable, or easily annoyed? Then you might have a sinful anger problem.

Do people tiptoe around you? If so, it could be an indication that you have a chronic problem with sinful anger.

2.4.2. Anger Addicts in Scripture

God talks about anger addicts; these are people who have give the reins over to anger and are completely under its control.

- [Proverbs 19:19](#) – *A man of great wrath will pay the penalty, for if you deliver him, you will only have to do it again.*
- [Proverbs 22:24](#) - *Make no friendship with a man given to anger, nor go with a wrathful man,*

These verses refer to these people as being addicted to anger the same way they talk about people being addicted to alcohol.

Anger is the immediate natural response when pressure is on. When this is the case, he or she is exhibiting sinful anger.

Do you know people like this? Do you refer to them as hostile, angry, touchy, irritable and easily provoked? Do you spend much time with them?

2.4.3. Conclusion

If that kind of anger is characteristic of our lives, we need to recognize and deal with it because it is sinful anger.

4. Summary

Anger can be Godly and constructive, or it can be ungodly and destructive.

When God expresses anger it's always righteous. When we express our anger , its often, if not usually, unrighteous.

We learned that anger that occurs for sinful reasons is sinful anger



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- Anger for selfish reasons like Jealousy
- Anger that controls us, causing us to act out of passion
- Anger is a dominant feature of our lives.
- There are more characteristics in Chapter 2