

NEW LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

HOW TO DEAL WITH ANGER

Anger is an involuntary reaction to a displeasing situation or event. As long as anger is limited to this involuntary, initial emotion, it may be considered a normal reaction. It is when we respond improperly to anger when we either lose our temper or store the anger so that it makes us resentful or hostile that it becomes dangerous. It is here that the Bible calls us to account.

In discussing anger, we must realize that not all anger is wrong. When the Bible mentions anger, it may be focusing on several different emotions. For example:

- Moses was angry when he saw the unfaithfulness and idolatry of his people (Exodus 32:19).
- When He healed the man with the withered hand, Jesus “looked around at them with anger” (Mark 3:5) because He was disturbed by the Pharisees’ stubborn hearts.
- Though not explicitly stated, anger is implied in the attitude and actions of our Lord as He drove the profiteers from the temple (Mark 11:15, 17).
- Anger can sometimes be called for in our response to sin: “Be angry, and do not sin” (Ephesians 4:26).

It Is Scriptural to Control Anger

“A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control” (Proverbs 29:11, NIV). Each person has the right to express his own opinions and to be treated with dignity and respect. At the same time, we should not forget that if Jesus had demanded His “rights,” He would not have gone to the cross! The Christian must be careful of his responses, remembering that one’s position may be right while the accompanying attitudes may be wrong.

Anger Is Excessive or Uncontrolled If It Leads To:

- Outbursts of temper or bad language
- Bitterness, resentment, and hostility (the urge to “get even”)
- Inner turmoil the loss of one’s sense of tranquility and well-being

Do I have the nagging feeling that my attitude is displeasing to God, or that I “give place to the devil” (Ephesians 4:27)?

- Harm to other people. Does the anger negatively affect my testimony as others observe my bad responses?
- Are they victims of those responses, physically or emotionally?

How Can We Learn to Control Anger?

1. Do not interpret everything as a personal offense, oversight, or hurt. At the same time, try to pinpoint the things that cause you to become excessively angry.
2. Make your attitudes and responses a matter for serious prayer. Pray also about the irritating behavior of others that has caused your anger. Remember that God uses people and circumstances to refine our character. We may have many rough edges that need to be filed down!

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How Can We Learn to Control Anger? (continued)

3. Regularly confess excessive anger as sin: “Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry” (Ephesians 4:26, NIV). Learn to balance the books at least by the end of each day.
4. Realize that the Christian must learn to cope with two natures, each striving for supremacy. We must learn to practice the “put off put on” principle of Ephesians 4:22–24 (NIV):
 - A. **“Put off** your old self which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires” (verse 22, emphasis added).
 - B. **“Put on** the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness” (verse 24, emphasis added).
 - C. The effect of practicing the “put off put on” principle is to “be made new in the attitude of your minds” (verse 23; see 2 Corinthians 5:17).
5. Strive to focus your anger away from yourself, to the problems that are causing it.
6. Surrender each day to the Holy Spirit: “Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature” (Galatians 5:16, NIV).
7. Let the Word of God permeate your life as you read, study, and memorize it: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom” (Colossians 3:16, NIV).

Scripture

“A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Proverbs 15:1, NIV).

“A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control” (Proverbs 29:11, NIV).

“You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness” (Ephesians 4:22–24, NIV).

“Put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language” (Colossians 3:8).

“My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man’s anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires” (James 1:19–20, NIV).