

PROVERBS SERIES FOURTEEN
HOW TO HANDLE ANGER
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Proverbs 14:17;15:1;16:14;17:1;20:3;21:14;29:11

A man with glasses had been drinking for a while in a bar on the top floor of the Empire State Building. He was becoming mean and surly. Another patron decided to cheer him up. He told him that life was really great and he wasn't going to leave until the angry man started to smile.

The more they talked the angrier the man with glasses became. He just wanted to be left alone.

Finally the surly drinker pointed out at the skyline and asked the unappointed cheerleader if he knew that happened to the winds when they swept through the big city's skyscrapers.

He told him, "When the wind sweeps through the buildings of a big city it creates powerful updrafts.

Sometimes, like today, they are so strong that you can hardly throw anything off the building without it being blown right back up to the top."

He walked out onto the penthouse, climbed up onto the wall, and said, "Look, I'll show you." Before the man could stop him, the man with glasses jumped off the building. The cheerful drinker looked over the edge as the man fell past the 80th floor, 70th floor, 60th floor, 50th floor, and sure enough, down about the 40th floor the man's fall slowed and gradually he began to come back up to the top of the building and climbed back over the ledge safe and sound.

The obnoxious drunk was stunned. He said, "That is the most incredible thing I have ever seen. Do you think I could do it, too?"

The surly patron said, "Of course you can."

So, the man climbed up on the ledge and jumped. And he fell like a rock, splat, all the way to the pavement below never pausing for even a moment during his trip.

As the surly man went back to the bar and ordered another drink, the bartender turned to another patron and said,

☉ SLIDE: "That Clark Kent really gets mean when he drinks."

☉ SLIDE: Proverb 29:11: *A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.*

☉ SLIDE: "Anger is just one letter away from danger."

☉ SLIDE: Wedding dress for sale, never worn.
Will trade for .38 caliber pistol.

TODAY we will talk about the Proverbial Wisdom about handling our anger.

☉ SLIDE: WHERE DOES ANGER ORIGINATE IN THE BRAIN?

☉ SLIDE: Fish Brain: lower brain—breathing, eating, react to pain (don't feel it); no cerebrum; no thinking; all instincts

☉ SLIDE: Reptilian Brain: lower brain, tiny cerebrum; little decision making; basically all instinct.

☉ SLIDE: Mammalian brain: lower brain for instincts and basic life support and larger cerebrum.

☉ SLIDE: Human brain: still has lower brain (instincts; emotions; eat, drink; sleep, reproductive drives); well-developed cerebrum (thinking and reasoning and self awareness).

● SLIDE: The entire brain: The Amygdala, an unconscious part of lower brain is intricately involved in the generation of human emotion (not feelings—complicated—possible to go into the emotion of anger and rage without feeling it. It is instrumental in the *Fear/Appeasement—Flight—Fight* survival response.

● OVERHEAD: Fear/Appeasement—flight—fight
Today's boardroom

Close proximity of the three areas in the amygdala
Stimulate part of the amygdala and get rage response.

1 of 3 murderers have no recollection of the murder. Blank out. Wake up holding knife over a dead body.
Can fix it with electrode cauterization. Should we still send them to prison?

Do have some control. Cerebrum thinks and can over ride anger and rage.

Neurons go from cerebrum to hypothalamus to amygdala. Have to grow into place. Begin to grow in place by age end of age 2.

Terrible Twos. No neurons. Mom and dad can encourage the growth and strength of the neurons. More child is patterned to control rage and anger, stronger and more numerous are the neurons. Better able to control anger in adult.

Child left to himself and not corrected and patterned in early life will struggle more with anger as an adult.
Fewer and weaker neurons.

Need for balance. Most people are balanced to varying degrees.

Look at how Proverbs deals with the amygdala processing.

APPEASEMENT

SLIDE: Prov 15:1: A gentle answer turns away wrath,
but a harsh word stirs up anger.

● SLIDE: Prov 21:14: A gift given in secret soothes anger,
and a bribe concealed in the cloak pacifies great wrath.

● SLIDE: Prov 16:14: A king's wrath is a messenger of death,
but a wise man will appease it.

FLIGHT

● SLIDE: Prov 17:1: Better a dry crust with peace and quiet
than a house full of feasting, with strife.

FIGHT

● SLIDE: Prov 20:3: It is to a man's honor to avoid strife,
but every fool is quick to quarrel.

● SLIDE: IS IT A SIN TO BE ANGRY?

Of course not, it is built in. But we have to be careful with it.

● SLIDE: Prov 14:17: A quick-tempered man does foolish things.

● SLIDE: Ephesians 4:26-27: *IN YOUR ANGER DO NOT SIN...*

The emotion of anger is not sin. Anger does not become sin until we translate it into aggressive and hostile actions—or activities destructive to the self.

● SLIDE: WHY DO PEOPLE GET ANGRY?

● SLIDE: 1. They get hurt.

● SLIDE: Prov 20:2: A king's wrath is like the roar of a lion; he who angers him forfeits his life.

Loss; Personal injury; Frustration

● SLIDE: Dave Ferguson Met With Husband Who Had Terrible Rage Background. Battered wives, abuser programs, hitting holes in walls, penitentiary. Angry man.

Pastor encouraged him to come for counseling. Andy came. Sitting there. Dave knew that underneath that anger was just a guy who had been hurting alone.

David wanted him to know that he knew he was angry: "I understand that beneath your rage is a person who is dealing with a tremendous amount of hurt." Comforted him. "I am sorry for the hurt of the decades." He softened before David's eyes.

"With the amount of rage you have, I am sure you have dealing with some deep, traumatic events." Andy not only softens, he gets teary eyed. Pastor never seen this. "Would you be willing to tell your pastor about your pain?"

"I have to tell someone." David left and heard Andy wailing for 30 minutes. Came back in they were embracing.

Andy shared his pain with David. As a little boy, 7 years old, he was told to be home at 8:00 p.m. He got home at 8:45 p.m. instead of 8:00 p.m. On the way home 3 boys sexually abused him in park. "If I hadn't been late this would not have happened. My fault." Got home and was disciplined for being late.

Carried this around for 4 decades. Healed his hurts and dealt with his anger and bitterness and now leads marriage seminars in church

● SLIDE: 2. Some are angry because of a brain chemistry imbalance.

Aviator Movie: Howard Hughes could have lived a normal life with one or two little pills per day—such are the advances of modern medicine.

Over active fear and appeasement leads to phobias and anxiety.

Over active flight leads to escape.

Overactive anger leads to continual and out of control anger.

Don't be afraid to take medicines. If thyroid problem, you'd take thyroid pills.

"I am afraid of side effects!"

Don't quit: learned something—what doesn't work for you. Might be just the right thing for the person next to you. Try another one.

● SLIDE: 3. Some open their lives to a demonic stronghold.

Ephesians 4:26-27: "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 *AND DO NOT GIVE THE DEVIL A FOOTHOLD.*

● SLIDE: WHAT MIGHT ANGER LOOK LIKE?

We Tend To Be Angry And Sin In Either One Of Two Directions—One is easy to recognize, the other is often insidious.

OVERHEAD: 1. The ventilation of anger. We blow up! Easy to see.
2. The internalization of anger. We clam up! Harder to recognize the symptoms.

In Greek there are two words for anger:

"Thumos" describes the flame which comes from dried straw. It is the anger which quickly blazes up and which just as quickly dies down.

"Orge" is the long-lived anger; it is the anger of the man who nurses his wrath to keep it warm; it is the anger over which a person broods, and which he will not allow to die.

VENTILATION

● SLIDE: Prov 29:11: *A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.*

● SLIDE: The Angry Book by Theodore Isaac Rubin, M.D: Unprocessed anger produces a slush fund or poison which will eventually have deep ramifications in our lives. Finally explodes.

● SLIDE: Road Rage; Bullying; Explosive Behavior; Rage; Violence; Suicide; Murder

Research now reveals that ventilation serves only to encourage more frequent use of aggressive behavior in the future.

One study showed that children who were originally low in aggressive behavior and who were given free play experiences in playing with aggressive toys became significantly more aggressive in their behavior after playing with those toys.

Playing with violent video games does not drain away anger. Rather, it opens up new ways for expressing anger and for translating anger into hostility.

OVERHEAD: GRAPH of Accumulated anger. Physical abuse is often genetic predisposition.

REPRESSION: Holding back anger by denying that it exists or by forcing it out of our awareness.

● SLIDE: Prov 29:11: *A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.*

The Angry Book by Theodore Isaac Rubin. Symptoms when anger is internalized.

● SLIDE: Anxiety; Depression; Self-Sabotage; High Blood Pressure; Over eating; Under eating; Sleep Problems; Silent Treatment; Malicious Gossip; Overworking; Over sexing; Over exercising; Bad Dreams; Fatigue; Drugs; Alcohol; Juice-Stewing

Jerry Day: "Your tests show that you are a very angry man.

Neither blowing up or clamming up is a proper way to handle anger.

● SLIDE: WHAT DO YOU DO IF YOU FIND YOURSELF LOSING CONTROL?

● SLIDE: Prov 16:32: *Better a patient man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city.*

● SLIDE: 1. Deescalate the emotions of the moment. Choose to calm yourself down.

Mary Gordon, a Christian woman describes in “Fascination Begins in the Mouth”, a personal experience with rage that I want us to hear.

It was a hot August afternoon. I was having 10 people over for dinner that evening. I was chopping, stirring, bending over a low flame, on that hot afternoon. No one was giving me a bit of help and I was getting angry.

My mother and my children put on their swim suits and got in the car and refused to move until I took them swimming. They leaned on the horn and shouted my name out the window, well within hearing of the neighbors, reminding me of my promise to take them to the pond.

And *I lost it*. I jumped on the hood of the car. I pounded on the windshield. I told my mother and my children that I was never, ever going to take any of them anywhere again. I told them they were never going to have a friend over to play ever again. I couldn't stop pounding on the windshield.

Then the frightening thing happened. I became a huge bird. A vulture. My legs became hard stalks; my eyes were sharp and vicious. I developed a murderous beak. Greasy black feathers took the place of arms. I flapped and flapped. Each time my beak landed near my victims (it seemed to be my fists on the windshield, but it was really my beak on their necks) I went back for more. The taste of blood entranced me. I wanted to peck and peck forever. I wanted to carry them all off in my bloody beak and drop them on a rock where I would feed on their battered corpses till my bird stomach swelled.

I don't mean this figuratively: I became that bird. I had to be forced to get off the car and stop pounding the windshield. Even then I didn't come back to myself. When I did, I was appalled. I realized I had genuinely frightened my children. My son said to me, “I was scared because I didn't know who you were.”

“I understand that this is not sin of a serious nature. I know this to be true because it has its comic aspects and deadly sin is characterized by the absence of humor, which always brings life. But because of that experience and others I won't tell you about, I understand the deadly sin of anger.”

She misdiagnosed what happened.

OVERHEAD: She reinforced the loop—and escalated her own anger (and she probably has a brain chemistry problem.

☺ SLIDE: Prov 30:33: For as churning the milk produces butter, and as twisting the nose produces blood, so stirring up anger produces strife.”

Get angry, clench fists, shout words...your body and cerebrum are screaming at the amygdala to escalate the problem.

☺ SLIDE: Thomas Jefferson: “Count to ten. If that doesn't work, count to one hundred.”

☺ SLIDE: Mark Twain: “Count to ten. If you don't feel better by the time you get to four, swear.”

SLIDE: Prov 15:1: A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

Make a worry face and body tells amygdala to begin worry process. Begin to look for things to worry about. You can always find something.

Tough times, smile and body is giving prompts to amygdala to cheer up.

This is why yoga brings such physical peace.

☺ SLIDE: 2. Ask the question, “Where have I been hurt?”

Then, process the hurt by mourning with a trusted friend and receiving comfort.
Understand the truth of what happened.
Forgive your offender.

● SLIDE: Prov 19:11 A man's wisdom gives him patience;
it is to his glory to overlook an offense.

● SLIDE: HOW DO WE TREAT ANGRY PEOPLE? WITH COMPASSION AND UNDERSTANDING

● SLIDE: Prov 15:1: A gentle answer turns away wrath,
but a harsh word stirs up anger.

Angry people are most often hurting people. People get angry because they get hurt.
Need mourning and comfort.

Ask the question, “Where are they hurting. Mourn and comfort.

● SLIDE: The Academy-Award-winning movie *Forrest Gump* has been viewed by millions. Most people remember “life is like a box of chocolates”, but there is another line worth noting.
In this particular scene one of the central characters, Jenny, returns to her old dilapidated and abandoned home after her father has died.

As she reflects on the sexual abuse that she endured from her dad as a child, she is overcome by rage and begins throwing rocks at the house. The scene escalates as we watch her rapidly reaching for rocks and then violently throwing them at the house.

Jenny finally falls to the ground in exhaustion and the scene closes with Forrest Gump sympathizing,

● SLIDE: “Sometimes there just aren’t enough rocks.”

Many of us struggle with anger. It can stem from a variety of reasons, and some anger seems very justifiable. Yet, unresolved anger leaves us reaching and crying out for more rocks. The rage is never satisfied, and contentment is never found. Through the power of Christ we can find the strength to lay down rocks of anger rather than needing to reach for more.