

Student Work

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Anger is a Choice

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Anger is a Choice

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February 12, 2017

Eliana Radde

Daily Scripture Texts

[Psalm 119:1-8](#)

[Deuteronomy 30:15-20](#)

[Matthew 5:21-37](#)

[1 Corinthians 3:1-9](#)

What is anger? Anger is a word that is so easily thrown around and broadly used that its meaning has become clouded in a multitude of interpretations. Anger is a sin that is often overlooked in the grand scheme of “bad things”. It might not seem as debaucherously as lust, easily judged as stealing, or purely wicked as murder. And yet, anger is something that each of us is regularly guilty of committing. Is this because we allow ourselves to rationalize our anger in our minds, and, in turn, more easily forgive ourselves for being angry? I mean, let’s be perfectly honest, I’m always rational when I’m angry and always right...Right? But, all jokes aside, the instant that we justify a sinful act, we allow ourselves to overlook it.

I think that the destructiveness of anger is more relevant than ever in the interconnected, digital, and social media driven world of today’s generation. Each of us has, at our fingertips, the ability to impact others positively or negatively whether they be next door or thousands of miles away, strangers or friends. This is particularly true given the intersection of social media and today’s emotionally charged political climate. There is little to no personal consequences to the words that we type or the manner in which we choose to react. Because of this, we frequently give little thought to those people that we are hurting through our hasty, self-serving comments, often humiliating them in front of their friends and family.

With that in mind, I believe that anger is a choice. We have the ability to choose whether we are going to let something lead us into anger with another. Sure, it might feel as if anger is just an instinctual emotion, but after that initial reaction, we can decide whether we will pursue the anger or deal with the issue in a more diplomatic manner. Once I came to this realization, I remember making a conscious effort to think about whether anger and the harm it causes to others is really worth “winning” or proving my knowledge. In each circumstance, I was able to come up with a reason as to why I should hold my tongue or how I could approach the issue in a different way—a method that did not result in raised voices and fallen dispositions.

Of course, there are many different facets of anger that extend beyond what a few short paragraphs can describe: wrath, disdain, loathing, angry people. And where does righteous anger even fit in? We have only begun to scratch the surface on this topic. Matthew 5:23-24 states: “So if you are offering a gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.” Anger breeds contempt, hatred, wrath, and self-loathing. But the natural cure to anger is love: love for others and love for self. And out of love emerges forgiveness, grace, and reconciliation. We are commanded to love our neighbors as ourselves. Perhaps instead of simply suppressing our anger, we should see it as an opportunity to actively channel those emotions into love and understanding.

So the next time anger tries to overcome you, remember that you have a choice.