

The Man in the Mirror

Solving the 24 Problems Men Face

Anger

Unedited Transcript

Ephesians 4:26-27, Ecclesiastes 7:9, James 1:19-20, Proverbs 26:2

Good morning, men! We are in the series called the Man in the Mirror. We're in the section on solving our temperament problems. We've looked at pride. We've looked at fear. Then this morning we're going to look at anger. We have two more in this section. The desire to be independent and avoiding suffering. Before we get going on that, let's go ahead and do a shout out this morning. We're kind of getting caught up and so we'll go back to doing one a week. This week goes to Mt. Tabor Men of Mt. Tabor Baptist Church in Bowman, SC. 12 men who have been meeting at the church for 12 weeks on Thursdays at 7:30pm using the Video Bible Study. Led by Corey Leggett and we are looking for an Area Director for this region in South Carolina. I wonder if you would join me in welcoming these men to our bible study now? One, two, three, hoorah! Welcome guys, we're glad to have you with us!

That's the series, the Man in the Mirror and this morning we're talking about anger. Anger is a very expensive emotion. Perhaps, the most expensive, 75-90% of all doctor office visits are stress related and the primary cause of that stress according to studies is anger, so it's a very expensive emotion. It's very expensive in your relationships. It's very expensive to your health and for some of us it's very expensive to our vocations or our careers. We want to look at that this morning. I want to begin with a question. If I were to call your house this afternoon and speak to your family, and ask them what kind of spirit do you have in the home, what would they tell me? Oh boy, now he's gone to meddling. Would they say he's gentle? He's calm? He's kind? He's helpful? Would they say that he is critical? That he is caustic? That he is mean? That he is an angry man? What I would like to propose to you is: however, you are behind the closed doors of your own private castle is how you really are.

We want to look at this this morning. I realize this is a very tender area because as men most of us are prone to this because of testosterone, to have aggressive feelings. We are prone to anger. Let's take a look at some examples of anger. I want to present this to you in three levels of anger. The first level is normal. Normal anger is a human emotion. Where does anger come from? Does anger come from the devil? Absolutely not. Anger comes from God. God created you. He created you with the emotion of anger and anger accomplishes many constructive purposes. It is through righteous indignation and anger that we overcome injustice. For example, Jesus became angry. What did Jesus become angry about? Stubborn hearts. Did Jesus sin in his anger? Absolutely not.

Do you have to necessarily sin when you become angry? Absolutely not. In fact, you can be angry in a constructive and not a destructive way. Let's take a look at the first text for the day, which is Ephesians chapter 4, verse 26. Hopefully, you are already there.

Ephesians, chapter 4, verse 26. In your anger do not sin. You'll see this in quotes in your Bibles. It's a reference to Psalms, chapter 4, verse 4. Paul's writing. He's quoting from the Old Testament. In your anger, do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry and do not give the devil a foothold. What we see in your anger, do not sin. That is giving a clear indication from the scripture, that you can be angry and not sin. Of course, we have the example of Jesus doing that, but you do give the devil a foothold when you go to bed angry for example. You hold anger in. I think what we see from this text is that there is no such thing as automatic sin. You don't auto sin when you become angry.

In other words, it's human to be angry and the issue is whether you deal with it constructively or destructively. Level one of anger is just this kind of normal anger. God, himself the father is angry, but it says that he's slow to anger, abounding in love. Deuteronomy 6:4, Numbers 14:15-20. Anger is important because, it is the necessary motivator to conquer injustice. If we didn't have anger, what would be the motivation that we would have to go out and conquer? There would not be any! Level one, normal anger. Level two is... let's call it sinful anger. Sinful anger. When does anger become sin? When the goal is to give full vent to your anger. Listen to these verses. You don't need to look them up. You might want to write down the verses so you can look them up later.

Proverbs 29:11. A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control. Proverbs Chapter 14, verse 17. A quick-tempered man does foolish things. Proverbs 19, verse 19. A hot-tempered man must pay the penalty. If you rescue him you will have to do it again. When does anger become sin? Well, anger becomes sin when making you feel bad, makes me feel better. When you go off on somebody, and of course we all know that the tendency is to go off on the people that are the closest to us, that can't retaliate against us. Sinful anger, three examples of this sinful type of anger would be Freddie Flash and this is out of the book, *The Man in the Mirror*.

Examples of Anger

Freddie Flash has a low flash point. The slightest thing sets off this trigger. He's just popping off at all kinds of little minor irritations. Not getting his own way. The sandwich was cut in half instead of diagonally. All kinds of little things for Freddie Flash. He has a frequency problem. He's constantly flying off the handle. Cary Control on the other hand, he's able to keep himself under control for a period of time, but they sort of build up with him and then he explodes and usually the thing that triggers him is something that is relatively small and usually by someone unrelated to the thing that has bothered him. He goes off and he has an intensity problem. Freddie Flash has a frequency problem. Cary Control has an intensity problem.

He flies into a rage. If it's with his wife, his wife is absolutely terrified. Doesn't know what to expect, so Freddie Flash, Cary Control and then Gary Grudge. Gary Grudge doesn't get mad, he gets even. What he does is he just collects all of these things that make him angry and rather than processing them, he plots his revenge against the person who's made him angry. There are a few examples. How does that happen? It happens, by not walking in the Holy Spirit. When you, as a believing person, walk in the power of the Holy Spirit, then you will have the power to overcome the temptation to be Freddie Flash, Cary Control or Gary Grudge. Why? Because of the fruit of the spirit. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, but it's your choice whether you walk in the power of the Holy Spirit or walk in the power of the flesh or the sinful nature.

The flesh and the sinful nature are synonyms in the Bible. Different versions say it different ways. You have it within you to turn to Jesus and ask him to fill you with the power of his Holy Spirit to walk in his

power or to respond according to your sinful nature. The Bible says that the flesh is warring against the spirit and the spirit is warring against the flesh, so you don't do what you want to do. How do you overcome this? We turn to Jesus and we ask him to fill us with the Holy Spirit. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, self-control. If we're in the Holy Spirit, then we will have the power to handle anger in a normal and not a sinful way.

This is the definition of anger, right out of the dictionary. I tweaked it a little bit. A strong feeling of displeasure and belligerence aroused by (and then I added) real or perceived wrong. It seemed to me that a lot of times the things that make us angry are totally unintended by the person that angers us, at least that's the way it is at my house. Very often it's a real wrong, but anyway it's this feeling of displeasure and belligerence. We've looked at level one normal anger. We looked at level two, sinful anger and now let's look at level three. That's an angry spirit. The difference between anger which is a strong feeling of displeasure and an angry spirit and I made it look like it's a dictionary definition. It's not. I just made it up. The state of always feeling displeasure and belligerence aroused by real or perceived wrongs.

The difference between just anger and an angry spirit is that word always. Always angry. A friend of mine, I called him Daniel in the book, his real name is Dave. He's fine with me using his real name. He and his wife had been out to dinner. This was when he lived in Baltimore. They had a lovely evening and on the way home he was sort of reveling in the beauty of the night. He was pulling up to a stoplight and cab driver dove into the space in front of him. It just set him off. He just went crazy. He started yelling expletives and waving his hands and so forth. The light turned green and the cab driver took off and he decided to take off after him.

He's driving down the road waving his hands out the window and screaming at the cab driver. His terrified little wife is sitting right next to him. Finally the cabbie catches a red light and so he pulls up on the passenger's side of the cab and he's just giving it to the cab driver, but the window is rolled up on the cab. Finally the cabbie leans over and he rolls down the window, he said, "Hey buddy, what do you want me to do die?" This happened; because, Dave had an angry spirit. Henry Brandt, Dr. Henry Brandt, the psychologist, he said that other people do not create your spirit, they only reveal it. If your wife does little things that irritate you and tick you off and you lose it, she doesn't create that in you, that's already in you.

She's just triggering something that's already in you; because, of an angry spirit. Now here's the solution. We've looked at three levels. Normal, sinful and the spirit of anger. Here's the solution and this is the big idea for the day: **I pledge not to sin when I get angry, but openly confess I can't do it on my own.** We're going to flesh this out a little bit more. I pledge not to sin when I get angry. You can do that. You can make a pledge that you will not sin when you get angry and you should, but also you should openly confess I can't do this on my own. I've tried to do this. I can't do this. I know I can't do this on my own. I can do it. I can make the pledge here at the bible study, at my table and in theory it sounds really good. Until I get in front of him or until that person cuts me off or whatever it is.

7 Sources of Anger

Let's look at seven sources of anger. I'm going to go through these pretty quickly because they are in the book. Number one is a violation of rights. Whether it's the space in front of you on the highway that you feel like you deserve, or somebody violating your personal space, that 18" zone around your face. Violation of things that you've come to think of as I have a right to this. I have a right to come home

from work and not have to engage my family for an hour. If you think that's a right and then you have a child that comes in with a question or problem, then that can be a trigger for anger.

By the way if you're a disciple, part of being a disciple means being a servant. Part of being a servant means that you exist for the pleasure of your master, Jesus. You're not looking for what do I want out of the situation, but what does the master need out of this situation. Number two: Disappointment with your station in life. This can come a couple of ways. You might feel like your oyster didn't have a pearl in it. I've got a friend, his name is Bill and Bill was going through this disappointment with station in his life. Christian guy. He used to go out into his garage and take a hammer and pound on his work bench for over an hour at a time. He would just sit there for over an hour. He was so angry. How many of you men have homes that have had no damage because of your anger?

No punched drywall. No doors off the hinges. Don't raise your hands. How many of you have had to do drywall work when you sold your house. A lot of that comes from disappointment with station in life. Number three, blocked goals. I really would like to go into more things here this morning, but we can't do that, but I'm going to give you a reference. If you have suffered from blocked goals, in other words you decided you wanted to have a child. You wanted to stay married. You wanted to purchase a particular home. Have your kids go to a certain kind of school. Drive a certain kind of car. Have a certain kind of job. That goal has been blocked and you have experienced anger because of that. Proverbs, Chapter 21, verses 5-8. Look it up.

So we have violation of rights, disappointment with station in life, blocked goals and then irritations. She clutches the toothpaste tube. I am very methodical. I even take a straight edge and I work the toothpaste up the toothpaste tube. Then she gets a hold of it and she just goes uh! Billy, how many times have I told you not to bounce that ball in the house! Irritations, another source of anger. Number five, feeling misunderstood. Oh poor baby. I feel so bad for you. Have a little pity party. Chris was talking about it in the video at the top of the show here. Yeah, so feeling misunderstood often results in a pity party or an explosion of anger too. As he was talking about it was actually Seamands' who wrote a book called *Healing For Damaged Emotions*. If that resonates, you might want to get it.

The author says that depression is frozen rage. People are depressed because they have an inner rage. They have this anger, but they are not necessarily big on verbalizing it or expressing that externally. They internalize their anger. You see people all the time who don't explode. They're not Freddie Flash. They're not Cary Control but they are bottling up this anger. I will assure you, especially as some of you get older, you will find that this bottled up anger will absolutely come out. If you have unprocessed anger, guess what, you're going to be processing it later. Instead of processing this little 8" tall cute cuddly problem, you're going to have this 8' tall monster with these big, jagged teeth that you're going to have to deal with.

That's just reality. Feeling misunderstood. Then six, unrealistic expectations. This is particularly prevalent in our personal relationships with those that are closest to us. It's interesting that we tend to give total strangers more slack than we give the people that are closest to us that we really love. Our expectations of those that we're close to tend to be higher than those expectations we have for total strangers. That makes no sense. The closer we are to somebody the more grace we should extend to them, because of the love, the intimacy that we have for them and of course anger destroys intimacy, too! Finally, seven. We've got violation of rights, disappointment with station in life, blocked goals, irritations, feeling misunderstood, unrealistic expectations, and then pathological or psychological reasons.

Some people do have diseases that create anger. Some people have emotional disorders that create anger and of course that requires professional help. The root of all these things though, except the ones that are pathological or psychological, the root of this is selfishness and impatience. I mean think about it. Can you think of anything that makes you angry because it's anything other than you didn't get what you wanted? I mean probably not. As long as you're getting what you want, you're not angry, right? If you don't get what you want, one of responses to that is what? To get angry! At the root of all this is selfishness and then impatience that comes with it, too. How do you respond to this? How do you respond to these seven sources of anger? The Big Idea: I pledge not to sin when I get angry, but I openly confess that I can't do it on my own. Given that, what can you do?

What To Do About It

Let's talk about what to do about it, what to do about anger. A little diagnostic here for yourself, do you have an angry spirit? Do I have an angry spirit? First am I easily offended? Do I assume the worst about people's motives? Do I yell at the evening news, like my dear sweet dad used to do? Like he was going to do something about it. My dad was this really meek, not timid, he was a man's man, but a very meek, controlled guy, until the evening news came on. Oh my gosh! Am I a steaming pot always about to boil over? Is my anger free floating? Do you have this volcano of anger just sort of floating around there and you never know exactly when it's going to erupt?

I'm always angry, but I don't know why. Is my anger explosive? I have a hair trigger and I explode at slight provocations. Is my anger suppressed? I withdraw, pout, get bitter and sometimes depressed. All right, so what do you do about it? Number one is if you are an angry person, don't deny it. Don't suppress it. I've heard many teachings that if you're a Christian, you shouldn't be angry. That is absolute heresy! You're made in the image of God and God has anger! He is slow to anger, abounding in love. He created us with angers and emotion. If God didn't create it, where did it come from? It comes from God! He wants us to use it in the normal way, not the sinful or the angry spirit way, but it's from God! It's from God, so don't deny it. Don't suppress it, because, if you do, it will come out in other ways.

It'll come out in your relationships. It will destroy. I don't need to tell you how corrosive anger is in relationships. It will destroy them. It will ruin your physical health. If you suppress and deny anger and don't learn how to deal with it constructively, you will have health problems and it will affect your career. I have somebody that I know, that I love very dearly, but he has ruined his career by always being angry and upset. He's always smarter than his bosses. He always thinks everybody got ahead of him that shouldn't, but what he's never been able to grasp is that he has an angry spirit and it comes out at work. It has basically blocked him from this goals. Don't deny or suppress it. Learn to express your anger constructively. Let's look again at Ephesians Chapter 4, verses 26 and 27. Oh I forgot to mention, Ecclesiastes 7:9, that's on your handout. That talks about not having a spirit of anger.

Ephesians 4:26 again, in your anger do not sin. Learn how to express it constructively. Here's how you do it constructively. You don't let the sun go down on your anger. You don't give the devil a foothold with the anger. Then drop down to verse 31, get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other. Forgiving each other just as in Christ, God forgave you. Don't deny it. Learn to express it constructively. Now you're thinking a great idea, but I can't. I tried this. It doesn't work for me. It might work for other people, it just doesn't work for me. It doesn't work for anybody. You're right. When you say I can't do this. You're right. You can't do this, but Jesus in you can do this.

Don't deny or suppress, the first piece. The second piece is learn how to deal with anger constructively. The third piece is to trust Jesus through the Holy Spirit to help you conquer it. Turn with me to James, Chapter 1, verse 19. James, Chapter 1, verse 19. If you're not familiar with all these different places in the Bible, you can just listen. James, Chapter 1, great prescription if you will. My dear brothers take note of this. Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry. Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.

I had a man that worked for me when I was in the real estate business and he had an executive type position. He was in charge of all our leasing, but he had a spirit of anger. I kept overlooking the spirit of anger. He would fly off the handle at fellow employees, associates. This went on for a couple of years. Then the word started to trickle back to me that he was also flying off the handle with leasing brokers in this town. The brokers that we depended upon in order to lease up our buildings. He was alienating them with his angry outbursts. Then that's not all. I found out that when he would take a call from a tenant that instead of having a servant heart and attitude, he would ream them out often for not taking care of the problem themselves or bringing a minor problem to the attention of the office.

I called him into the office. I'll call him Fred. That's not his real name. I said, Fred, I love you very much, but the business portion of our relationship has come to its natural conclusion. You're fired. That's the penalty of a man who gives full vent to his anger, who does not keep himself under control. Whether it's in your work or in your relationships or your health, I exhort you, don't pay the price for anger. Instead do the Big Idea. Make a pledge not to sin when I get angry and openly confess that I can't do it on my own. We can't do this without Jesus through his spirit. Let's pray!

Closing Prayer

Our dearest Father, thank you so much for your word and just how clear it is on what we should need to do and how you give us the power to do it. We come to you humbly Lord. An area that is sensitive for many of us. An area that's caused many of us a lot of grief, a lot of pain. This corrosive problem of anger. We turn it over to you in our lives. We pledge ourselves to not sin when we become angry and we openly confess that we cannot do this on our own without the power of your Holy Spirit in us. Help us Father as we go forward in our own lives to be the kind of men that would welcome someone to call our home and ask what kind of a spirit does he have? In Jesus' name, amen.