

1. The anger of God

Real and personal:

“God judges the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day.” - Psalm 7:11

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God has showed it to them.” - Romans 1:18-19

“He who believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him.” - John 3:36

“And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?'" - Revelation 6:15-17.

Provoked by sin, especially idolatry:

“And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger.” - Judges 2:12

“Therefore is the anger of the LORD kindled against his people, and he has stretched forth his hand against them, and has smitten them: and the hills did tremble, and their carcasses were torn in the midst of the streets. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.” - Isaiah 5:25

Yet God is slow to express his anger, abounding in mercy and patience, eager to forgive:

“The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.” - Psalm 103:8

“The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.” - Psalm 145:8

“Therefore also now, says the LORD, turn even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and he relents from doing harm.” - Joel 2:12-13.

2. Identifying ungodly anger

Righteous anger: directed to God's glory, not self. Not simply directed against sin – but against sin against God.

“And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; And said unto them that sold doves, 'Take these things from here; do not make my Father's house an house of merchandise.' And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of your house has eaten me up.” - John 2:14-17

Two ways in which ungodly anger can be expressed: exploding and bottling.

1 Samuel 18:11 - *“And Saul cast the javelin; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall with it. And David avoided out of his presence twice.”*

1 Kings 21:4 - *“And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.”*

Connected with a range of sins: *“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:”* - Ephesians 4:31

Unrighteous anger is easily provoked: *“Be not hasty in your spirit to be angry: for anger rests in the bosom of fools.”* - Ecclesiastes 7:9

3. Defeating ungodly anger

A heart issue: *“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,”* - Mark 7:21

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” - Galatians 5:19-21

“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” - James 1:19-20

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.” - 1 John 1:8-10

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” - Galatians 5:22-23

Ephesians 4:20-32 – Putting off the old man and putting on the new man; *“Be angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: ... Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.”*

Matthew 5:43-48 – the standards of the kingdom: *“You have heard that it has been said, 'You shall love thy neighbour, and hate your enemy.' But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven...”*

Some wisdom from Proverbs:

Proverbs 15:1 - *“A soft answer turns away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.”*

Proverbs 15:18 - *“A wrathful man stirs up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeases strife.”*

Proverbs 16:32 - *“He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that rules his spirit than he that takes a city.”*

Proverbs 19:11 - *“The discretion of a man defers his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.”*