

Anger

(Ephesians 4:26-32 NKJV) ““Be angry, and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, {27} nor give place to the devil. {28} Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. {29} Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. {30} And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. {31} Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. {32} And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.”

Verses 26-27

(New Living Translation) “And “don’t sin by letting anger gain control over you.” Don’t let the sun go down while you are still angry, {27} for anger gives a mighty foothold to the Devil.”

(God’s Word Translation)

“Be angry without sinning. Don’t go to bed angry. {27} Don’t give the devil any opportunity <to work>.”

(International Children’s Bible)

“When you are angry, do not sin. And do not go on being angry all day. {27} Do not give the devil a way to defeat you.”

We all go through painful experiences. We are all hurt by others. We see people we care about getting hurt and we get angry and resentful. When any of this happens, we are easily moved to emotions that multiply the hurt within us. When left unresolved, anger grows into resentment and resentment ultimately becomes a root of bitterness.

Resentment: *A feeling of indignation or persistent ill will at something regarded as wrong, insulting or injurious (same as an offense - which is an act of stumbling, a cause or occasion of sin - a stumbling block)*

Bitterness: *Distasteful, distressing to the mind, intensely unpleasant, expressive of severe pain, grief or regret*
(Definitions paraphrased from Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition)

Our natural reaction is to look for someone to blame... for someone to be the object of our negative emotions. Sometimes, that someone may even be us.

- Who is to blame for what made us angry is not the issue.
- Being responsible to God for our attitudes and actions is the real issue.

Anger is an Emotional Reaction that is Out of Control

Anger is a passionate reaction in us. When left unchecked, this reaction becomes a decision - an act of our will to perpetuate negative, ungodly feelings. Once we make this decision, we lose control. We cultivate our negative passions, and allow them to grow, all the time gaining more and more control over us. Our anger becomes sin, because it rejects God's Word - and His will for our lives. It puts our feelings on the throne and we no longer walk in the Spirit, submitting to God.

POINT 1. Uncontrollable anger is always sin.

There is never justification for venting our angry feelings in ways that allow them to rule over our lives - and become a stumbling block to us, or others around us.

There are two ways that anger works in us.

1. We blow up!



2. We clam up!



1. BLOWING UP

There can typically be **three targets for our anger** when we blow up. In all three cases, our actions are sinful. They result in an explosion of hurt. It affects us and those around us.

1. Blowing up can be an outward expression or eruption of our angry emotions toward other people. When this happens, we react in judgment without any mercy. We cease to manifest Christian character. We deny our heritage as children of God. The effect between Christians is to destroy relationship, to break the ties that keep us in fellowship with one another. The effect between us and non-Christians is to put up a wall that will keep them from seeing Christ and experiencing His light, shining in us. We effectively take a part in condemning them to the path of darkness they are taking.

2. Sometimes, the angry blowup can be directed **back toward ourselves**. When this happens we are outwardly expressing our frustrations about ourselves. We begin to become our own judges. When we behave sinfully, we are no longer honoring and respecting ourselves as God desires. **Often, our lashing out will touch someone who is an innocent bystander to whatever we are angry about.** They catch the fallout from our explosions.

Blowing up at ourselves is clearly the result of having unrealistic expectations for our own performance. Much of the time our anger and frustration comes because we are used to relying on ourselves. We are not in the habit of giving enough control to God.

3. Blowing up can also be an outburst **without a particular target**. If we allow anger to blow up from within us often enough, it becomes a pattern or a habit, and thus, the first choice whenever we are under pressure. This behavior will tend to isolate us, as nobody wants to be too close to someone who becomes unpleasant to be around, over and over again.

Jesus never allowed His anger to get out of control, or turn to resentment and bitterness. He was always the perfect example of the scriptural admonition not to sin by letting anger gain control.

(Again, New Living Translation) “And “don’t sin by letting anger gain control over you... for anger gives a mighty foothold to the Devil.”

(Proverbs 14:29 God’s Word Translation) “A person of great understanding is patient, but a short temper is the height of stupidity.”

(Proverbs 29:11 International Children’s Bible) “A foolish person loses his temper. But a wise person controls his anger.”

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

Blowing up in anger is the act of giving control of our actions to someone, or something other than God. It means giving our emotions or concern for ourselves priority over the will and feelings of God. Angry outbursts remove us from the protective covering that comes with submission to God and His Word. We give the devil a place to operate. He begins to dictate the quality of life to us. We are snared and on the way to misery!

(Proverbs 15:1 International Children's Bible) "A gentle answer will calm a person's anger. But an unkind answer will cause more anger."

**POINT 2. Uncontrollable anger is an open door to misery.
(For us and others around us)**

Hurts and disappointments are always going to occur. They are not optional in life. What is optional is how we react to them. We can either be miserable, or we can choose to give God's ways an opportunity to take us beyond our pain.

2. CLAMMING UP

When we clam up **we stuff our feelings deep inside of us**. We try to ignore them. We hide them in the deep recesses of our consciousness. However, they never go away, but are always there ready to pop up and remind us of the pain. We have made our choice to live with them. We find ourselves continually rehearsing and reliving them within ourselves.

Clamming up is **like a cancer**. The anger slowly eats away our insides. Clamming up stops us from expressing our feelings. The anger gets planted firmly and its presence prevents emotional healing. **Unresolved anger is a destroyer of relationships**. It keeps us from reconciling - with whoever we're mad at... even if it's God.

Holding a Grudge (Holding it against somebody)

When we stuff our anger, we hold it in readiness to bring it back up at a moment's notice. As this sinful pattern develops, it can accurately be described as resentment. Let's look again at our earlier definition of resentment.

Resentment: *A feeling of indignation or persistent ill will at something regarded as wrong, insulting or injurious (same as an offense - which is an act of stumbling, a cause or occasion of sin - a stumbling block)*

If resentment stays with us for a prolonged time, it will become a grudge. **A grudge is resentment that has infiltrated our hearts and holds strong enough influence over our thinking to color our assumptions and control our actions**. Even those people who are incidental to what caused our anger will feel the weight of our grudges.

A Progressive Pattern of Sinful Captivity

Here's how the pattern progresses from its initial emotions until it has completely captured its victim. It is a four-stage process.

1. **Anger - Stuffed Deep Inside** (festering and heating up)
2. **Resentment - or grudge** (a smothering heaviness)

Herodias' Daughter: Resentment that deepened into a Grudge

(Mark 6:14-24 God's Word Translation) "King Herod heard about Jesus, because Jesus' name had become well-known. Some people were saying, "John the Baptizer has come back to life. That's why he has the power to perform these miracles." ... {16} But when Herod heard about it, he said, "I had John's head cut off, and he has come back to life!" {17} Herod had sent men who had arrested John, tied him up, and put him in prison. Herod did that for Herodias, whom he had married. (She used to be his brother Philip's wife.) {18} John had been telling Herod, "It's not right for you to be married to your brother's wife." {19} So Herodias held a grudge against John and wanted to kill him. ...{21} An opportunity finally came on Herod's birthday... {22} ...Herodias' daughter, came in and danced. Herod and his guests were delighted with her. The king told the girl, "Ask me for anything you want, and I'll give it to you... {24} So she went out and asked her mother, "What should I ask for?" Her mother said, "Ask for the head of John the Baptizer."

3. **Bitterness** (a vile, recurring **emotional taste** from the hurtful experience we had - It just keeps on coming up and burning our hearts)

4. **Given enough time → A Root of Bitterness (a stranglehold)**

A Root of Bitterness will eventually **strangle the soul in its own bitter poisons**. All that is left to look forward to is emotional, spiritual and physical death. A root of bitterness feeds our self-pity and deep disregard for the feelings and well-being of others. As this sinful, destructive root becomes more firmly planted, it grafts itself to our hearts, until it is part of who we are. A root of bitterness has its ultimate end in nothing short of death.

(Proverbs 14:12 International Children's Bible) "Some people think they are doing what's right. But what they are doing will really kill them."

POINT 3. Unexpressed anger will eventually kill you.

When anger roots itself deeply, we become so committed to it that we are trapped. We have gone from our initial anger into deep feelings of misery and now we invite death.

Like blowing up, clamming up is a sin. We reject Biblical instruction, turn our backs on reconciliation and forgiveness and rebel against the leading of the Holy Spirit. We turn our backs on God's way of doing things. We turn our backs on God.

A THIRD OPTION: GIVING UP **(The only option we have to gain the victory)**

We have seen that neither **blowing up** or **clamming up** works to help us in any way. Neither pleases God. Both keep us captive to our feelings. But there is a third way. Instead of blowing up or clamming up, we can give up.

(Galatians 2:20 NKJV) "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Paraphrase using the Greek definition for crucified: sustauroo: "I have been impaled in company with, or in union together with" [Christ.]

Paul writes of how he has crucified his old ways of reacting to the hurtful circumstances of his life. **He has nailed his prideful, self-centered emotional reactions - his negative passions - to the cross.** He no longer lives for himself. Christ now lives in him. Paul is determined to let faith rule his life. He lives to please God. He yields his mind, will and emotions to the lordship of Christ. He is a brand-new man! He has died to self and is alive to all that Christ wants for him. Here's how worked for Paul. It will work for you!

Four Steps to Victory over Anger

First Step: Surrender your will to His will.

It was **not** the hammer in the hand of a Roman that crucified **Jesus Christ, the Son of God.** It was His submission to the will of God the Father. This submission was only possible because of His closeness to God. Jesus gained His victory in the context of His oneness with God. You can too! His weapons in the battle were no different than your weapons are today. His weapons:

- His closeness to God
- His undeniable communion and prayer with God
- His unstoppable determination to see the will of the Father accomplished in His life

Jesus nailed Himself to the cross with the hammer of His own will. Three days later He celebrated absolute victory. He took the kingdom by force with His own determination to love and serve the Father. Will you do the same? If you want that same resurrection power you must first have a crucifixion. If you want to take your kingdom by force, do it by the force of surrender of your will to His.

Second Step: Invite His absolute authority into your life.

(Matthew 6:9-10 NKJV) "In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. {10} Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

(Matthew 28:18 NKJV) "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.""

Third Step: Take your anger to the cross and leave it there. Give it up to God.

The Apostle Paul's Testimony (Paraphrase of Galatians 2:20)

"I have shared the Lord's experience of crucifixion... Not as a spectator, not as someone who read about it, not as someone who heard someone else tell about it...

But as a determined participant who welcomed the painful nailing of my will to the cross of His will!

Nevertheless, (in fact) because of that pain-filled experience, I have now been made alive to a brand new life of total trust and dependence in Him."

(Luke 9:23-26 NKJV) "Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. {24} For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. {25} For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? {26} For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels.""

Your Required Commitment

Deny yourself. Take up your cross daily. Follow Jesus.

Deny who? How often? Follow who?

Become dead to self, dead to anger, dead to holding a grudge and dead to all bitterness! You are alive in Christ!

(Galatians 5:22-24 International Children's Bible) "But the Spirit gives love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, {23} gentleness, self-control. There is no law that says these things are wrong. {24} Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified their own sinful selves. They have given up their old selfish feelings and the evil things they wanted to do."

When you are crucified with Christ, and your life is no longer your own, the hurtful actions of others no longer have the power to control your actions. You have died to self and refuse to resurrect the old ways, the old thinking and the old emotions. Therefore, when something hurtful happens, it no longer hurts you. Why? You are a dead man - a dead woman! Your flesh is impaled on the cross. You will not let it come down! You are dead to self, dead to anger, dead to holding a grudge and dead to all bitterness! You are alive in Christ!

POINT 4. You cannot hurt a dead man!

Anger can no longer affect or control a Christian who has crucified his/her flesh and now lives by faith in the Son of God.

Fourth Step: Move ahead in the blessings and favor of God.

Practical Steps to becoming a "Dead Man"
(Your anger is crucified. You are at peace in Christ.)

1. **Loose your grip on any sin you might be close to. Why should you give it a home in your heart? It will only hurt you.**
2. **Let God and His Word control the direction of your emotions.**
3. **Stop judging the people you ought to be loving.**
4. **Embrace others and value them as God's gift to you.**
5. **Help somebody else get past their emotions and into the blessings of God.**

Position yourself for victory. Recognize the will of God for your life. Then move in to it!

(Psalms 37:8-9 NKJV) "Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret; it only causes harm. {9} For evildoers shall be cut off; But those who wait on the LORD, They shall inherit the earth."