Doest Thou Well To Be Angry?

Sermon to the Elect of God on Sunday, November 15th, 2026

He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city. (Proverbs 16:32)

Today, I'd like to discuss the sin of anger and examine the question that the Lord posed to the prophet Jonah and how we can apply it to ourselves, that is, **"Doest thou well to be angry?" (Jonah 4:4 and 9)**. As I've mentioned in previous opportunities to speak with you all, the lens that I examine these perspectives through are my own. That is, what the Lord has caused me to be taught about anger (from what I've experienced or done). This was a rather difficult sermon to write, as this is for the most part autobiographical. When beholding your natural face in a glass it is always a monstrous and grotesque thing. **But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1Corinthians 15:57).** For the sake of today's work, I'd like to begin with the context of the Lord asking Jonah this question, then look at why anger is a sin and when is it sinful, when is anger not sinful, and lastly consider what we are to do with our anger.

Why was Jonah angry and what was his cause?

For those that may not be familiar with the history recorded in the book of Jonah in the Bible, let me give a quick summary. In roughly 760 B.C., the Lord appeared to Jonah the son of Amittai to go and preach to the city of Nineveh (a great metropolis in this time in history) about their impending destruction. Rather than doing that, Jonah disobeyed God and fled to Joppa and found a ship sailing to Tarshish in order to get the farthest opposite direction from Nineveh that he could. During his journey, and through the events of providence, the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah and after being in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights and praying to the Lord for deliverance, the fish vomited him out onto dry land. The Lord then told Jonah the second time to go and preach to Nineveh that in forty days they would be destroyed. Jonah obeyed the Lord and preached to that city for three days, as it was a three day's journey through the city. After mass repentance of the entire city led by the king of Nineveh, the Lord withheld His wrath and spared that great city. Let's pick up in chapter four, upon Jonah learning of the Lord showing mercy to Nineveh, and read it all.

But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil. Therefore now, O LORD, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live. Then said the LORD, Doest thou well to be angry? So Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what

would become of the city. And the LORD God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd. But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered. And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live. And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, even unto death. Then said the LORD, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle? (Jonah 4)

As we read from this passage, Jonah provides a couple of excuses for why he was angry as the events unfold. He says that he was first angry because he knew the Lord would be merciful (and rather dramatically asks the Lord to take his life), and then he was angry because of the gourd drying up that God sent and the raging heat he experienced as a result (again, quite dramatically asking the Lord to kill him). However, ultimately, he was angry at the Lord and he had no cause to be. Putting yourself in his shoes, you can start to think through the various stages and levels of Jonah's anger as he traversed this journey the Lord put him on to test his faith and teach him invaluable lessons for his soul. Perhaps these reasons sparked and kindled his anger: he was angry because the Lord chose him to do this preaching, he was angry that he was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights, he was angry because he had spent three days walking through the city preaching the message of their destruction, he was angry that the Lord spared that city and all the people in it, he was angry at those people for repenting and receiving God's mercy, he was angry at the gourd for withering away, and he was angry for that vehement east wind and for the sun beating upon his head. Through it all, the Lord showed Jonah the same mercy that he showed to Nineveh, and deals with him as a gentle Father dealing with an undisciplined child. That is each one of us, to some respect, and at various stages of our lives.

<u>Why is anger a sin and when is it sinful?</u>

The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion: whoso provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own soul. (Proverbs 20:2)

The word anger in the Hebrew is from the root nostril, nose, face, anger and literally means "to breathe hard". Wrath is sometimes the same root word, but also several different Hebrew words that mean: burning, splinter, crack off / burst out (in rage), heat, poison. In Jonah, the root word for angry is defined as to be hot, furious, burn, be kindled, to heat oneself in

vexation. Anger, I believe, is sinful behavior in men and should be something to be avoided at all times and at all seasons. When truly considered, we simply do not have a cause and I hope to show in the remainder of this sermon that the answer to the question whether we do well to be angry, is no. The scripture is rife with examples that warn against anger and how dangerous it can be. The scripture also teaches us to stay away from sins like contention, which anger is at the root of.

As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife. (Proverbs 26:21)

But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God. (1 Corinthians 11:16)

We are contentious because we are angry. That contention can be directed at another person because you don't like what they did, or said, or you simply don't agree with them. You can have contention about a circumstance that you don't like or why something is happening. You can be contentious with yourself because of a sin you committed, something you failed in, or something you did that didn't turn out the way you hoped. You can be contentious towards God because of something He has appointed for you at a given moment that you find disagreeable. What is anger but a result of some form of discontentment, murmuring, or pride (which then leads to this contention)?

Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom. (Proverbs 13:10)

King Solomon in his God-given Wisdom warns against anger with these words:

Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad; and a gift destroyeth the heart. Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit. Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools. Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this. (Ecclesiastes 7:7-10)

Our Lord Jesus perfectly lays the axe to the root of the tree concerning anger, in His sermon on the mount, and how the seed of anger begins in the heart. In that preaching, the Lord compares anger with the sin of murder.

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way;

first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing. (Matthew 5:22-26)

Anger often leads to wrath, which is the resulting punishment and consequence, or a physical manifestation of your anger towards another person. That wrath in man then leads to other evil works, or worse sins. A man that dwells in and is a worker of the iniquity of anger is considered a fool and one that exalts folly.

Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth. (Psalm 37:8-9)

A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident. He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated. (Proverbs 14:16-17)

He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly. (Proverbs 14:29)

Not being hasty or quick to anger is a qualification of being an elder in the church, which points to how grave a matter anger is:

For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; (Titus 1:7)

There are many ways and examples in which a person can have anger and show their anger. Anger doesn't always bring on wrath. You can be angry and mistreat someone (bear a grudge, resent them, get revenge, etc.), angry and complain, angry and separate yourself, angry and passive aggressive or hostile, angry and blaming others or making them walk on eggshells around you. You can become angry by being overly critical because someone is doing something you don't like or agree with and then it colors how you interact with them. The list goes on and on. … Anger can look and feel different for different people. At one end of the spectrum, a contentious man often shows their anger openly and with hostility towards others. Likewise, anger can manifest itself through very loud outward explosions of their passions, whether public or private. That visible and aggressive anger can sometimes be towards everyone, a select group of people, or just towards certain individuals. Any time you are openly showing your anger towards another is wrong, but to do so only towards certain people and in certain situations or environments can be an especially grievous thing and demonstrates a way of being a respecter of persons. This tends to happen towards the people that are closest to us.

Children or your spouse is a top example that comes to mind. We're all children, so it most certainly applies.

Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. (Colossians 3:21)

And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)

Our brother Ben, in his sermon series on Ephesians from April 19th, 2026, addressed what provoking your children to wrath means and what that can look like. He taught how it can lead to instability, hurtfulness, unfairness, and unfaithfulness. Blowing up at your children or spouse in anger is one of the primary ways to provoke them to anger and wrath. If a person more easily tends towards an aggressive and outward demonstration of anger, and if left unchecked and reigned in, it becomes your default, until one day you look up and you no longer care who you're angry with and where your outburst is happening.

Anger isn't always visible and doesn't always manifest itself to others. Similar to that of envy, covetousness, discontentment, and pride, it is primarily a sin of the heart. At the other end of the spectrum, there are some individuals that can hide their anger really well, and again, from different people in different ways. In our flesh, we can become very manipulative when it comes to how we show our anger and how we let it affect ourselves and other people. When you aren't becoming openly hostile or aggressive in your anger, it can show all over your countenance or body language. Whether you are prone to jaw clenching, shutting down, internalizing, or maybe even coming across as happy and bubbly on the outside while a fire rages on the inside. Then if you more and more internalize and work to hide your anger, it will become what you are most prone to and like second nature until one day you look up and you're looking around quietly angry and raging over everyone and everything. Just because no one sees your anger, it doesn't mean it isn't grievous. In most cases it's even more so, because of the deceptive and dissembling nature of it (dissembling means to hide your real feelings, opinions, motives, or the actual facts behind a false appearance or pretense). Our brother Charles gave a sermon on pride being the antithesis of the sovereignty of God on October 5th, 2014. In the sermon, he took a brief detour to teach us about being proud in heart, and paraphrasing a portion of that - often the quietest person in the room is the proudest. I've learned that this can be often true about anger.

Like so many of our sins, we can also tend to justify our anger, that it is actually a different behavior or emotion. It can be masked or mislabeled as being zealous or something else. We lie to ourselves to justify either our own or another's anger stating that it is because we're frustrated, we're over-stimulated, we're tired, we're hungry, we're trying to focus on something, we're trying to accomplish something and it isn't going well, we're overwhelmed about a matter, we're stressed, we have different opinions or viewpoints than another person,

someone is quiet by nature, another is more prone to anger and it's best to steer clear, I just can't stand a person, place, or thing, etc. We can also justify our anger because a person is blatantly sinning, someone is teaching false doctrine, they are breaking the law or a rule, or our child is doing something that we simply don't like. Some or even all of these things could be true to some degree in a given situation, but whatever the reason is that leads to our anger, we have to consider whether we truthfully have a cause to be angry. Or is the cause God's?

There are also some more extreme situations where the world justifies that it is proper and good to be angry for harming a child, a wife, or property. Then in the extreme, murder is justified as retaliation for it because damage was done to something that is ours or even something we deem as innocent. We see this in the world every day. Anger in those scenarios is not justified but rather improper. We should absolutely care for, love, and nurture what blessings the Lord has given, but all the while fully acknowledging that the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. None of the things we have are ours to begin with and we're really angry at the Lord for appointing those situations when they happen. We also know from our sinful nature, that no one is innocent. Those same people that will justify anger and murder in retaliation for harm done to what is theirs, also justify murdering a baby in the womb (for whatever cause resulted in the baby being there). Related to these examples, we also see where the world tries to justify anger and murder, as a result of a spouse committing adultery. Solomon spends a good section of Proverbs chapter 6 providing warnings against adultery and why you should never even meddle with it. He ends those exhortations by stating that jealousy is the rage of a man (**Proverbs 6:34**), and once a man is in that state of anger and jealousy, he will stop at nothing until you're dead, so stay away from adultery. That's the world's stance on being able to justify anger, in all of these above examples, and whenever a man feels they have a cause to be angry, who can stand before them and their envy (jealousy)?

Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy? (Proverbs 27:4)

In these examples and situations where we feel strongly that we can justify our anger and we have a cause, it is in fact God's cause and doesn't pertain to us. I proffer that our anger is still sinful and there are scriptural remedies that help lead us away from such poisonous behavior. We'll cover some of those in the last section.

Six to seven years ago, my Dad did a sermon series on charity and expounded 1 Corinthians chapter 13. He spent two sermons on this very subject (**02/09/2020 and 02/16/2020**), covering nearly identical ground, when he discussed how charity "is not easily provoked" (**1 Corinthians 13:5**). These are very good sermons and I highly recommend that you reread them or listen to them again on our web site. In part two in particular, he calls on Charles Spurgeon and Richard Baxter to cover a scriptural and spiritual appeal to the servants of Christ why we must cease from anger, and some helpful considerations to hinder anger. Included in part two is also some

medical support against anger, showing the negative effects that it can have on our physical bodies, in addition to our spirits.

To wrap up this section, let's call to mind our brother Jonah and those examples that God left for our teaching and admonition. In those moments of silent or loud anger, who are you really angry at? Are you angry at the loud or disobedient child, your disagreeing friend or companion, a person's idiosyncrasies, a mess you have to clean up, the amount on your plate, your stress, your health, your lack of sleep, the weather, your job, or whatever bounds of your habitation that your God appointed for you on a given day or a given moment? The answer is simply and firmly, no. You are angry at God and His providence. Not in a rote way, but in those moments strive to catch yourself and truly consider this question in your heart: do you truly and honestly do well to be angry? I really struggle to think that our answer could ever be yes, if we're being honest in our hearts.

When is anger not sinful?

The words anger, angry, rage, fury, and other synonyms, are in the Bible hundreds of times. When these words show up, they are used to show us both when anger is righteous and good, when it is sinful, and for warnings against anger. The times that these are righteous and good are nearly completely reserved for God.

For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains. (Deuteronomy 32:22)

God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day. (Psalm 7:11)

We have several examples in scripture where the Lord's people were angry and here are just a few: Jacob being angry at Rachel (**Genesis 30:2**), Moses being angry and killing that Egyptian (**Exodus 2:11-12**), Moses being angry at the children of Israel and smashing the tables of stone (**Exodus 32:19**), Moses being angry and speaking unadvisedly with his lips (**Psalm 106:32-33**), David wanting to kill Nabal and Abigail preventing it (**1 Samuel 25:32-34**), Jonah being angry at the Lord (**Jonah 4**) and several others. We see from these examples just a few of the various levels of anger and situations where anger can rear its head. None of these were justified, but the Lord taught each of those tender souls something important as a result of their anger, and had mercy upon them and covered their sin.

We also have the examples of Levi and Simeon's anger against the men of Shechem for their sister Dinah (**Genesis 34**) and Absalom's anger and plot over Amnon's rape of his sister Tamar (**2 Samuel 13**). In these examples, men might feel inclined to say this anger was justified and appropriate, but they were not. In both examples, this anger brought great shame and distress upon their families, because they acted upon that anger. Jacob sought for peace in the

moment and later cursed his sons' anger and called their wrath cruel (**Genesis 49:7**) and David was wroth for what happened to his daughter, but unlike Absalom, he was angry and sinned not (a concept we'll get to later).

By contrast, anger is a righteous attribute of God. It is something that is reserved for Him alone, just like vengeance, being a Jealous God. When the Lord is angry, it's because we've used up all of His longsuffering and even in His anger, He is merciful.

For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (Hebrews 10:30-31)

O LORD, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing. (Jeremiah 10:24)

For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God. (Deuteronomy 4:24)

For our God is a consuming fire. (Hebrews 12:29)

Christ, being God, showed anger and it was not sinful:

And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other. (Mark 3:5)

Here is our admonition, as servants:

Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil. (Ephesians 4:26-27)

I've often struggled with this verse and it's meaning over the years. I looked at many commentators on this passage and on several of the examples in scripture when the Lord's people were angry, and I think those commentators for the most part miss the mark on this. They justify situations where they say a person being angry on behalf of the Lord or a parent being angry at a disobedient child, as being examples where anger is not sinful. The scriptures command us to put off anger, completely. Is having pride ever not sinful? Then why is anger? Being zealous for God or being vexed by the sin of men are not anger. However, deceiving ourselves and putting those labels on our anger to justify it is wrong and where I believe the commentators like John Gill missed the mark.

My understanding of these verses in Ephesians at this moment in time is this: we are sinful humans and are prone to the sins of the old man, so we are going to be angry from time to time and some of us more than others. When we do become angry, we must reign it in and don't compound it with another sin. We can't become angry and then bear a grudge in our

hearts. We can't become angry with our brother or sister and go around being a talebearer. We can't become angry with our lot and try to force a change. We can't be angry with our children and then punish them in that anger (and in so doing hurt them or provoke them to wrath). When we become angry and do anything to compound that sin, we give place to the devil; that is, we give place to the nature and character of the adversary and we give place for the old man to take over. When we do become angry, we have to quickly and speedily refrain from that anger, put it away, and exercise humility, forbearance, longsuffering, patience, mercy, and forgiveness. Albert Barnes summarizes this in his commentary on Ephesians 4:26 quite well with these words:

Let not the sun go down*. Do not cherish anger. Do not sleep upon it. Do not harbour a purpose of revenge; do not cherish ill-will against another. When the sun sets on a man's anger, he may be sure it is wrong. The meaning of the whole of this verse then is, "If you be angry, which may be the case, and which may be unavoidable, see that the sudden excitement does not become sin. Do not let it overleap its proper bounds; do not cherish it; do not let it remain in your bosom even to the setting of the sun. Though the sun be sinking in the west, let not the passion linger in the bosom, but let his last rays find you always peaceful and calm."*

What to do about your anger – scriptural remedies

Knowing that anger is reserved for the Lord and is sinful for men, what are we to do with our anger? As everything in life, the answer will always lie within the word of God. Here are just a few of the remedies available for our anger, with scriptural evidence to support each one. These remedies or behaviors are all related and for the most part follow or are a result of one another.

1. Submit to the sovereignty of God and His Providence – this was discussed earlier, but knowing that God is the supreme sovereign over all things we do not do well to be angry and kick against the pricks. We have to submit to God, with a willing spirit, and after that raging battle with our flesh, it submits as well. Christ set this example for us when He was tempted in the wilderness by Satan (**Matthew 4:1-11**). When you truly submit to the Lord, then that enables you to resist the devil, and then the devil flees from you.

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7)

2. Be slow to anger and keep a bridle over your tongue – out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks (**Luke 6:45**). The anger that stirs in our hearts cannot come billowing up out of our mouths.

A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife. (Proverbs 15:18)

He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city. (Proverbs 16:32)

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

3. Let not the sun go down upon your anger, neither give place to the devil – which was expounded and talked about in the prior section but I wanted to call it out again as a spiritual remedy to anger.

Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil. (Ephesians 4:26-27)

4. Be patient, longsuffering, forbear one another in love – longsuffering is the opposite of anger, as we learned from my Dad's sermon last week (**11/08/26**). The dictionary definition of longsuffering is *patiently enduring lasting hardship, trouble, or annoying behavior from others without complaint or retaliation*. Rather than reacting in anger, we are to be patient, bear and endure what we consider offenses, and consider that person or thing we are offended by. There are other causes or circumstances that could be going on and we should strive to consider those things and take the best motives away from the experience or person. In other words, this is defined in the world as having empathy, but this must be done through a spiritual lens and not of the flesh.

That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: (Colossians 1:10-13)

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:1-3)

5. Have compassion, love as brethren, be pitiful, be merciful, be kindly affectioned one toward another and prefer one another in honour – these are all different behaviors but I looped them together as they are mentioned in the same passages together. The world would have you believe that this is all about the 'live and let live' doctrine. Rather, this is a sincere love and with all lowliness considering your brethren more deserving of God's mercy and grace than you will ever be and not being a respecter of persons. This isn't putting someone on a

pedestal but rather approaching your thinking, words, and deeds towards and for one another to be one of a servant (what can you do for them). We are members of one body, the Bride of Christ, and our hearts are joined together. We all serve that Great King.

Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. (1 Peter 3:8-9)

Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. (Romans 12:10-15)

6. Eschew evil, seek peace and ensue it / Live peaceably with all men – eschew means to avoid or shun. We have to keep ourselves far from any form of evil influence of our flesh and rather replace it with good and proper influence of the spirit (separate from the world and cleave to those of like precious faith). When you see that word ensue, think of a predator pursuing a prey and not giving up until it's caught. That's the root meaning of that word and that is how vigorously we're supposed to seek peace.

For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. (1 Peter 3:10-12)

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. (Romans 12:18-19)

7. Flee wrath, malice, strife, envy and put on love and meekness – in this instance, instead of taking spiritual action towards godly behavior, take spiritual action away from ungodly behavior of the old man. Wrath, malice, strife, and envy are violent behaviors in our hearts that can be shown openly, and are always to be avoided like a deadly poison. Meanwhile, love and meekness and the rest of the fruits of the spirit are gentle and full of all goodness. This remedy (and all of the items in this list) is done by diligently seeking after the Lord in prayer.

But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: (Colossians 3:8-10)

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 which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. (Galatians 5:19-25)

8. Flee covetousness, discontentment, and murmuring – bring those thoughts into captivity. Treat these behaviors as a deep pit and take a wide-berth. When you have these sins creep in to your heart, run with all your might to God and seek Him for deliverance.

Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. (Hebrews 13:5)

Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain. (Philippians 2:14-16)

9. Rule over your spirit – this is a big one and would require multiple sermons to inspect this very concept, which several elders have spoken about to some degree to this body. At a basic level, this is mature and heightened levels of self-control, self-awareness, and self-restraint of our thoughts, words, and deeds. This is gained only from experience. Those godly teachers you have in this life provide you with the tools you need but it is ultimately your work to do, and you are the one that will be held accountable by your God.

He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls. (Proverbs 25:28)

10. If you are the recipient of the anger, de-escalate. This can take many forms. This isn't walking on eggshells around one another or steering clear of a person when they are angry which we shouldn't do. We are to know one another and when you are with someone who is angry, you'll know what to say or you can go get help. Refrain from adding fuel to the fire but use your discernment to provide them right and spiritual words to help them. Speak with soft tones and with a calm disposition. It might sound silly, but it works, trust me.

A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger. (Proverbs 15:1)

A gift in secret pacifieth anger: and a reward in the bosom strong wrath. (Proverbs 21:4)

11. Don’t avoid - encourage and provoke one another against anger. We can tend towards this behavior when we are angry with someone or when we see someone who is angry. We must shy away from this tendency and go towards one another and not away from. We have to be reconciled to one another when we’re offended, which takes laying aside our pride.

Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. (Hebrews 10:23-25)

12. Forgive one another and practice that behavior every day – see no offense and don’t be easily offended. You pass over the transgression or offense, you don’t even regard it or give it the time of day. The offense or wrong doing is forgiven, not forgotten. Rather, when you do recall the offense you forgive it afresh and you don’t let it reignite your anger. By the grace of God, may we be so.

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:31-32)

The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression. (Proverbs 19:11)

A fool’s wrath is presently known: but a prudent man covereth shame. (Proverbs 12:16)

Gill: Ver. 16. **A fool’s wrath is presently known**, *Having no command of himself, he cannot repress it, nor keep it in; no sooner is he provoked but he shows it in his countenance, and by his words and actions; it is to be seen in the fire of his eyes, in the frowns of his face, in the gnashing of his teeth, and in the stamping of his feet, as well as in the bitter expressions of his mouth: or "a fool’s wrath in that day is known"; in the same day in which the provocation is given; yea, in the same hour, and in the same moment; he cannot defer showing it for the least space of time; or it is openly known, it is to be seen and observed by everyone: or thus, "a fool is presently known by his wrath" see* ***Ec 7:9***; **but a prudent man covereth shame**; *conceals his anger and resentment at any injury done him by words or actions, which if suffered to break out would bring shame and disgrace to him; or he covers the injury itself, the disgraceful words that are spoken of him, and the shameful actions done unto him; he puts up with the contempt that is cast upon him, and bears it patiently; takes no notice of the offence given him, and much less seeks revenge; in which he acts a prudent part, for by so doing he creates less trouble to himself, and gains more credit and reputation from others.*

Forgiveness is the primary remedy when we have anger towards another person. Forgiveness is hard, because it does injury to our pride. It is especially difficult while you're in the middle of a fit of anger, but it is key and needful, and we can't get past our anger without forgiveness. Our brother Charles gave a sermon on the subject of forgiveness (**03/08/2020**), which is very good and well worth your inspection as you're able. Here is a quote from that sermon, which I found powerful for making this point: *Forgiveness is the complete unburdening of responsibility for anything a person has done that we see as "wronging us". It is a complete and utter cancellation of the debt we believe they owe for intrusion upon our space, interference in our happiness or disruption of our state of mind. Forgiving means not judging future interactions in the light of past ones. It requires deliberate action to accomplish. It is the ultimate expression of putting off the old man in that it requires us to completely put the needs of other people before our own and esteem their well-being over our own need for vengeance and payment for a slight. It requires us seeing ourselves as lowly enough that the worst offense another commits against us is irrelevant in our own eyes.*

In that same sermon on forgiveness, Charles made this point and I'll say it again – in those moments where you feel your anger beginning to creep in and take over, we should strive to stop ourselves and ask this question "Do we do well to be angry?" and honestly coming to the conclusion "No" will help us keep our anger in check along with many other benefits.

To end this exploration of anger, and as you have heard over and over again from this pulpit, I want to remind you dear friends that we can do none of these things ourselves. First, seek the Lord every day and ask Him with all sincerity and humility to grant you His Spirit to dwell within you and to work within you the blessed works of that Spirit. This is especially life to us, as we strive to put off the old man and to put on the new man each and every day, striving against those sins that so easily beset us. I love you all dearly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.