



Wise Up! A Series in Proverbs

Anger

Date: Sunday 21st August

Speaker: Aaron Smith (City Centre), Phil Grasham (South Site)

Key Verses: Proverbs 27:4; 29:22; 29:11; 16:32

Talk Summary:

Anger is something which will affect us all. We all get angry and we have probably all experienced someone we know becoming angry, whether that is a spouse, parent, child, friend or colleague.

When we look at the bible we see that there are numerous examples of people who are renowned for their anger. From the beginning when Cain becomes angry and the result is him killing his brother Abel. Levi and Simeon destroy a city in anger. Saul tries to kill David. Peter gets angry when they try and arrest Jesus and cuts off one of the guards ears. James and John, two of Jesus' disciples are called 'Sons of Thunder' by Jesus. He knew their characters. It was more than likely that they had a temper on them. Then finally we see Jesus showing his anger, turning over tables and remonstrating with the people in the temple.

1. Anger is in our DNA:

You might find this surprising, but anger is part of our DNA, it's in our design. We see in the Bible that God gets angry at various points in the Bible. In Psalm 7:11 we read '*God is a righteous judge, a God who displays his wrath (or anger) every day.*'

We read in scripture that God's anger was kindled against sin, rebellion, evil and injustice. Psalm 30:5 says that God's '*anger lasts a moment, but his favour lasts a lifetime.*' We can be confident that God's anger is not the end of the story BUT we can't deny God's anger. It's very real, and is a force to be dealt with – so we can see how we too can experience strong feelings of anger. If we believe that we are made in God's image (Psalm 139) then anger is part of our DNA.

2. Constructive v Destructive Anger:

Firstly, destructive anger. This anger is one that many will be familiar with. This is the one we may have witnessed in our families, friends or workplace. Destructive anger is dangerous. One person says about this kind of anger is that 'it doesn't solve anything, it builds nothing, but it can destroy everything.'

This type of anger can cause serious harm to ourselves and others. Even if we suppress it, it will still cause harm to both ourselves and others. Our relationships are damaged, including our relationship with God.

Secondly, constructive anger. This kind of anger is the type of anger that we see God and Jesus show in the Bible. It leads us to take action to resolve or improve a situation – it's the kind of anger that spurs us on to fight for God and God's cause. And let's face it – as we look out on the world right now – we have a lot to be angry about. People not being able to heat their houses, including some of us, people having to use food banks at a great rate, climate change, litter, refugees' mistreatment, people living in warzones and conflict, exploitation, corruption etc. You fill in the blank for yourself. However, we need to be careful with this kind of anger, as it says in Ephesians, to not let it lead us to sin. If our desire for OUR justice leads us to not trust God, we may refuse to let go of a grudge, we may want to get revenge, see the person come to harm or downfall or it may lead us to unforgiveness or bitterness.

3. Walk the way of Wisdom:

So, how can we deal with anger? Proverbs 16:32 says '*He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.*' The writer realises that sometimes it takes more strength and courage to control our emotions than it does to capture a fortified city.

How do we walk the way of wisdom?

1. Recognise it!

We need to recognise its presence of it in our lives. When do we get angry? What are the circumstances where we feel anger rising inside of us? Do we have stiffening of our posture, do we suddenly swear, clenching a fist, setting our jaw, a rising of frustration, confusion, impatience or irritability – or does our tone of voice change?

Whatever it is – be aware of it and be aware of what is going on at that moment. The sooner we realise what is going on inside of us is anger, the sooner we can start to learn from it. From this, we can start to understand why we are getting angry and what the cause of our anger is the issue or the problem – not the person who caused the anger, but the issue which arose by that person. Then we can address that issue rather than the person.

2. Deal with it!

Sometimes we can try to bottle it up, push it down and try to live in a way that it doesn't exist. This is like a toxic dump for our bodies. We bury it and at some point, it will leak out and have an impact – more than likely on our own body, mind set or relationships. Mark Twain, a novelist and travel writer says 'Anger is an acid that does more harm to the vessel in which it is stored than by anything on which it may be poured'

So let's be real. If you have anger, accept it and deal with it. We have a choice, it may be a painful one to accept it and deal with it, but to not is more devastating. We do not have to deny our anger or bottle it up, nor do we have to spew it out in a destructive manner.

Worship

Worship is not just singing, it is thanking God for who he is and what he has done and is lived out through a life of trusting obedience. Discussing this together is an act of worship.

(Small group worship resources can be found at bvc.so/sgworship)

- What are you thankful for this week?

- Where has God been at work in your life?
- When have you taken risks in faith and obedience this week?

If you have a time of singing you can skip the above questions but please do ask this question each week:

- What has God been speaking to you about this week? (*Go around the group quickly don't spend a long time on it*)

Discussion Questions (choose some which are most relevant to your group)

- What stood out to you the most from this week's sermon?
- In what way does the idea of God becoming angry challenge your image of who He is?
- Do you feel happy to share the ways in which you have ever experienced anger in a destructive way in your life? How about in a constructive way?
- In what ways does our anger teach us something about ourselves? How can the Lord help us with this?

Witness - *How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?*

We want to be investing in authentic relationships with those who don't know Jesus yet and inviting them to anything where they might meet other Christians and Jesus. Pick one of the below each week:

- How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?
- What church events coming up would your friends appreciate an invitation to?
 - Upcoming Events (go to bvc.so/whats-on for details)
 - Encounter Night – 27th August at 7.30pm, City Centre Site
 - All Church Picnic – 28th August from 12.30pm (after the usual Sunday services), Cannon Hill Park