

CCC LOVE IS NOT EASILY ANGERED Part 6

40 Days of Love

Welcome to the sixth weekend of “40 Days of Love!” In God’s word, the bible, it says “*Love is not easily angered.*” 1 Cor. 13:5. Anger is the most misunderstood, and by the way misapplied, emotion of all the emotions that we have as human beings. Anger is not necessarily a sin. A lot of people think anger is always a sin. But that’s not necessarily true. Sometimes anger is the most appropriate response. Actually anger is a capacity given to you by God. We see in the bible that God gets angry. There’s some times that you should get angry. Sometimes anger is an evidence of love. In fact there are things that could happen in my life and if I didn’t get angry, it would mean I was just heartless, apathetic, unconcerned. What I am trying to say is sometimes when we talk about love we

just automatically think the opposite of love is anger. But really the opposite of love is apathy. Not caring. If you never get angry it means basically you’re a vegetable, your existing in life... your not a human being living life..

The problem is not anger. The problem is whether anger is appropriate or inappropriately expressed.

Managed anger like I said, is actually a good thing. It produces good marriages. It produces good leadership, good churches and many other things. So there fore what we need to develop is how to put anger in its proper place, we need to learn how to express it. When I grew up nobody taught me how to manage my anger. As a result we live in what psychiatry calls The Age of Rage. That’s really what our society is today. Nobody learned how to manage their anger. You didn’t learn it from your parents. You didn’t learn it at school. You don’t learn it in

business and in most churches they don't even teach it or talk about it – so what I'm going to teach you today is how to manage it. God's word, the Bible is actually very clear about what's appropriate and what's inappropriate.

What we typically do is we go to one extreme or the other. Let me also say this just because you don't turn into Mount Saint Helen when angered... doesn't mean you don't have an anger problem. There are dozen different ways you manifest anger and we're going to talk about those also today. But typically the two extremes are 1. Some people clam up when they get angry and other 2. People blow up when they get angry. Some people stuff it all inside and others let it all out.

Let me give you some little facts about anger that you may not know. For instance, the average woman loses her temper three times a week while the average man loses

his temper about six times a week. Women get more often angry at people while men more often get angry at things. Single adults express anger twice as often as married adults. Men are far more physical in their anger than women. You are more likely to express anger at home than anywhere else. Another little fact is successful marriages are not those marriages where anger or conflict does not exist but rather it's where they've **learned** to manage it.

So today I want to look at what God has to say about how do you tame your temper. The Bible is very clear about this.

1. The first thing God says to do if you want to tame your temper is you must **resolve to manage it.**

You can learn to manage it. What I mean by that is you quit saying, "I can't control it!" And start realizing that you can, your just choosing not to: You decide to stop

making excuses for your anger and realize that anger like love is a choice. When you get angry you are choosing to get angry. Nobody is forcing you to get angry. Nobody can *make* you mad. People say “You make me so mad!” Nobody can make you mad without your permission to allow them to make you mad. Anger is a choice. And you choose it or you don’t choose it.

The Bible says this in Proverbs 29:11 “*A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.*” Circle “keeps.” Keeps means it’s a choice.

When I get angry I’m choosing to get angry and I’m not blaming anybody else.

When I say “resolve to manage your anger”, resolve means you make a choice **in advance**. The time to decide to manage your anger is not when your blood pressure is rising, your adrenaline is shooting into your system out of

control, your nerves are all on alert and your muscles tense. That’s not the time to decide to manage your anger. You’ve already lost the battle at that point.

You manage your anger by deciding “Today you will manage it not when you’re in the heat of the moment. So how do you tame your temper.

2. How you do this is by **remember the cost**.

When you remember the cost of uncontrolled anger you will be more motivated to manage it. You’re less likely to get angry if you realize that there’s always a price tag to anger. The Bible is very, very specific. I could give you dozens of verses on the high cost of losing your temper.

The Bible says this in Proverbs 29:22 “*A hot tempered man... gets into all kinds of trouble.*” In fact, true confession is good for the soul. On these next three verses let’s take a little survey on would you with thme:

Proverbs 15:18 that *“hot tempers cause arguments.”* How many of you agree with that? How about this one?

“Anger causes mistakes.” How many of you would agree with that? How about this one? *“People with hot tempers do foolish things.”* In fact people make real fools of themselves in public. It has been said when you get angry you lose fifty percent IQ!

Proverbs 11:29 says this *“The fool who provokes his family to anger and resentment will finally have nothing worthwhile left.”* You always lose when you lose your temper. Write this down: **“I always lose when I lose my temper!”**

What do you lose? You lose your reputation. You can lose the respect of others. You can lose your job. You can lose the love and respect of your family. You could lose your health. So remember the cost whenever we’re tempted to

lose our temper. You have to resolve to manage it and then you have to remember the cost. And what is the cost?

Nothing destroys relationships faster than anger. If you are always losing your temper with your kids... you will only create in them apathy (they won’t become non-caring) and more anger then will only bring alienation of your kids.

Here’s the third thing the Bible says...

3. **Reflect before reacting.**

In other words think before you speak. Put your mind in gear before you put your mouth in gear. Anger controled is largely a matter of mouth control. If you can watch your words then you’re going to watch your anger.

The Bible tells us *“It is foolish to respond impulsively to anything.”* When something gets your goat, something ticks you off, something irritates you, something makes you mad the Bible says first, resolve to manage it, then

remember the cost of losing your temper, then reflect before reacting. In other words don't respond impulsively. Let there be a little delay before you respond. Proverbs 29:11 says "*A stupid man gives free reign to his anger; a wise man waits and lets it grow cool.*" Circle "waits." He's saying one of the greatest tools for anger management is delay. Just wait a minute. Don't write that email instantly when you read one that's upsetting. Don't respond back when somebody says something mean-spirited to you. Don't do it. Wait. Notice it says "*A stupid man gives free reign to his anger, but a wise man waits and lets it grow cool.*" This is the biblical basis for the term *Chill out! Cool it!* God says when you start to get angry, wait and chill out! Give yourself time to think and reflect. The longer you hold your temper the better it improves. Delay is a great remedy

to anger. I'm not talking about delay for a week or a month or a year. No. In fact the Bible says "*Do not let the sun go down on your anger.*" In other words don't carry anger from today over till tomorrow. If you hold on to anger for more than twenty-four hours, anger turns to resentment, and resentment turns to bitterness. Anger is not always wrong. But bitterness, resentment is always a sin. So I'm not saying delaying and putting it off and carrying that anger in your heart for days and weeks and months and not deal with it. No. I'm saying that if you're in an argument and you both start to get real vocal about it, it's ok to say, "Time out! Let's just take a five minute break." During that time talk with God. Then you come back and talk when you're a little bit calmer. Reflect before you reacting. The forth thing God says to do if you want to tame your temper is you must

4. **Release my anger appropriately.** As I said there is a right way and there is a wrong way to express anger. There is an appropriate and an inappropriate way to do it.

There's a helpful and there is a harmful way. There is a sinful way and a non sinful way to express anger.

God gets angry when he sees a rape. God gets angry when he sees child abuse. God gets angry when he sees poor people ignored by rich people. God gets angry when he sees racial prejudice. God get angry when he sees people ripping off each other... There are a lot of things in the world that are flat out evil. And you ought to get angry about those things. Anger is not a sin.

But I must release my anger appropriately. Ephesians 4:26
"If you become angry, don't let your anger lead you into sin." It doesn't say anger is sin... But it does say there's away... if you do it that it is definitely wrong. It's all in

how you release it. Most people express their anger in ways that actually lead them further away from their goal they want to bring out rather than closer to it.

So if you want to de-escalate anger in your relationship, in your marriage, friendship or whatever, you talk low and slow. Quiet the anger. God's word says, *"A gentle answer turns away wrath."* It quiets anger.

What is the best way to deal with anger? You admit it first to yourself: I'm angry. And you admit it to God: "God, I'm mad!" You talk to God about it. You confess not just the anger but the cause of why your angry: You say god, "I'm hurt! I'm frustrated! I'm scared! I feel insecure! I feel this is out of control." You admit the cause behind the anger. You confess it and that's how you deal effectively with anger.

These next two steps are key to permanent long term change. These others that we have talked about they dealt with the moment. But if you're serious about saying, I don't want to be an angry person; I want to learn the proper ways. 5. **Re-pattern your mind.**

The Bible has a lot to teach about this. You rethink and change the way you think. What I am saying here the way you express your anger, you didn't just get that overnight. Your presumed pattern of behavior is a learned response. Somebody modeled it for you. You didn't just automatically choose it. Somebody modeled it for you. Anger response is a learned response. The good news is you can unlearn it. You don't have to stay that way. You can learn new patterns. You can learn new habits. You don't have to keep perpetuating what your parents and their parents and the parents before did in three or four

generations. I've seen this. Every time I get angry in an inappropriate way, I'm modeling it for my kids. I'm teaching them how to do it the wrong way. If I don't change... if I don't draw a line in the sand and choose to change this all that's going to happen is they're going to teach their kids how to do it the wrong way. Somebody has to stop the insanity. Somebody has to break the chain and that can happen only when I re-pattern my mind. The good news is it can be unlearned.

The Bible says in Romans 12:2 *"Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world."* What's the behavior of this world? The behavior of this world is repress, express, suppress. One of those three ways is how we are taught. This is by the way, why violence in media is not a good thing. What the world teaches is, you got a problem? Use a gun! You got a problem? Blow somebody away.

You're angry at somebody? Drop a bomb. Slice and dice, be rude, be mean, be disobedient. Television and movies are filled with violent responses to people who are frustrated, feel out of control or hurt. Kids learn the models. They learn from the models they observe. I don't want to teach my kids wrong ways to be angry anymore. God says, "*Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way that you think.*" Circle "*changing the way you think.*" This is the key to learning a new way to handle anger. Change the way you think.

The way I think affects the way that I feel. Every time I feel something it's because I'm thinking something. Every emotion you feel has a thought behind it. When you think this, then you're going to feel this. If I feel depressed it's because I'm thinking depressed thoughts. The way I think

determines the way I feel and the way I feel determines the way I act.

So if you're here today and you want to change the way you act. If for example, I have a tendency to be abusive, if I have a tendency to fly off the handle, to reach out and show physical violence, you don't focus on the behavior. You start by going back not even to the way you feel. You start by changing what you think. If you change that thought, that mental process, it's going to change your feelings and it's going to change your behavior. The Bible says "*Be changed, be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*"

That's what God does. He's the one who can change those thought patterns in your mind.

6. **Rely on God's help.**

This isn't going to be solved by a quick visit to the Oprah show. What were talking about, you're not going to find it

in reading a self-help book or magazine or taking a seminar. The real secret is God's power to change you on the inside. Romans 15:5 *Patience and encouragement come from God. I pray God will help you to agree with each other, the way Christ Jesus wants.*" [Not a pill, not a seminar, not a conference. Now listen they can all be helpful. But patience and encouragement comes from God.] Then this verse goes on to say *I pray God will help you to agree with each other* [In other words so you're not fighting all the time, agree with each other...]

Your relationship and your closeness to Jesus Christ will determine the amount of patience you have in your life. If you are close to Jesus Christ, you're going to have a lot of patience in your life. If you're kind of wishy-washy in your relationship to Christ, you're going to be sometimes patient and sometimes not. If you're kind of on

the fringe in your relationship to Christ, you're going to have problems and anger all your life. You're going to have problems with being patient all your life because you don't have the love that gives you patience and encouragement. I'm not talking about superficial love. I'm talking about supernatural love. Whatever is inside of you is going to come out when you're squeezed.

If you take a tube of toothpaste and squeeze it, what comes out? You say, toothpaste. Not quite true. It could be whatever has been put in it. It could say "toothpaste" on the outside but whatever is in it is what's going to come out when you put on the squeeze.

Tension and temper go together. Pressure and anger go together. If you are filled with anger on the inside, stuff

you haven't dealt with like we talked about the last couple weeks, if you're filled with anger when you get bumped, almost anything can make you angry. On the other hand, if you're filled with God's love almost nothing can make you angry, to lose your temper, to get it out of gear.

How does God manage my anger? The Bible says "*The fruit of the Spirit is patience.*" In other words when God's Spirit is in me and I am choosing to draw close to Him with my life, by coming Sunday and worship, read His word, talk with Him...he fills me with love and joy and peace and patience.

How does God help me with my bad habit of anger? I'll tell you how he does it. He goes straight to the heart of the problem. And the heart of the problem is a problem in the heart. It starts in the heart. It doesn't start in your behavior. It doesn't start in your background. It doesn't

start with your attitudes and your feelings and emotions. It starts in the heart.

The Bible says this, "*Whatever is in your heart determines what you will say.*" You see the problem is not my tongue, it's my heart. My mouth just betrays what I'm really like inside. Sometimes I hear people say something really mean or unkind to a kid or a husband or wife and you hear them say, "Oh, I don't know what got into me. That's not like me." No that's exactly like you. You may not want to be that way or stay that way but your mouth just revealed what's in your heart. If it wasn't in your heart it wouldn't be coming out of your mouth. The problem is not your mouth. The problem is in your heart. If you've got bad water in a well, painting the pump isn't going to do any good. You've still got bad water in the well.

My mouth just betrays what's inside me.

- **You find somebody with a harsh tongue, a cutting tongue, - it reveals an angry heart.**
- **You find somebody with a negative tongue; - you know they've got a fearful heart.**
- **You find somebody with a boasting tongue; - you know they've got an insecure heart.**
- **You find somebody with a judgmental tongue, they're always judging everybody, - you know they've got a guilty heart.**
- **You find somebody with a critical tongue, they're always nagging and being critical, - they've got a bitter heart.**
- **You find somebody with a filthy tongue, - you know they've got an impure heart.**

Would like to have these come up right after I say the first part I will pause to wait for them to come up.

Now, on the other hand, if you find somebody who's always encouraging, they're always encouraging, they have a happy heart. You know what's on the inside of them. If they're always speaking in a gentle way you know they've got a loving heart. If they're always being loving and controlled in their words you know they've got a peaceful heart.

Friends, what you need is a heart transplant. You need a new heart. David says this in Psalm 51 *"Create in me a clean heart, O God."* That's what you need to say today: God I need a clean heart. I need a heart transplant. Jesus can replace a hurting heart and all that pain with a sense of his love. Maybe you have been beaten and abused and rejected and unloved. God says, I care about your pain. It all matters to me. If you will allow Me, I will help you in the healing. Maybe you've got a frustrated heart.

God can fill it with his peace. Maybe you've got an insecure heart – it seems out of control. He can fill it with his confidence. When my daughter and son were little babies... I remember whenever something was going on and they were crying, I would pick one of them up and just hold them in my arms very close to me and I would just hold them and allow them to feel my love for them... Somehow just from that warmth and security of being held close in my arms, they would stop crying.

If you're here today and your heart is crying out inside... allow Jesus to just hold you in his arms for a while this morning, fully received, the warmth and security of Jesus Christ.

Prayer: Father, it's sad but it's true that we often get angry at the people we love the most, the people we're closest to. It's often, Lord, because we forget that you are the source

of all we need and not other people. You are the source of all we need, your word tells us. Jesus, help us to remember that when we expect somebody else to meet needs our deepest needs, we're going to be disappointed and we're going to be angry. When we expect other people to be God in our lives and meet all of our needs, help us to realize that we're just setting ourselves up for disappointment and anger. Lord, I'm certain that there are many people here today who are struggling with anger. I ask you to help them Lord, whatever the hurt or the frustration or the insecurity, help them to experience hope and healing today.

Now you pray. Say, "Dear Jesus Christ, I admit that I have a problem with my anger and I don't want to stay that way. I need your help. I need you to do a heart transplant in me. I need you to fill my heart with your love. Today with your help I want to start practicing these steps. Today

I am resolving to learn how to manage my anger. To learn some of these Bible verses we've looked at today. I'm very aware of how my anger has hurt other people including those that I love and I'm sorry. Please forgive me. Forgive me for the times I've tried to control things and then getting angry when I couldn't. Help me to reflect before reacting... To pause, to put my mind and heart in gear before my mouth. Help me to learn to release my anger appropriately, not to repress it or suppress it or express it in sarcasm or manipulation or weird behavior. But help me to re-pattern my mind. I confess to you that I need your help. So Jesus, today I open up my life, every room of my heart completely to you. Come into my life and save me and change me. Make the changes only you can make."

While our heads are still bowed, and we are in the midst of prayer... I'm going to ask everybody to just take a card that was given to you and write me a note about what's going on in your life so as your pastor I can pray for you this week. Just write your name somewhere... No one will see them but me... If you prayed this prayer for the first time check the box that says I've committed my life to Christ, so I can pray for you. If you're particularly struggling with this area of anger between you and me I want you to write on the card "I need help." And I'll get you some. But I want to ask everybody to fill out a card.

I have asked Bob Goslee, who is an Elder of the church to stand by the back door and collect your cards...

Father, thank you for your word that it's so practical and so relevant and it helps us in every area of life. Lord, we want to be lovers, not haters. We want to be filled with you, and your peace and joy. In your name we pray. Amen