

# Hearts Fit for the Journey

## Slaying the Giants in Your Life

### Controlling Your Anger – Mt.5:21-26

#### I. Introduction

##### A. *Guess that Disease*

1. I want to begin this morning by describing some of the symptoms of a very dangerous physical and spiritual malady or disease
2. As I do so I want you to see if you can guess the disease the exhibits these symptoms
3. Dr. Walter Cannon, a researcher in psychosomatics symptoms at Harvard describes the symptoms as follows:
  - a. “Respiration deepens and the hearts beat more rapidly. Blood pressure rises as the blood is shifted from the stomach and intestines to the heart, central nervous system and the muscles.
  - b. Further he says that the processes of the alimentary canal cease (digestive process), sugar is freed from the reserves in the liver, the spleen contracts and discharges its contents of concentrated corpuscles (cells, or blood cells) and adrenalin is secreted”
  - c. Anyone know what disease exhibits these symptoms?
4. Here is a less technical description of the symptoms
  - a. The obvious symptoms are often red face, swollen neck veins, clenched fists and a stumbling for words.
  - b. The person’s vision may also be blurred because this diseased clouds the visual centers of the brain

- c. **The disease is anger and it has destroyed many lives, physically and spiritually**

***B. Slaying the Giants in Your Life***

1. **In His book *Slaying the Giants in Your Life*, David Jeremiah tells the true story of Peter**
2. **Peter was a policeman who was fired by his captain for no apparent or at least unexplained reason. Peter allowed the firing to steam and seethe in his heart until he found himself plotting to murder his former boss and anyone else who got into the way.**
3. **It was suggested that of all people, a policeman ought to know that he would eventually get caught and punished, but at this point Peter no longer cared. The odds of apprehension were unimportant.**
4. **So dark was his rage that he was willing to pay any price—any price: prison, death row, the loss of family and friends. Because Satan had so filled his heart with anger and hate, nothing else really mattered any more.**
5. **That is anger**
  - a. **That is what anger does to you**
  - b. **It grows until it fills every thought, every attitude and every crevice of your life**
  - c. **It causes you to say things and do things that you would have never thought yourself capable of saying or doing**

***C. In this lesson I want to discuss anger***

1. **Principles concerning anger**
2. **Principles of controlling anger**

**II. Some Important Principles Concerning Anger**

***A. Anger is a natural human emotion***

1. **All of us have had to and will have to again deal with this emotion, whether our own anger or that of another**

2. We live in a world that is filled with anger and one merely needs to pick up a copy of the morning newspaper to verify that such is true
3. We have road rage, shopper's rage, cooking rage and on and on we could go because it is everywhere everyday
4. In fact some of you have probably dealt with this emotion this week
  - a. Have you done or said anything in anger this week?
  - b. Has anyone said or done something to you this week out of anger?
  - c. Have we sulked and pouted this week because we were angry we did not get our way?
  - d. Are you holding any grudges because of anger
  - e. The point is that all of us at one times or another, and some more than others, has been guilty of harboring anger and resentment
  - f. It is a human emotion and we must learn to deal with it properly

*B. Anger can lead to sin*

1. Webster's defines anger as a "hostile feeling of displeasure, excited by a real or supposed injury or loss, which is often accompanied by a desire to take vengeance or to obtain satisfaction from the offending party by some form of retaliation"
2. The Greek word translated anger in ch.5 of Matthew is translated wrath 31 times in the KJV
3. It refers to a mental excitement that could result in violent passion and please highlight the fact that I said it could result in violent passion
  - a. It did for Cain and he killed his brother
  - b. It did for Joseph's brothers and they sold him into slavery

- c. It did for king Saul and he tried repeatedly to kill young David
- d. It did for Moses and he killed an Egyptian out of revenge
- e. It did for the Jewish hierarchy and they called for the death of Jesus

#### 4. Thoughts about anger

- a. Doris Black and Charlotte Mize in the book *But How Can I* compare anger to dynamite. “It is useful when managed correctly, but it will kill, cripple, maim and scar for life when handled in an inappropriate and ungodly way”
- b. Someone has said that anger “is a thin stream of dissatisfaction with another that, if encouraged, cuts a channel into which all other thoughts are drained”
- c. S.I. McMillen relates in the book *None of These Diseases* that “anger is a God-given emotion that is neither good nor bad in itself. It depends upon how we use it, or misuse it, that makes anger a sin or not”

#### 5. Anger is not sin, it is what we do with it that leads to sin and this is affirmed in the Scriptures

- a. Eph.4:26
- b. Heb.12:15

#### C. Anger is progressive in nature

##### 1. This is demonstrated in Mt.5:21-26

- a. First there is the mental excitement which we call anger
- b. Second, this leads the angry person to call his brother “Raca” a Hebrew word meaning literally “stupid idiot”—which is an attack on a person’s personality without any basis for doing so
- c. From there it escalates to an assault on the brother’s character as he is called a fool



- a. From hurt
  - b. To thoughts
  - c. To words
  - d. To actions
  - e. And in this case to murder
  - f. What will you allow anger to do you? Or cause you to do to others
  - g. No wonder Paul said, “Be angry and do not sin, do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil” (Eph.4:26-27)
6. The way to overcome anger is to stop it at any point along the line of progression before it reaches the words and actions stages because anger is like a loaded shotgun, “Once it goes off there is no way to get the shotgun pellets back into the gun”
7. So, how do we control anger?
- a. First, we must realize that anger must be controlled
    - i. *“Be angry and do not sin”*
    - ii. *God would not have given this commandment if it could not be obeyed*
    - iii. *It is like those who claim people are born homosexual—there is no way God would condemn homosexuality if it were something that could not be controlled and the same goes for anger*
  - b. Second, we must realize that anger can be controlled
    - i. *What we do with anger is a personal choice, it is up to us—I hate hearing the expression “crime of passion” as though the offender had no control*
    - ii. *Crimes of passion are just nicer ways of saying crimes of anger that went uncontrolled*
    - iii. *All of us have the ability to control our anger or let it progress into something hateful, revengeful and sinful*

- iv. *Harboring anger is no way to live, it robs us of joy and is a cancer eating a way at the soul of the one who holds it*
- v. *Anger can be controlled if we control it*

- c. **Third, we must put into practice some of the principles which can help us to control anger**

### **III. Some Principles of Controlling Anger**

#### ***A. Never pass on your anger to others***

1. **One of the main ingredients to sustaining anger is involving others and by this I mean those outside of your immediate family**
2. **How often do we feed our anger by telling others of the injustice we have suffered at the hands of another?**
3. **All we are doing in such settings is trying to gain sympathizers with our cause so that we might feel justified in our anger and hatred**
4. **In rehearsing our anger over and over again we find new meaning in it each time and even manage, at times, to find new hurt in each retelling**
5. **It is like continuing to pour gas on a fire that is already burning quite well enough on its own—it serves no good purpose**

#### ***B. Never take vengeance into your own hands***

1. **Anger is a human emotion and as such is not sinful, but vengeance on the other hand is when we allow the anger inside us to boil over into hateful words and deeds**
2. **Our fleshly instinct when wronged by others is to get even, or at least what we think in our own minds is even, by lashing out towards those who have hurt us**
3. **Thus, while vengeance may be the natural thing to do, it is by no means the Scriptural or Christ-like thing to do**
4. **Listen to the Scriptures speak**
  - a. **“See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all” (1 Thess.5:15)**



- b. “Repay no one evil for evil. Beloved do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay,” says the Lord” (Rom.12:17a, 19)**
- c. “And to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thess.1:7-8)**
- d. You see brethren, it was never our place to take vengeance on those who have wronged us, that has always belonged to God**
- e. Our place is to love and forgive and this we do because God loved and forgave us**

***C. Heal the hurt through service***

- 1. One of the best, if not the best, way we can work through our anger is to serve, befriend or do something good to the person who angered us**
- 2. And yes I know that this is not natural and not easy, but it is biblical**
- 3. Mt.5:44-48**
- 4. Rom.12:20-21**
- 5. Jesus is our ultimate example**
  - a. 1 Pet.2:23**
  - b. If Jesus could overcome His enemies without lashing out at them, so can we**
  - c. If we are willing; are we?**

***D. Learn to practice true forgiveness***

- 1. Eph.4:32**
- 2. Even though this passage was written to the church, the admonition to forgive as forgiven is echoed throughout the Bible—Mt.18 comes to mind specifically**
- 3. When is forgiveness a reality?**

- a. When we can think of those who have hurt us without recalling the offence
  - b. When we can honestly say and pray that all goes well for them
  - c. When we can place their needs above our own
  - d. When we no longer avoid being in their presence
  - e. Until we can do these things we have not really forgiven and we often have not forgiven because we have not learned to let go of our anger
4. Our relationship with God will never be what it needs to be, what it should be while we hold onto anger in our hearts
  5. Have you learned to forgive those who have wronged you?

#### **IV. Conclusion**

##### ***A. An ever present danger***

1. Anger is a real and ever present danger to our spiritual lives
2. It can rob us of our peace and steal our joy for the journey
3. But only if we let it
4. Only if we fail to process it properly and let go of it before it causes us to say something or do something that we can't take back
5. If you have anger in your heart, God wants you to let go of it today so that you can once again live the life God has called you to live
6. Do you have any anger that needs to be let go of; then why not let it go today?

##### ***B. Invitation***