



# What About Anger?

## **Is Anger Sin?**

The Bible says the Christian must “put away” or get rid of anger and wrath (*Colossians 3:8*). But didn’t Jesus get angry? Is anger sin? “Anger” may be defined as a “strong emotion of displeasure aroused by a real or supposed wrong.” Anger is not necessarily a sin. It is a God-given emotion.

## **Justifiable Anger**

The Bible often speaks of the anger or wrath of God. Jesus got angry. In Mark 3, when the Pharisees were watching to see if Jesus would heal on the Sabbath, the Scripture says Jesus looked around at them “with anger and sorrow at the hardness of their hearts” (*Mark 3:5*).

Jesus’ actions in clearing the temple indicate anger (*John 2:14-16*). Yet Jesus was “without sin” (*Hebrews 4:15*). His anger was a “righteous” or “justifiable” anger, because his motives were righteous and his emotions were kept under perfect control. We too can experience a justifiable anger. Thus the Bible says, “Be angry and do not sin” (*Ephesians 4:26, ESV*).

## **Sinful Anger**

Typically, our anger is not justifiable, or at least not entirely. Our anger is usually influenced by selfishness and pride (e.g., a wounded pride, a selfish or critical spirit, or a clinging to personal rights). Even if our anger is initially justifiable, it can easily lead us to sin. Thus the Bible tells us to be slow to anger, “for human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires” (*James 1:20*). The anger that belongs to our “earthly nature” must be “put to death” (*Colossians 3:5*).

Sometimes we realize that our anger is wrong, but we make excuses. The Bible says, “put it away.” Other times, we assume *our* anger is justifiable, while others’ anger is only bad temper. We need to examine our hearts and uncover our hidden motives. Even when our anger is truly justifiable, we need to proceed cautiously. Our response to justifiable anger needs to be turned into positive action under the control of God’s Spirit. We need to act, not react.

## **Scripture Concerning Anger**

Read and remember the following Scripture passages concerning anger:

- 📖 Fools give full vent to their rage, but the wise bring calm in the end. (*Proverbs 29:11, NIV*)
- 📖 A quick-tempered person does foolish things, and the one who devises evil schemes is hated. (*Proverbs 14:17, NIV*)
- 📖 Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly. (*Proverbs 14:29, NIV*)
- 📖 Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret—it leads only to evil. (*Psalms 37:8, NIV*)
- 📖 A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. (*Proverbs 15:1, NIV*)
- 📖 Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. (*James 1:19-20, NIV*)

- 📖 Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city. *(Proverbs 16:32, NIV)*
- 📖 A hot-tempered person stirs up conflict, but the one who is patient calms a quarrel. *(Proverbs 15:18, NIV)*
- 📖 An angry person stirs up conflict, and a hot-tempered person commits many sins. *(Proverbs 29:22, NIV)*
- 📖 Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools. *(Ecclesiastes 7:9)*
- 📖 Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger. *(Ephesians 4:26, ESV)*
- 📖 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. *(Ephesians 4:31, NIV)*
- 📖 A person's wisdom yields patience; it is to one's glory to overlook an offense. *(Proverbs 19:11)*