



**AN ANGRY AND WRATHFUL  
MAN STIRRETH UP STRIFE**

Willie A. Alvarenga

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(Proverbs 15:18; 29:22)

All quotations have been taken from the New King James Version.

### **INTRODUCTION**

It is indeed an honor to be part of this fine lectureship. I commend the elders and the congregation for allowing this lectureship to continue for so many years. I also thank Brother Gabriel Rodriguez for the hard work he puts into directing this great lectureship. It is my conviction thousands of people have been edified through the years with the lessons that have been presented by faithful gospel preachers. It is my prayer that God may continue to bless these efforts so that thousands of people may continue to learn more about God's Word. It is my prayer that the things that I will say today may be of great encouragement to all of us. To God be the glory!

Great lessons have been presented and will continue to be presented during this lectureship. I commend the elders and Brother Rodriguez for selecting a topic much needed today. Church conflict avails much today in many of the Lord's church. Lessons like these will help the brethren learn how to deal with this problem. It is my conviction that we, as members of the Lord's body, must strive to avoid conflict at all cost. Let us remember Satan is trying to destroy the church for which our Savior died. The Bible describes Satan as our enemy (Matt. 13:39), the wicked one (1 John 5:19), the roaring lion (1 Pet. 5:8). He will try his best to use even Christians to accomplish his goal. Therefore, we must remain awake and consider lectureships like this; something the church needs today.

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<sup>1</sup> This lesson was presented at the Twenty-Second Annual Shenandoah Lectures 2009 (San Antonio, TX). Gabriel Rodríguez, editor. "Debate Thy Cause: Social Conflict Termination"

A great and much needed topic has been assigned to me. Lord willing, we will discuss for a few minutes the topic **“An angry and wrathful man stirreth up strife”**, from Proverbs 15:18 and 29:22. This topic is very important for the following reasons: 1) It is a Bible topic, and 2) it is a topic we need today. The church for which Jesus died on the cross has suffered much because of the attitudes of so many Christians who are not paying attention to what the Bible teaches on this very important subject. Brethren, our attitude can either encourage, or it can destroy people’s lives. Therefore, let us pay close attention to what the will of the Lord is on this very important topic.

### **ANGER AND WRATH—ITS MEANINGS**

Let me take a few moments to define certain terms related to our lesson. This will help us to have a pretty good idea of what we are talking about.

According to The American Heritage Dictionary, “anger” is defined as a feeling of extreme displeasure, hostility, indignation, or exasperation toward someone or something; rage.” Some synonyms are anger, fury, rage, ire, wrath, resentment, indignation. According to Holman’s Bible Dictionary, anger is defined as a feeling of being very annoyed and wanting to fight back at a person or thing that hurts one or is against one; rage. As we can see, these attitudes can lead us to some serious problems that may generate church conflict.

As far as “wrath” is concerned, The American Heritage Dictionary defines it as a violent, resentful anger; rage; fury. It is a manifestation of anger.

These definitions help us to understand what we are dealing with. These attitudes, when not controlled by Christians, can bring serious conflict to the church of Jesus Christ. Therefore, let us consider some helpful points about this

very important subject. And once again, it is my prayer that the things that I will say today be of great encouragement to us all. May we learn as much as we can!

## **ANGER—THE POSTIVITE SIDE OF IT**

Yes, there is a positive side to anger. Anger is a natural feeling of human beings. God has created men with this kind of feeling.

### ***God commands us to be angry in a positive way***

As we read the Scriptures, we realize that God commands us to be angry. For example, the apostle Paul, writing to the saints at Ephesus, wrote “Be angry, and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath” (Eph. 4:26, NKJV). If being angry at all was sinful, then we would not find Scriptures like this one. Of course, God has given us an explanation of how far we can go with anger—“do not let the sun go down on your wrath”. The feeling of being anger must be controlled by Christians at all times.

Let me suggest a few examples of positive anger that may be felt by Christians today.

1. **We should get angry when we see others (Christians and non-Christians) show no respect for Biblical authority.** We are commanded to have respect for Bible authority (cf. Col. 3:17); nevertheless, it is sad to see how many Christians around this world have no respect for the authority of the Scriptures. Many today are introducing changes to the church that are not authorized by God. Many Christians do not get angry when their preacher teaches false doctrine about salvation, instrumental music in worship, and many other subjects which pervert the doctrine of Christ. We should have a

feeling of indignation when things like these take place. Change agents are causing much grief in the church today. These are people who have no respect whatsoever for the authority of the Scriptures. When we observe this kind of attitude, we must have indignation. Sadly to say, many Christians today feel nothing when false teachers take over the church. Most Christians do not get angry when the authority of the Scripture is being ignored by so many. A positive feeling of anger can help us to deal with these kind of problems. Feeling anger when this takes place will lead us to do something about it. It will help us to deal with these kind of problems. The apostle Paul was extremely angry when false teachers spread their erroneous doctrines. This helped him to deal with this kind of people. But, his dealings with false teachers were done according to the will of God, and not according to his way of thinking. The apostle Paul never fought physically those false teachers who perverted the gospel of Jesus Christ. We must not allowed anger to take control of us to the point in which we violate the will of God.

- 2. We should get angry when Christians show no respect and reverence for God.** God's word commands us to love Him with all of our hearts, mind, soul and strength (Mk. 12:30); nevertheless, many Christians today have no love for God, much less reverence for Him. People love to attack God at all times. It seems like the whole world is trying to get rid of God, instead of coming to Him and accepting His will. We can see how people in the media attack God and His word. This is sad and ought not to be the case. It is sad that so many Christians observe these things happen, and feel nothing about it. Sometimes they act as if they are in agreement with what is going on.

3. **We should get angry when we see Christians indifferent to the work of the Lord.** God's Word commands us to work diligently in His kingdom (cf. 1 Cor. 15:58). God has done so much for us. It is a sinful action from our part not to be thankful with the Lord for all that He has done for us. We must get involve in the Lord's work. Remember, He deserves the best from all of us. It is a matter of indignation to see how Christians are so indifferent to the work of the Lord. It is so sad how Christians do not get involved in the work of evangelism. This is a lack of love from their part towards the work of the Lord.
4. **We should be angry at sin** (Psa. 97:10; 101:3; 119:128). The Bible commands us to hate sinful practices. Let us remember that our Savior died on the cross because of sin. How can we continue to live in sin when we have died to sin? (cf. Rom. 6:1-2). We must feel indignation towards sin and stay away as much as possible. Let us remember, without sanctification no one will see God (cf. Heb. 12:14; Matt. 5:8). A feeling of anger towards sin will help us to love holiness, and hate sinfulness. Sadly, many Christians enjoy sinning, instead of hating it. Many today talk about sin like there is nothing wrong with it. Many laugh at sin, when in reality; they should feel anger towards it. Some times I wonder if we have forgotten what God thinks about sin (cf. Hab. 1:13; Psa. 5:5; 1 Pet. 1:15-16).

As we can see, Christians have the right to get angry and feel indignant when such things take place in the church. Nevertheless, we should never let the sun go down upon our anger. When this happens, we let the wrong attitude enter our hearts, and this may, and will, cause harm to the cause of Christ. We should, and must have control over our anger. Not to do so will bring about

conflict in the church. This will ultimately result in the church getting hurt. But, anger, felt properly, can help us to solve problems in the church.

### **ANGER AND WRATH—THE NEGATIVE SIDE OF IT**

We have considered the positive side of anger; now let us consider the negative side of it. There is a negative side to anger as the following examples will show. The Bible provides plenty of examples of those who gave in to anger in a negative way. How do we know when anger is considered negative? One thing we must understand is that when anger leads us to violate God's word; then we have practiced something that God does not approve of. The following passages help us to understand that there is a kind of anger that God wants us to avoid (Psa. 37:8; Prov. 14:17; 15:1; 15:18; 29:8, 22). Let us consider a few examples:

1. **Moses**—this man of God gave in to anger when he struck the rock at Kadesh instead of speaking to the rock (Num. 20:1-13). Moses violated the command from God by allowing anger to take control of his life. This anger took him as far as ignoring the will of God. So, as we can see, anger can take us as far as practicing the sin of disobedience to the will of God.
2. **Cain**—this man came as far as taking the life of his own brother. This took place because Cain allowed his anger to take control of his life (Gen. 4). Anger, if not managed, can take us as far as taking the life of someone. This can be done, either physically or spiritually. We may come to the point in which we may hate our brethren if we are not careful. Doing this may lead us to be guilty of spiritual murder (cf. 1 John 3:15).
3. **The apostle Peter**—this man of God allowed anger to take him to the point of cutting Malchus' right ear when Jesus was being taken by the

guards before His crucifixion (cf. John 18:10). Christians who do not control their anger have come to the point in which they use physical force to get revenge. Even though Peter had every reason in the world to protect Jesus; nevertheless, his action was not justified in the sight of God. We cannot get angry in this manner and call it righteous anger.

4. **James and John**—these disciples of Jesus allowed anger to take control of their lives to the point that when Jesus was rejected by the Samaritans they asked Jesus whether they could pray to God so that fire could come down from heaven and kill the Samaritans (Lk. 9:51-56). Their anger was so terrible that they came to the point in which they were blinded, and all they could think of was to take people's lives away from them.

There are so many examples in the Bible of negative anger which must be avoided by Christians today. May God give us the strength and the wisdom to be able to control anger when this attitude comes to our hearts negatively. Let us remember that anger becomes sin when this attitude brings us to violate God's Word.

#### **ANGER AND WRATH—ATTITUDES THAT TRULY HURT THE CHURCH**

Anger, when not controlled by Christians, will bring about conflict in the church. Sadly, we have many Christians today who have allowed anger and wrath to take control of their lives to the point they hurt one another. These attitudes, when not handled properly by Christians, will hurt the cause of Christ. There are many examples of daily Christian living that can reference to see and understand how these attitudes bring about conflict in the church. For example, I am reminded of a Christian who always wanted things to go according to his own will. In one occasion the men of the congregation made a decision he did



not agree with. After the decision was made, he got so angry that he started saying awful things to his brethren and asked one of the men to step outside of the church building to fight.

In another similar situation, a brother was teaching a class and made a comment that did not sit well with another member. A heated disagreement ensued. The student of the class then bade the teacher of the class to go outside to fight. This brother had a real problem with anger.

How many times has this happen at men's meetings, elders meetings, etc.? Nothing good can come out of anger and wrath when these emotions are not controlled by Christians. Notice what God has said about this:

"A fool's wrath is known at once, but a prudent man covers shame" (Prov. 12:16)

Also notice what Proverbs 14:17 and 14:29 teaches,

"A quick-tempered man acts foolishly, and a man of wicked intentions is hated",

"He who is slow to wrath has great understanding, but he who is impulsive exalts folly."

May we never allow anger and wrath to cause us to violate the Word of God!

Why do these attitudes hurt the church? Let me suggest a few reasons:

1. **We become a bad example to others, especially visitors.** Let us remember that we are to be the light of the world (Matt. 5:16). We cannot be the light of the world when we display an attitude that goes contrary to the will of God. A bad example from Christians who cannot control anger may cause a person to stumble. We may also cause a visitor to stop coming to church services and hear the Word of God being proclaimed.

No one wants to visit a congregation where the saints are always fighting and speaking evil one against each other. The growth of the church will be affected when these attitudes prevail in the church. I am reminded of a situation when members began arguing in the midst of church services as visitors were present. It was told that the visitors who came that day came after much persuasion and pleading from members of the church. Needless to say, these visitors never came back. As you can see, this kind of behavior brought serious consequences to the congregation. These brethren became a bad example to the visitors on that occasion. This attitude has occurred in many congregations. May God help us to not be a stumbling block to others.

2. **We forget our responsibility to love one another.** Jesus has commanded us to love one another (cf. John 13:34-35; Rom. 12:9). We cannot love one another when we are challenging one another to fight. We cannot love one another when we allow anger to cause us to speak evil against our brother or our sister in Christ. I am reminded of an experience I had with another preacher who wanted to physically fight me because he did not want to accept his wrong doings. I spoke to him about his false teachings, but he refused to accept responsibility. The good thing about this is that it was over the phone; otherwise, I would have been hurt pretty bad! He was, and still is, a preacher who teaches false doctrine, and likes to get his way all the time. As far as I know, he has challenged to fight many members of the congregation where he preaches. Brethren, this ought not to be the case! We need to remind ourselves of what God's will is concerning brotherly love.
3. **It keeps us away from forgiving one another.** There are many Christians who are harboring anger and wrath in their hearts, and this is keeping

them from forgiving those who sin against them. There are many members of the church who will not speak with one another in church services because they are angry with them. It is amazing to see how many Christians have allowed anger to penetrate their hearts to the point that they will not forgive. Jesus teaches us that we must forgive one another (cf. Mk. 11:25-26; Col. 3:13; Eph. 4:32). Not to do so will make us guilty of not obeying the will of God.

4. **Anger destroys the peace that needs to prevail in the church.** There cannot be peace when anger is present in our lives. We cannot work together for the cause of Christ when anger has taken control of our lives. Anger keeps the peace away from the church. Therefore, we must do away with anger from our lives, that is, if we want peace to prevail. Congregations where anger prevails cannot live in peace with each other. Members will always be fighting each other. This is not the will of God for the church. God's word commands us to be at peace with one another (cf. Eph. 4:3; Rom. 14:19). If anger is not control, peace will never be a part of our lives. Brother Gus Nichols once said: "Christians are peace makers, not peace breakers."
5. **Anger hurts our lives physically and spiritually.** Nothing good can come when we let anger take control of our lives. The sorrows that come when anger controls us are far too dangerous. We cannot live at peace with each other and with ourselves. One Chinese proverb said: "If you are patient in one moment of anger, you will escape a hundred days of sorrow."<sup>2</sup> Alfred Montapert said: "Every time you get angry, you poison your own system."<sup>3</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson said: "For every minute you

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<sup>2</sup> [http://thinkexist.com/quotation/if\\_you\\_are\\_patient\\_in\\_one\\_moment\\_of\\_anger-you/7550.html](http://thinkexist.com/quotation/if_you_are_patient_in_one_moment_of_anger-you/7550.html)

<sup>3</sup> Alfred Montapert: <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/a/alfredamo163778.html>

remain angry, you give up sixty seconds of peace of mind.”<sup>4</sup> Each of these quotes teaches us a great lesson about anger. Some have suggested that when you get angry, the following happens: Your adrenaline surges, your heart beats faster, your palms sweat, your face flushes, your stomach pumps great gushes of ACID, you have trouble sleeping, you get depressed, moody, and introverted.<sup>5</sup> All of these things affect your physical body. Let us remember that we must take care of our bodies (1 Cor. 6:19-20). Also, one experienced counselor stated that 50% of the people who came in for counseling had problems with their anger. Anger can shatter communication and tear apart relationships and ruins both the joy and health of many.<sup>6</sup>

It is imperative that we acknowledge that this kind of attitude hurts the church for which Jesus gave His life (cf. Acts 20:28; Matt. 20:28). This kind of attitude keeps the church from growing spiritually the way God would have it to grow. We need to remind ourselves that our responsibility consists in striving to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3). We must “pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another” (Rom. 14:19). This is something we need to remember all the time.

## **ANGER AND WRATH—WE CAN BE MORE THAN CONQUERORS**

We have considered a few principles about our topic. Now, I would like to spend some time talking about how you and I can overcome these attitudes which hurt the church and perpetuate conflict in the lives of so many Christians.

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<sup>4</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson Quotes: [http://thinkexist.com/quotation/for\\_every\\_minute\\_you\\_remain\\_angry-you\\_give\\_up/223464.html](http://thinkexist.com/quotation/for_every_minute_you_remain_angry-you_give_up/223464.html)

<sup>5</sup> Essay: Bible Guidance on Controlling Anger: <http://www.biblebell.org/anger.html>

<sup>6</sup> Created to Rebel Against Anger:  
[http://www.pleaseconvinceme.com/index/Created\\_to\\_Rebel\\_Against\\_Anger](http://www.pleaseconvinceme.com/index/Created_to_Rebel_Against_Anger)

It is my prayer that you and I realize how dangerous these attitudes can be when not control by Christians. I would like to look at some principles from Ephesians chapter 4, regarding how we can be more than conquerors over anger and wrath. Let me remind you that victory belongs to us (cf. 1 Cor. 15:57; 2 Cor. 2:14). We can be more than conquerors over anger and wrath; bad attitudes that can lead us to become disobedient to our heavenly Father. God has given us everything it takes to be victorious (cf. 2 Pet. 1:3; 2 Tim. 3:17). God's word can help us to defeat attitudes that can lead us to eternal punishment. But before we discuss these ways of how to overcome anger, let me encourage you to not turn to the world for the answer. The world will suggest to you things that are contrary to God's will. For example, notice what the world is telling you to do when you get angry:

1. "Don't get mad, GET EVEN!, revenge is sweet, so they say"
2. Tell people off! Bang the wall! Go into the closet; close the door, scream to the top of your lungs!
3. "Let it out," they say, "and it will go away."<sup>7</sup>

As we can see, this is not what God would have us to do. Therefore, may I encourage you to reject what the world says in how to deal with anger. Now, let us consider what you and I can do to overcome anger.

#### **Principles to overcome anger and wrath from Ephesians 4**

1. We must be gentle, longsuffering, and loving towards one another (4:1-2).
2. We must endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (4:3).
3. We must put away sin from our lives (4:17-19).
4. We must imitate Jesus Christ (4:20-21).

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.biblebell.org/anger.html>

5. We must put away the old man, and put on the new man (4:22-24; 2 Cor. 5:17).
6. We must put away lying from our lives (4:25).
7. We must not let the devil in when we get angry (4:26-27).
8. We must not let corrupt speech come out of our mouths (4:29; Prov. 15:1).
9. We must put away every negative attitude from our lives (4:31).
10. We must be kind to one another and forgiving each other (4:32).

These are some of the things we may consider to overcome anger and wrath.

Let me suggest a few more we may consider.

1. We need to be obedient to what God says about anger (James 1:20-21; Eph. 4:26; Col. 3:8).
2. We need to acknowledge that these kinds of attitudes hurt the church for which Jesus died (Prov. 14:17; James 1:19-20).
3. We need to remember the kind of attitude that God wants us to have (Matt. 5:16; Col. 3:13; Eph. 4:32; John 13:34-35; Heb. 12:14).
4. We must remember that anger and wrath, when not control, can lead us to eternal punishment (Gal. 5:20).
5. We must acknowledge that anger and wrath will hinder our prayers (1 Tim. 2:8; Mk. 11:25-26).
6. We must remember that only a wise man turns away anger and wrath (Prov. 29:8).
7. We must remember that we must pursue peace with all men (Heb. 12:14).
8. We must think, before we act.
9. We must realize that when we are slow to anger, this will appease strife (Prov. 15:1, 18).
10. Let us pray to God continually that God may help us!

## CONCLUSION

It is my prayer that this lesson was helpful to each of us. I realize we cannot do justice to this topic in the time we had; nevertheless, may we consider the information that was presented in this lesson. Let us pray to our heavenly Father that He may give us the wisdom and the understanding to do His will on this subject of anger and wrath. Let us strive to the best of our ability to do as much as we can to let peace prevail in the church. May negative attitudes be rejected by the children of God who have a deep desire to be in heaven some day!

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