

Love Is Not Irritable

「 Introduction 」

We navigate countless waves of emotion every day — joy, sorrow, delight, and ‘anger’. Anger is one of the most natural and powerful human emotions. At times it becomes a burning drive that cries out for justice; at other times, a defense mechanism that shields our wounded selves. Yet more often, anger left unchecked either explodes and scorches the relationships we treasure or sinks to the depths of our hearts becoming a bitter and poisonous root. The anger that becomes uncontrolled and erupts ends up hurting others and ultimately tearing ourselves down.

Love is not irritable. In this lesson, may we honestly confront the true nature of the anger that rises within us, and draw a little closer to the beautiful, loving character of God.

「 Instances of destructive anger in the Bible 」

1) Cain’s Murder: Spiritual envy born from comparison

The first murder in human history took place, remarkably, right after worship. When God accepted Abel’s offering but not his own, Cain was seized by a consuming rage. God gave Cain the opportunity to control it, warning him, “Sin is crouching at the door, and you must rule over it.” But Cain could not extinguish the fire raging from within, and he eventually called his brother out to a field and killed him.

2) Simeon and Levi: Cruel vengeance wearing the mask of justice

There was a terrible event where Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, was violated by Shechem. Her brothers Simeon and Levi were overtaken by unspeakable fury. In their desire for revenge, they used God’s holy covenant of circumcision as a deceptive means. While the men of Shechem were in pain, the two brothers attacked the city with swords, brutally massacring every male, including the innocent, and plundering their possessions.

3) Moses at Meribah: Anger unleashed by exhaustion and frustration

Moses was a man of meekness, more so than anyone else on the face of the earth. Yet after 40 years in the wilderness, contending with the ceaseless grumbling and complaints of the Israelites, weariness and frustration had quietly accumulated within him. When the people complained yet again at Meribah that there was no water, Moses finally broke. Water did flow, but God rebuked him: “You did not uphold my holiness before the eyes of the Israelites.” It became one of the reasons Moses was not permitted to enter Canaan, the Promised Land he had spent his life longing to reach.

4) Jonah’s defiance: Anger towards an outcome that does not match one’s expectations

When the people of Nineveh, who were enemies for Jonah, heard the message of judgment and repented in sackcloth, God relented and withheld the calamity. Jonah was furious. For Jonah, justice could only be served if those wicked enemies were punished.

5) King Saul: Obsessive anger in defense of his own power(benefits)

Feeling that his dignity and authority as king were under threat, Saul lost all control over his anger. He became consumed by jealousy and envy, and a raging fire that burned to his wretched end.

Sharing

1. Because we are all fragile, each of us has a ‘vulnerable point’ where we easily stumble into anger. In what kinds of situations do you get most easily angered? And how do you typically respond?

「 3 Practices for managing anger 」

1) Patience, and patience.

We learned earlier that love is long-suffering. To be long-suffering means choosing not to flare up quickly and giving time.

Proverbs 16:32 Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and one who rules his spirit is better than one who captures a city.

- Patience Level 1 — Enduring a situation
- Patience Level 2 — Enduring a person
- Patience Level 3 — Enduring through time

2) Guard your words.

A single sentence can inflict a wound that never fully heals. A moment of unrestrained anger can instantly destroy what took a decade or more to build.

Matthew 5:22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire.

When possible, speaking less is wisdom. Many words lead to careless ones. Speak only if there are words better than silence. And speak the least especially when anger has been building up and emotions are running hot.

3) Keep the temperature of emotions warm.

People who lose temper in the church are usually the passionate ones. Working with someone with no passion can be more difficult. But when that passion leaves no room to breathe and burns too hot, it can easily tip into anger or collapse into frustration.

James 1:20 For the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Most people get angry over injustice, and yet the Scripture tells us that anger does not bring about righteousness. In God's justice there is love. Justice stripped of love cannot truly be called righteousness. May you keep your passion and your heart warm.

「Application」

The 80% Practice

- 1) Express only 80% of your emotions
- 2) Give only 80% in ministry and service

「Meditation」

This painting is David and Abigail by the 17th-century artist Peter Paul Rubens.

May God deal with David, be it ever so severely, if by morning I leave alive one male of all who belong to him. (1 Samuel 25:22)



When anger rises within us, we can feel like David, ready to charge and set everything right on our own terms. We want to defend with our own words, repay with our own hands, and resolve the situation our own way. But God stopped David through the wise words of Abigail. David did not perceive the interruption as a human obstacle but as the hand of God that held him back from the path of bloodshed and retaliation. Abigail's wise restraint was God's gracious protection over David that kept him from destroying himself out of anger.

「Sharing and Prayer」

1. Has there been a moment of grace in your life when God stopped you before your anger could spill into harsher words or actions? Think back on a person, a Bible verse, or a circumstance of your own 'Abigail', and share it with other members.
2. Reflect and share the areas in your life that needs the 20% lessening of tension.
3. Let us remember that the foundation of patience is love. Let us pray for one another that we would overflow with the love of Christ.